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SSAT Journal 03

Summer 2015

Contents

1	Welcome <i>Sue Williamson, SSAT</i>	34	Redesigning Schooling in Action: a futures-oriented personalised curriculum at Essa Academy <i>Caroline Barlow, SSAT and Essa Academy</i>
2	Introduction to SSAT Journal 03 <i>Bill Watkin, SSAT</i>	37	Redesigning Schooling in Action: curriculum coherence and relevance through Dynamic Days at St Mary's Catholic Academy <i>Caroline Barlow, SSAT and St Mary's Catholic Academy</i>
3	The global classroom <i>John Tait, Acklam Grange School</i>	39	Stronger together: museum learning at The Langley Academy <i>Jenny Blay, The Langley Academy</i>
5	Raising the attainment of disadvantaged students at key stage 4 at Charter Academy <i>Mark Masters, Charter Academy</i>	42	The next steps in Ofsted inspection, 2015-16 <i>Justine McNeillie, SSAT</i>
8	EBacc for all? The findings from SSAT's national survey of school leaders <i>Bill Watkin, SSAT</i>	44	Teacher development programme at Capital City Academy <i>Laura Ellener, Capital City Academy</i>
14	Careers provision: how to mend a fragmented system <i>Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, Warwick University</i>	47	Are you ready to show off your talented middle leaders to Ofsted? <i>Louis Coiffait, NAHT Edge</i>
20	Becoming a character education-led school <i>Andrew Wood, Steyning Grammar School</i>	52	How Leigh Academies Trust is facing up to the financial challenges ahead <i>Steve Avis, Leigh Academies Trust</i>
23	A cluster-based organisational structure of governance at the Harris Federation <i>DfE case study</i>	55	16-19 performance tables: changes for 2017 <i>Sylvia King, SSAT</i>
26	Wind of change: reflecting on Vision 2040 <i>Stephen Tierney, The Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust and Chair, Vision 2040 group</i>	57	SSAT National Conference 2015: Quality & Equity <i>Tom Middlehurst, SSAT</i>
28	Insights from the Educational Outcomes Celebration and Networking evenings <i>Caroline Barlow & Alex Galvin, SSAT</i>	61	What is the role of the local governing body in a MAT? <i>Veale Wasbrough Vizards LLP</i>
32	Redesigning Schooling: principled approaches to curriculum design in a time of rapid change <i>Caroline Barlow, SSAT</i>		

Welcome

*from Sue Williamson,
Chief Executive, SSAT*



Welcome to the third and last SSAT Journal of this academic year. I am sure you and your staff will enjoy reading the articles that are full of innovative examples and proven solutions.

The journal recognises the outstanding work taking place in schools and helps schools to network as part of their improvement journey. In the first half of the summer term I attended our regional Educational Outcomes events, presenting awards. It was a delight to share the successful schools' pleasure. Sadly a number of headteachers commented that schools were frequently criticised but seldom congratulated.

During half-term I was saddened by Vic Goddard's letter (bit.ly/vicgoddard) to the secretary of state detailing the pressures that he was feeling. Headteachers and teachers need to be recognised for their work and supported to develop further.

To help schools, SSAT has revised its membership offer and we will be launching this from the autumn term. To give you a flavour, SSAT will be providing each member school with a dedicated relationship manager, who will listen to your priorities, link you with schools that share your challenges, and point you to relevant CPD, research and conversations. Secondary member headteachers will also be getting one free place at our annual National Conference. There is an article about the theme of this year's conference, quality and equity, in this journal.

Everyone at SSAT wishes you a relaxing and fun summer break, and we hope you and your young people enjoy their exam results. We look forward to celebrating your successes with you. Thank you for all that you do.

Sue Williamson





Introduction to SSAT Journal 03

*from Bill Watkin,
Director, SSAT*

Welcome to the summer edition of SSAT's termly Journal. Now that the examination season has come to an end, and the anticipation of the results builds among students, teachers and school leaders, it is important to make the most of opportunities to celebrate what has been achieved over the last few years, by individuals and by schools. And it is important to look forward to the next academic year and to prepare for the new cohort, the new curriculum, the new examinations and the new qualifications.

This Journal sets out to do exactly that: to celebrate the creative and dynamic strategies in schools that have made a real difference to pupils' learning, to learn from the work of others and to offer information and insights about the requirements, the possibilities and the opportunities facing schools in the coming year.

An important part of SSAT's work is to identify the achievements, strategies, practices, successes and solutions in schools across the country that can inform the way the system operates and find approaches to new challenges. The new vocational curriculum and qualifications; an increased focus on character, resilience, employability and well-being; developments in careers education; and changes to the Ofsted framework.... All these provide a strong counterpoint to the continuing focus on knowledge

in the new national curriculum; the new GCSEs and AS/AL exams, the emphasis on the EBacc subjects; the crucial importance of closing the gap; and the place of examination results, both attainment and progress, in performance measures.

The government has emphasised the need to have a period of calm and stability while existing reforms are embedded. However, the next year may not feel entirely calm and stable to teachers who are busy preparing for the implementation of all the changes in the pipeline.

As details about the new specifications, tests and grades are released, teachers will be preparing new schemes of work, new lessons and new assessments. As clarification about the validity of legacy GCSE qualifications, about the need to resit year 6 SATs, and about target-setting and tracking continues to emerge, schools will need to remain fleet-footed and alert to new demands and opportunities.

We can be sure that one thing will not change, however: schools' relentless focus on standards and on what is best for our young people. And in August, we will be celebrating once again. And we will be learning from each other.

Bill Watkin



The global classroom

*John Tait, Deputy Headteacher,
Acklam Grange School*

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the impact digital technology is having on today's educational landscape. In little more than a decade, the internet has changed the world that we once knew. The way we shop, travel, learn and interact with others has all been transformed by the web.

For better or worse, the internet has made the world smaller. It has created an online world without borders that is now accessible to us all. Individuals and organisations can overcome geographical, cultural and logistical barriers, which is proving to be significantly more time and cost effective. Time and distance are now no longer obstacles.

Web video conferencing has become almost routine in today's world of global business and it is just beginning to break through into education. With very little hi-tech equipment required, only the help of a simple Skype account, classrooms are fast becoming exciting global learning environments.

What are the advantages of a global classroom?

Getting our students to connect and collaborate with other students across the world is becoming more and more important. In an ever increasingly digital world where businesses and organisations trade globally, it is vital that we develop our students as global citizens who can compete in the workplace. Not only that, but Skype offers a simple and creative way to make your subject really come alive. It all comes down to having a limitless imagination. No longer do physical barriers exist. The questions you should be asking now are *What if?* and *Why not?*

What if you could connect your class to an Olympic athlete to ask what it feels like to compete in the Olympics?

What if you could speak to students in a school in Florida about their personal experiences of living through hurricanes?

When you start to connect with real people, you can tap into real feelings. Books, websites and videos don't even come close to providing you with authentic learning experiences like this. Then, when you've got real feelings from real people, I believe you start to create deep and memorable learning – a far cry from students learning out of text books.

So, how does it work?

There are four main ways to use Skype in the classroom:

1. The easiest way to get your classroom connected to the world is to join the thousands of teachers who are already signed up to Skype's education site – www.education.skype.net. Here you can submit a request to connect with a class in a defined country, age group, or for a specific project/syllabus topic. Alternatively, if you're looking for inspiration, you can browse the thousands of requests already posted and connect with a classroom that interests you. Once you've contacted the teacher and talked it over, you simply swap Skype ID's and hook up at the agreed time with your classes – it couldn't be easier!
2. If you're not sure where to start with an international collaboration, why not take advantage of the new craze that is sweeping the Skype education community – a Mystery Skype! Here you take part ➡

in an international guessing game between two classes where your students use carefully crafted questioning to identify the location of the other school!

3. Thirdly, you can browse the site for an expert guest speaker. What could be more inspiring than having a world-class speaker talk to your students and extend the level of expertise that you can provide. There are lots of organisations and individuals on the site who are willing to speak to your students.
4. Lastly, the education team at Skype have teamed up with many partner organisations to take you on the ultimate field trip from the comfort of your classroom. No more risk assessments, cover requests and financial barriers to compete with! You can explore the world direct from your classroom!

How has it worked for me?

Since using Skype in my own classroom it has transformed the learning experiences of my students. We have been able to remove the traditional physical barriers and begin to collaborate on a global scale like we've never done before.

The two biggest projects I have given my students the opportunity to take part in have both been in physical education – a subject area that you would not normally associate with a live classroom-to-classroom video collaboration. For both these projects I connected my classroom at my previous school in County Durham with a classroom at Merton Intermediate School in Wisconsin, USA.

For our first project we conducted an international 'dance off' where we had groups of dancers on each side of the Atlantic dancing for each other live on Skype. Once each group had danced, the students scored and judged the technical aspects of the dance via their mobile phones on a free internet poll we set up. This enabled the students to see their results and feedback instantly. Due to the success of this project, we decided to extend the classroom partnership and try something even more adventurous. So, for our second project we created a real global classroom with students from Wisconsin teaching my students how to 'Jump Rope' live via the Skype link – a truly global learning experience with the students and student teachers being over 3,500 miles apart!

At my current school, Acklam Grange School in Middlesbrough, our humanities faculty has used



Skype regularly in geography lessons to create amazing and authentic learning experiences for the students by connecting with schools in Kansas, America to learn about climate and extreme weather conditions such as tornados. The engagement from the students has been incredible as they have learned first-hand from their peers in America what it is like to live in an area regularly affected by tornados. We have also been lucky to have a very special guest speaker speak to our PE students via Skype this year. Judy Murray Skyped in to talk about preparation in sport and how her Wimbledon-winning son prepares before his big games.

Outside of my school, and as a result of carrying the Olympic Torch at the London 2012 Olympic Games, I wanted to share my story and the Olympic message with children all over the world. After touring the local Cubs, Scouts and Brownies with the torch, I took to Skype to connect with classrooms across the globe. 40 Skypes later and after speaking to children in 17 different states in America as well as schools in Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and France, I have been lucky enough to inspire children across the world.

Why not?

So, why not give it a go? You owe it to your students to try and make their learning experiences as fun and diverse as possible. Just imagine the possibilities of connecting your class to another class on the other side of the world, or an expert who can help teach an exciting part of your syllabus. If there's one thing that using Skype has taught me, it's that bringing learning to life and making it authentic really does deepen the understanding of your students. And, not only do they begin to understand it more, they also remember it because it was fun.

When you think of it like that, what are you waiting for? Get your classroom connected to the world!

Raising the attainment of disadvantaged students at key stage 4 at Charter Academy

Mark Masters, Associate Principal, Charter Academy

Charter Academy was recently named the most improved school in the country, having achieved 83% A*-C including English and maths in 2014, a rise of 59% in terms of GCSE attainment in five years, from 24% A*-C including English and maths in 2009.

Our key stage 2 APS is 24.5, significantly below the national average. Indeed, 37% of students in the previous year 11 cohort were classed as low attainers and our FFT predicted outcome with the 2014 year 11 cohort was 35%. Fifty-eight per cent of students in this cohort were classed as disadvantaged and yet our Best 8 value added for this group was 1059, almost a perfect match to the 1060 Best 8 VA achieved with our non-disadvantaged group. For these reasons, we won the National Pupil Premium Award this year, which was £250,000, the most money ever awarded to a secondary school.

While it is true that changes to the DfE performance tables over



the last two years have made the achievement of high headline measures more challenging, we have survived this onslaught of change and flourished. Having inherited a narrow, vocational curriculum upon its conversion to academy status, Charter was more vulnerable to the swift phasing out of BTEC double award qualifications than schools with more traditional EBacc pathways. However, our improved Best 8 VA score over the last two years demonstrates that we have increased the breadth of our curriculum successfully, while improving the depth of the curriculum in the core subjects.

We have a strong belief that any child that starts with us should

succeed by the time they leave, and be ready for the world of work, having successfully achieved a wide range of GCSE qualifications, thus enabling students to have choices when they leave us. We believe in the concept of growth mindset, that achieving a below average APS score at key stage 2 does not preclude students achieving C grades or above in their GCSEs. We believe all these things should happen despite the changes to the educational landscape, and we have worked hard to enable that to occur.

But how have we done that?





Start with the outcome you want

Rather like a lesson, in which the best planning works back from the desired student outcome, the same, of course, applies to whole-school improvement. We agreed a target for the 2014 year 11 cohort, which was 70% A*-C including English and maths. We had achieved 68% A*-C including English and maths in 2013, a 20% jump in results from our 2012 result of 48%. Our 2013 result was 8% higher than the school target we had set ourselves of 60% and because of this, we were somewhat hesitant in setting our ambitious whole-school target of 70% for 2014. There were a number of challenges we faced in this year that made the outcome feel uncertain, not least the phasing out of the pathways we had relied upon in the past. Nevertheless, this ambitious target was decided upon, because it was the right thing to do for the students and the school.

Make sure the curriculum you have in place will deliver for all students

We reduced, uncertainly, as much as we could with the curriculum we designed for year 11. If there were foundation subject GCSEs that for one reason or another were not going to enable the outcome we wanted for that student, we adjusted their curriculum to ensure they were in subjects where they would achieve.

This means playing to the strengths of your teaching staff and middle leaders, as much as possible. The Charter English and maths departments are exceptional, and so students who may have otherwise struggled to achieve the outcomes we wanted for them received additional teaching hours for pathways such as English literature and statistics, a strategy which proved extremely successful. English literature, particularly, is a qualification that

extremely vulnerable students can achieve well in, with the right teaching. Leaders should feel a sense of relief that English literature is so central in the Progress 8 measures going forward.

Look and act on your cohort's data carefully and often

We have a year 11 strategy meeting every week, in which we look at the attainment and progress of a selection of our most vulnerable students, with a random sample of middle and high attaining students discussed in addition to this.

Often there is fresh data every week, which is collated in a standards binder for each member of the team to collectively refer to. As a school, we tend to test fairly regularly, whether through formative and summative tasks, set as classwork and homework, through mock exams, or practice coursework pieces. This means that the data can tell a very useful



narrative to leaders every week about how the students are doing, and strategic decisions can be accurately made to enhance the students' achievement if they are falling behind.

All SLT are present for these meetings, to comment on students in their areas of line management. The meeting has an atmosphere of complete transparency and accountability that everyone is now used to and is comfortable with. We are responsible for the departments we line manage, and the achievement of the students within those areas. We should be able to speak confidently on what we are doing if there are students that are a concern to the group in our subject areas.

**The data tells the story
– act swiftly to close
gaps as they occur**

From these weekly meetings, a number of decisions are actioned, and proposed actions minuted and sent out to all stakeholders

at the end of each meeting. The actions depend on the issue. If it is an attendance issue, the senior vice principal pastoral will action further support through our year learning managers (non-teaching staff that are year group pastoral leaders) to support good attendance. This can involve heightened parental engagement, or minibuss pick-ups in some extreme cases!

It may be a behaviour issue, in which case additional in-class support may be offered to the teacher concerned, and further teacher training delivered, alongside appropriate sanctions being put into place. It may be a middle leadership challenge, with a new postholder struggling to correctly interpret the assessment foci for a new qualification, in which case subject support is brokered with other schools or the examination board itself. It may be that a more precise intervention for a group of students is needed, or one-to-one tuition for a particular

achievement issue, with impact carefully monitored. Our mantra is: 'There is always a solution, no matter what the barrier'. Ninety-nine per cent of the time, that can be true.

**How applicable are
these strategies to other
educational contexts?**

As you can hopefully see, there is nothing terribly different or difficult to implement for schools in terms of the strategies explored above. The coordination of human resources, and the monitoring of achievement of vulnerable students needs to be very tightly planned for and adhered to, and there are, of course, a large amount of staff involved, all of whom will need to be unified, vision-aligned and consistent in their approach. However, great results are achievable, even in this time of educational instability, and we hope that this snippet of what we do will help schools achieve what we have achieved. There is always a solution!



EBacc for all?

The findings from SSAT's national survey of school leaders

Bill Watkin, Director, SSAT

Following the announcement by Nick Gibb, minister of state for school reform, on 11 June, that the government was committed to honouring its manifesto pledge to require pupils to study the EBacc, SSAT launched a survey for school leaders.

The intention was to build a rapid and representative picture of the positions being adopted by school leaders and their responses to the requirement for this academic EBacc curriculum for all.

On 16 June, the secretary of state for education confirmed that this requirement will apply to all students, except those with special educational needs, in all maintained schools, though there is a willingness to explore the particular circumstances of UTCs and studio schools which may qualify for an exemption. Ofsted will be unable to award its highest ratings to schools that refuse to teach the EBacc to all pupils.

Schools will choose, therefore, to teach the EBacc to all, or to accept that they cannot be judged to be 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

Some schools will already be 'outstanding' and their leaders may have to forego that status – which may have implications for their existing work as NLEs and teaching schools.

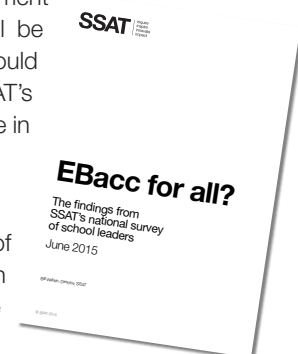
Some schools will be on the journey to 'outstanding', but will perhaps have to accept that there is a ceiling of 'good', beyond which they cannot pass, unless they redesign their curriculum to make all EBacc subjects a requirement.

The plan is that all pupils who start secondary school in September 2015, and who will start Y10 in 2018, will be required to be entered for GCSE exams in the full EBacc suite. There is to be a period of consultation, but the government will focus on *how* this initiative will be implemented, rather than on *if* it should be implemented. It is hoped that SSAT's survey and its findings will be of value in the consultation exercise.

A spectrum of views

Clearly there is a widespread of opinion and it is valuable to draw on as many different views as possible if we are to understand the thinking among school leaders about how this might impact on their schools and students.

- » The government are positioning the debate very much in its agenda to raise aspirations and achievement among more vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. Some schools are doing the same.
- » A number of arts organisations have expressed the view that a focus on the EBacc will pose a threat to non-EBacc subjects.
- » Some schools, of course, are worried about curriculum time (the impact on non-EBacc subjects), option choices (the choices available to students according to their aptitudes and abilities), staff recruitment (the skills required of the staff and the importance of recruiting according to the new curriculum requirements) and/or a one-size-fits-all curriculum (the notions of pathways and personalisation may need some reworking).



How did we get to this point?

When the last government announced the proposed new accountability measures for secondary schools, many felt that the move from 5+A*-CEM to Progress 8 was a good thing. Less focus on the C/D borderline; more emphasis on progress rather than raw attainment; greater attention paid to eight subjects, not just five. This all made sense.

Yes, the EBacc measure would still be reported in the performance tables but would not be a determining factor in the floor standards.

Schools were encouraged to enter more students for EBacc subjects; to do otherwise, we were told, would be to do the young people a disservice because their chances of getting into the best universities and of securing the best jobs would suffer if they did not qualify in the more rigorous and aspirational disciplines.

However, the EBacc was not compulsory. There was a broad understanding that it was not suitable for all students. Years of personalisation and flexible curriculum pathways had shown us that a critical tool in engaging learners was an accessible, appropriate and individualised (as far as possible) curriculum.

And it seemed that the government agreed:

‘We expect some schools to offer EBacc subjects to many more pupils as a result of these accountability reforms.’

Update on Progress 8 measure and reforms to secondary school accountability framework, DfE, January 2014

Many more pupils, but not all.

And earlier this year, there seemed to be an understanding that curriculum and qualifications were not best served by a one-size-fits-all approach. Not everyone can or should go to a university. Many universities, including Russell Group universities, have stated that they do not have a preference for the EBacc. Not everyone can or should pursue academic studies. Society and the economy need school leavers and graduates with a wide range of qualifications, training, experience and skills.

And there was a commonly expressed view that if all pupils were to be pushed along a single (EBacc) curriculum pathway, the consequent risk would be heightened disaffection and disengagement among less academic learners.

But schools were told that they only had to enter students for EBacc subjects ‘where appropriate’:

‘Schools should continue to focus on which qualifications are most suitable for individual pupils, as the grades pupils achieve will help them reach their goals for the next stage of their education or training.’

Progress 8 measure in 2016 and 2017, Guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools, DfE, March 2015

Furthermore, Progress 8, we were told, did not demand all EBacc subjects. The EBacc category could be filled with three sciences and no humanities or languages at all. Essentially, at least one, if not two, of the EBacc disciplines were optional as far as the school's Progress 8 performance measure was concerned.

What is more, the government told us that it might even be advantageous to more vulnerable, less able, learners, to follow fewer subjects. If you impose the study of French on an SEN EAL student, he may conscientiously spend so much time trying to master the necessary skills and content for his French GCSE that his other studies suffer.

‘It can be of more benefit to less-able students to strive for ‘good’ grades (and hence score more points) in fewer subjects, with the emphasis on doing well in English and mathematics, than to take more subjects but achieve lower grades overall.’

Factsheet: Progress 8 measure 2014 and 2015, DfE, February 2014

A manifesto promise

‘We will require secondary school pupils to take GCSEs in English, maths, science, a language and history or geography, with Ofsted unable to award its highest ratings to schools that refuse to teach these core subjects.’

Conservative Manifesto, 2015

The case for the EBacc being a requirement for all

Those who express support for this requirement say that:

1. If it is aspirational and right for my child, should it not be right for all young people? How will we

close the attainment gap if we do not have equal expectations of young people from all points of the social spectrum? A child's background is not an excuse for lower achievement. Nor does social disadvantage equate to low achievement potential, of course.

2. The EBacc is a lever for social mobility and it must not be the preserve of the more advantaged sections of society. Socio-economic disadvantage is not the same thing as low ability at all, and this aspirational suite of qualifications is not only as important to less privileged young people, it is actually more important to them. These are the young people who desperately need the keys to open doorways to a successful adult and working life.
3. Recent research carried out by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, an independent body which monitors whether youngsters from poorer backgrounds have the same opportunities in the workplace, tells us that employers at elite companies are 'systematically excluding' candidates if they are not middle or upper class. It was found that 70% of 'elite' job offers went to graduates educated at selective state or fee-paying schools.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

Respondents

In the first three days of the survey, 1500 responses were received. The total number received when the survey closed was 1664. The responding schools were almost all community schools and academies (91.5%). Eighty-eight per cent of responses came from 'good' (58.7%) or 'outstanding' (29.3%) schools. Responding schools catered for a predominantly more able student grouping with only 34.4% described as below average. Just over 1% of respondents already offer the EBacc to all, while in almost 40% of schools the full EBacc is followed by more than one pupil in two. This represents with a high degree of accuracy the national picture, in terms of both pupil ability distribution and Ofsted judgement.

The headline finding

Only 17% of respondents said that they would make the EBacc compulsory if that were a requirement for an 'outstanding' judgement from Ofsted, while 42% were certain that they would not. As would be expected, a nuanced and varied picture lay behind this headline finding. Through an analysis of the

responses to 16 multiple-choice questions and four opportunities to expand on their answers in greater detail, the following major themes emerged.

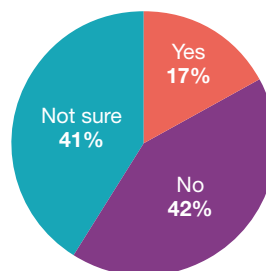


Fig 1. If an Ofsted 'outstanding' judgement required EBacc for all, will you make the EBacc compulsory?

The appropriateness of one path for all

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents would refuse to teach the EBacc for all, even if that meant a ceiling of Ofsted 'good' for their schools. Of the respondents from 'outstanding' schools, 47% would refuse to teach the EBacc for all, even if it meant losing their 'outstanding' status, while a further 33% remain undecided. Only 1 in 5 respondents from 'outstanding' schools said that they would make the EBacc compulsory for all.

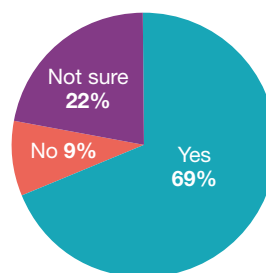


Fig 2. Would you consider 'refusing to teach' EBacc for all even if that meant accepting a ceiling of Ofsted 'good'?

Respondents offering their reasons for this quite startling set of results were often in favour, in theory, of the academically rigorous curriculum that the EBacc sets out and regularly stated that they thought it should be available to all:

'The EBacc should be available for all students to study but should not be compulsory.'

'I agree with much of what the government says and 100% believe in rigour and an academic curriculum but...'

'I believe it should be available to all to study if they wish. I do not believe it should be compulsory.'

'EBacc should be available to all but the student should have the option to follow their interests.'

However, there were no respondents who thought that it was the right path for all of their students:

‘...but to make full EBacc compulsory will damage self-esteem and overall outcomes for some students. It will add to anxiety that the current accountability structure has already magnified – mental health of teenagers is already a significant issue for schools.’

‘I shall continue to encourage all students who will benefit from doing the EBacc to take that route but it is certainly not for all.’

‘I would have little problem with a mandated core academic study for the 60 or so per cent of pupils likely to succeed in it. I only foresee misery and failure for the “forgotten” half of children under this measure.’

‘I think there is a social justice case for NOT forcing all students to do EBacc. In our current model, where all students can meet Progress and Attainment 8 but not all do EBacc, we can maximise progression route opportunities for all.’

Subject choice

Strongly linked to the idea of appropriate curriculum pathways for individual students is the issue of subject choice.

Only 9% of respondents said that their school would not have to make cuts to other subjects in the curriculum in order to accommodate the EBacc for all.

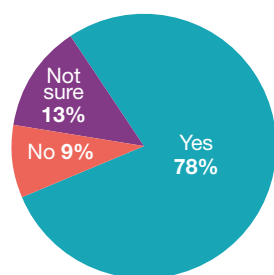


Fig 3. Would you need to cut certain subjects or reduce their curriculum time in order to teach EBacc for all?

The most commonly cited subjects under threat among the 78% of respondents who were certain of the need for cuts to non-EBacc subjects in their schools were technologies, arts, PE, RE. The reason for this appears to be that the addition of MFL and history/geography to the compulsory core reduces the amount of teaching periods available for optional subjects in the course of a normal school week.

‘Other subjects would inevitably be squeezed by EBacc for all as fewer students would opt for technology, music, art and business studies.’

‘...this would mean we reduce subjects that have an enormous impact on the school in terms of culture, breadth of curriculum and engagement.’

‘This goes against the broad and balanced curriculum entitlement statement in the national curriculum.’

Furthermore, 70% of respondents said that their school would have to reduce their vocational offer and a further 14% are not certain of the future of vocational learning at this stage. This inevitable reduction in the vocational offer and the lack of any place for an equal value vocational route within secondary education was referred to often in the written responses to the survey:

‘In countries where a traditional academic suite of qualifications is built into an expected core offer (e.g. Abitur study in Germany, Bac in France) these sit alongside a strong provision for approximately half to 60% of students who are more vocationally motivated from age 14 or so. This vocational learning model is completely absent from the department’s thinking, to the detriment of these proposals.’

‘For a society that needs creativity and people with technical skills, this is an unintelligent step.’

‘...Much better to have the expectation that ‘most’ students will follow the EBacc, with up to 20% having a more vocational curriculum better suited to their needs and which enables them to “achieve” something.’

Shifting the focus from the needs of individual students

There was a feeling that, just in the way that the EBacc did not cater to the needs of those students who would benefit from a gold-standard vocational route, it did not chime with the recent drives to personalise education to match the diverse needs of every student as far as possible.



'EBacc for all does not sit well with the importance of dealing with students as individual human beings.'

'Students are all individuals with no two students having the exact same skill set, and the curriculum should reflect this. In society we need people with a diverse skill set, surely therefore, our curriculum should guide them to a pathway best suited for their individual needs, leading to a country with experts in a range of fields.'

'I believe in the principle of getting the best for everyone but this must take into account the individual child. It is ironic that the government on one hand talks about individualism and personalisation yet they are trying to shape society through a de-personalised curriculum. In today's society this will simply not work and indeed is not beneficial.'

There was a strong sense that MFL would be particularly problematic for some students. Although EAL students can count a GCSE in their mother language in the EBacc measure, assuming their language will be represented in the GCSE lists, not all schools will be set up for this:

'How can a boy recently arrived in the country be expected to take French or German GCSE when he already speaks Lithuanian or Latvian and is learning English as a foreign language?'

'Our school historically made it a requirement for all pupils to take an MFL option at KS4 and we breathed a huge sigh of relief when it was removed from the compulsory GCSE option blocking system. Parents were delighted, pupils felt empowered, and staff relieved.'

Only 12% of respondents felt that the EBacc for all would benefit students. 80% felt there would be no benefit, with a further 8% unsure.

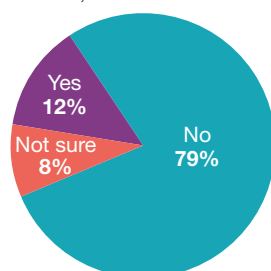


Fig 4. Do you believe that any of your students would benefit from a policy of EBacc for all?

Conversely, 94% of respondents felt that students would be disadvantaged by a compulsory EBacc curriculum, with a further 2% still unsure. The overwhelming view was that the EBacc requirement would benefit the more able but disadvantage the less able:

'Another example of how schools with above average intake will be able to take it in their stride and their students succeed even further, whereas schools with lower ability intakes in challenging circumstances will have another measure they will find hard to meet and therefore the EBacc for all will be another stick with which to beat us.'

'Appropriate for some but would make the less able switch off from secondary education – creating discipline problems that do not exist at present.'

'These changes are actually about introducing a greater divide and putting education further out of reach for many middle ability and less able children – regardless of their class!'

A retrograde step running counter to the professionalisation of teaching

It seemed that many respondents felt that, in shifting the focus from the needs of individual students, it is a policy that preferences centralised control over nuanced decision-making by professional educationalists.

'We should be able to choose a curriculum that best suits the students in our school.'

'School leaders are best placed to decide on the most appropriate, personalised pathways for their students, looking at the context of their school. A one-size-fits-all approach to schools, and to the curriculum within schools, is inappropriate and unhelpful.'

'Please allow educationalists to decide what is best for our students: we are teachers because we care about our students and for no other statistical reason. We would never allow our students to follow an inappropriate curriculum.'

Staffing difficulties

Compounding these conceptual challenges and disagreements was a worry that there would be real, practical staffing difficulties in implementing the

policy. Eighty-three per cent of respondents said that their schools would have to change their staffing, with 45% anticipating significant changes required.

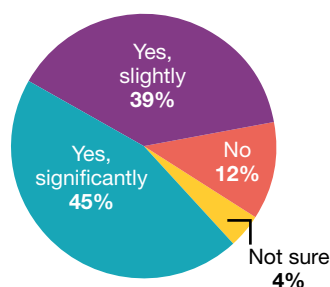


Fig 5. Would compulsory EBacc require to you to change the composition/skillset of your staff?

'This would be a disaster. Where will the teachers come from when training and recruitment are in such disarray?'

'It will further increase the shortage of teachers in some subject areas and will also dramatically impact upon budgets as a different staff body would be required.'

'With budget issues as well, how can schools afford the costs to make staff redundant in certain areas where they may have given 20+ years of great service to the students?'

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some respondents felt that the policy would be beneficial for some pupils, especially middle and high attainers who might not otherwise have picked academic subjects. People commented that this group could include a significant proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, and that this would help to raise their aspirations for FE and HE. There was also a feeling that a curriculum pathway that preferences traditional, academic subjects over others should be available to all.

However, there is an overwhelming feeling that the EBacc curriculum is not appropriate for all. Pupils with lower prior attainment, those newly arrived to the country, and some with poor literacy, were cited as being 'set up to fail' if forced to study a language and a humanity at GCSE. Many practitioners worried that this could distract students from the core curriculum of English, maths and science and limit the opportunity for these students to undertake rigorous vocational and technical courses. Many teachers suggested that vocational courses provide strong routes into further education, and that some pupils would be disadvantaged by forcing them down a purely academic route.

Furthermore, there was a feeling that, as offering the full EBacc would require other subjects to be cut from the KS4 options, students who had aptitude and interest in the arts and other creative subjects would miss out. Similarly, students for whom a predominantly STEM curriculum was appropriate would be equally disadvantaged (by the need to study for both a humanity and a language). The resulting changes to the subjects taught under a compulsory EBacc are a worry for many school leaders who already find recruitment of 'good' teachers, across the curriculum, a struggle.

Many respondents chose to comment on the discrepancy between the UK drive for digital and technical skills and this perceived return to a traditional, academic curriculum. School leaders are worried that the EBacc does not allow for sufficient personalisation in the curriculum, or value their professional judgement of what is best for their students. The overriding message in the responses is that while take-up of the EBacc should be available for all and encouraged for the most able learners, whatever their background, it is not appropriate for all, and will lead to an unhelpful and regressive narrowing of the curriculum.

The following recommendations are offered:

1. As many pupils as possible, on the basis of aptitude, interest, opportunity and ability, should be encouraged to study the EBacc subjects. But schools should be empowered to deploy their professional judgement in deciding the nature of their own curriculum requirements and pathways.
2. Schools should not be penalised for allowing pupils to follow curriculum pathways other than the EBacc. A school can be 'outstanding' without all pupils studying a particular selection of subjects.
3. Take up of the EBacc should be encouraged, but phased in over time, in order that schools can work towards a staff body that has the necessary skills and in order that schools have sufficient time to recruit suitable teachers.
4. In its efforts to drive the rigour agenda, the government needs also to communicate the value of vocational education, the arts and the technologies.
5. UTCs and studio schools merit particular consideration. The EBacc curriculum for all is at odds with their vision.

SSAT will be submitting a response to the government consultation on EBacc for all using the findings of this survey.



Careers provision: how to mend a fragmented system

*Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, Associate Fellow
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Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* divides the public purposes of education into two parts: that which can be acquired through daily experience ‘without any attention of government’ and that for which ‘some attention of government is necessary’ (Smith, 1937, p734).¹

This article considers the degree of attention needed by central and local government with local agencies to mend a fragmented careers support system for young people across England. It focuses on the UK productivity challenge to assist in making sense of the careers landscape, since jobs, skills and growth are inextricably linked to the well-being of individuals, communities and our economy. SSAT is exploring solutions that can bring about urgent improvements in careers provision for young people throughout England.

Meeting the UK productivity challenge

Education has a social and a moral purpose. What we learn in our early education contributes to how we conduct ourselves as adults. Schools, colleges and universities have an important role to play in helping their students learn more about roles and responsibilities, and how these relate to the world of work. Our economy has been growing since the start of 2013 and looks set to continue.

But the recession was deeper and longer than ever before, and for various reasons productivity was set back greatly and has yet to recover. Productivity is falling behind where it would have been if it had kept its pre-recession trend (CBI, 2015).² What has productivity got to do with careers provision? While

job creation trends are impressive, real wages fell in the recession and have declined and stagnated at least until the end of 2014, when we have seen some growth with inflation so low. The UK is ‘below western European average levels of temporary and involuntary part-time work’ (UKCES, 2015).³ Signals to young people (and parents) about the added value of learning and work are becoming more blurred.

For example, weighing up the cost benefits of higher education can be difficult for some young people even though ‘in difficult conditions graduates continue to experience better outcomes than non-graduates in both lifetime earnings and employability (UUK, 2014).⁴ Many young people have concerns about the added-value returns for their investments in learning and work, job quality, zero hour contracts and future salaries.

With 1 in 5 vacancies in the UK difficult to fill because of a lack of the right skills in the labour market, the importance of developing the skilled and experienced workforce of tomorrow cannot be overstated. In current (and future) labour markets individuals will continue to experience new patterns of work, with changing expectations affecting the way we do things and how we behave. This has enormous implications for schools and colleges and their curriculum design and delivery in helping students to look ahead and prepare themselves for a very different world.

How do you solve the problem of mending a fragmented careers system?

Before considering how to mend a fragmented careers system, is it right to assume the current system is not working properly? The evidence is compelling: over the last two years a plethora of published reports from



employer, education, trade union and careers sector bodies (as well as the Education Select Committee findings⁵ and the National Careers Council's heat map of careers provision across England and two reports commissioned by Government⁶) reaffirm the urgent need for improved careers provision for young people across England.

There are growing concerns about young people's lack of awareness in making good connections between their educational experiences and the realities of labour markets. Many young people remain caught in a catch-22 situation, finding it 'difficult to get work without experience and difficult to obtain experience without work' (UKCES, 2015).⁷ A comparison of the career aspirations of 11,000 teenagers, against the projected distribution of the 13.5 million new and replacement jobs predicted to emerge in our economy over the next decade, has shown the two have nothing in common (Mann et al., 2013).⁸ In some geographical areas, for example London, the proportion of young people in apprenticeships and jobs with training stands at half the England average in 2014 and has fallen over the last 12 months (IoE, 2014).⁹ Across England, the latest figures show 178,100 16 to 18-year-olds failed to complete post-16 qualifications they started in 2012/13, and are at risk of becoming not in employment, education or training (NEET).¹⁰

Analysis for the Local Government Association by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion indicates the cost to the public purse of this wasted education and skills provision is £814 million – 12% of all government spending on post-16 education and skills (op. cit.). The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (December 2014) has raised concerns that 100,000 plus young people (aged 16-18) are off the radar... too many young people simply disappear from all relevant public systems.¹¹ The Fabian Society (December 2014) puts the estimate higher: 'We have lost track of over 150,000 young people nationally, including over 50,000 NEETs.'¹² This is a serious problem as research shows unemployment in youth can scar prospects throughout working life, not just at the time.

Young men are a third less likely than young girls to apply to higher education, and the relationship between participation in higher education and disadvantage is such that the more disadvantaged young men are, the less likely they are to apply to higher education (UCU, 2014).¹³ Variations in gender balance in different subjects also persist (HoL, 2015).¹⁴ Overall, there is universal agreement that a culture change in careers provision is necessary, but the actual mechanisms for achieving this have become less clear.



Making sense of the current careers landscape in England

In 2011, significant changes to the delivery of careers support for young people were ushered in. The introduction of the Education Act (2011)¹⁵, followed by a dismantling of the Connexions service in England (2012)¹⁶, and local authorities no longer having responsibility for providing a universal careers guidance offer (but they retain responsibility for providing targeted support for vulnerable young people) have led to a new era in England's careers landscape.

Over a three-year period, the process to rebuild and re-engineer careers provision for young people has been slow, with false starts and a recent 'new dawn'. Developments include:

Firstly, an all-age National Careers Service, launched in April 2012¹⁷, became a predominantly adult careers service, with online rather than face-to-face (unless in exceptional circumstances) careers support aimed at young people. This self-help and brief-assisted service became the new careers offer for young people and schools. Since April 2012, the overall budget provided by government departments has remained broadly static (circa £106m).

Secondly, in September 2012, schools – after four decades of having available a publicly-funded service – were given a statutory duty to secure access for their pupils to 'independent and impartial careers guidance', with no dedicated government funding to commission such services. Despite this, some schools have risen to this challenge, putting in place careers, enterprise and employability support for their students, while others continue to struggle to achieve this. Ofsted, in its sample survey, found that only a fifth of the 60 schools it surveyed were giving the right careers information to pupils (Ofsted, 2013).¹⁸

Thirdly, a neo-liberal approach to careers provision was adopted, whereby government stimulated the market in careers providers resulting in a crowded, confused and complex landscape, with a multiplicity of disjointed careers provision. There is an assumption from government that market-based goods and services ensure greater responsiveness to consumer choice and offer better and/or more innovative services for lower prices. However, very little research has been conducted into the effects of market principles applied in career provision (Meijers, 2001)¹⁹ and the cost benefits to governments and individuals (ELGPN, 2012).²⁰

Fourthly, the Chancellor's Autumn Statement announcement (October, 2014) was well received; a £20m investment for careers advice and support for young people (para. 2.227).²¹

Fifthly, in early December 2014, the secretary of state for education announced plans for a new independent careers and enterprise company in England.²² This moved beyond recommendations proposed by the National Careers Council's report to government (2014). The company will 'ensure employers are supporting young people with decision-making and career development at every stage of school life'.²³

The new careers and enterprise company's work will be aimed at schools, to transform the provision of careers education and advice for young people and inspire them about the opportunities offered by the world of work. This will focus on young people aged 12 to 18 and will 'help to broker relationships between employers on one hand and schools and colleges on the other' (Department for Education, op. cit.). The new company will be employer-led and independent of government, with governance and advisory board arrangements established in March 2015.²⁴ The National Careers Service will form part of the advisory arrangements and will have a formal 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the new company (it currently has a 5% allocated budget from the Skills Funding Agency for 'brokerage services' to schools and colleges). The extent to which employers within the new careers and enterprise company may lead the way in setting out new careers policies and practices has yet to be determined.

A recent report by Warwick University IER, on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS), sets out findings from a study focused on understanding the link between employers, schools and the National Careers Service (BIS, 2014).²⁵ While many employers are doing great work with schools, colleges and universities need to step up and offer young people more work experiences and opportunities. This is a major challenge given findings from a survey of just over 300 employers which highlights over 50% did not engage, and had no plans to engage in working links with schools because they saw no real benefits to their business and there are too many restrictions to navigate (BIS op. cit.). This may also help explain the Government and Skills Funding Agency's focus on the need to strengthen 'brokerage arrangements' between schools and employers.

Establishing a new company takes time and could potentially be a complicated process. There will be a need to establish clear protocols, mechanisms for agreeing the balance of investment funding for careers and enterprise activities, and a transparent process of distribution.

In a very crowded landscape the new company must be clear on the actual problem it is trying to solve. This may be to:

- » set up brokerage arrangements between schools and employers (something the National Careers Service has in its delivery remit from 1 October 2014 onwards with small-scale funding; Business in the Community (BiTC) also has a remit in this regard)
- » target 'cold spots' where careers provision is weak, working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other local agencies
- » quality assure and invest in scalable and sustainable careers and enterprise initiatives that help build capacity in schools and colleges
- » strengthen working links with the careers profession
- » evaluate careers and enterprise policies that have been proven to work well and disseminate good and interesting practices.

The extent to which Lord Young's enterprise agenda²⁶ becomes the dominant theme is something to be reconciled. Concrete agreements will need to be reached and improved careers information, advice and guidance for students needs to be achieved. This is truly a new era for careers work in England and this 'experiment' needs to work. Given these key components are in place (alongside other related developments such as the DWP Youth Guarantee)²⁷ it seems timely to take stock and situate not just problems and challenges but also to identify solutions that will improve the careers offer to young people.

We should ask ourselves whether or not the attention given by government to date is sufficient to mend a fragmented system (are we pointing in the right direction)? Should cities simply get on with it and create/shape their own careers offer for young people? This is the current direction of travel in London.

Alternatively, should more schools cluster with a local college to find their own ways of maximising their limited and shared careers resources? Some evidence is emerging that LEPs and City Deals are starting to step up to find their own local solutions.



To what extent can a largely unregulated careers provider market in England deliver in the public interest? Lessons from the Netherlands, who have adopted a similar approach, show marketisation of career guidance leads to an impoverished supply of services, both in the quantitative as well as in the qualitative sense (Hughes & Meijers, 2014).²⁸ This can also reduce innovation and significantly narrow the 'careers offer' to young people.

How do you catch this 'careers cloud' and pin it down?

Who you know and where you live have a big impact on the opportunities available to young people. It is time to do something more for all young people, parents and teachers. Our education landscape requires young people to make early subject choice decisions (some from 13 years old upwards) and the raising of the participation age from 16 to 18 years old by 2015 signals further challenges for this current generation of school pupils, parents and teachers. A fragmented and incoherent national system will only lead to more individuals 'falling between the cracks', not knowing where best to go for careers support within and beyond their formal schooling.

Careers provision is a public as well as a private good. It is time to 'pin this cloud down' into a coherent 'careers offer' for all young people. If we want to keep more young people switched on to learning; encourage them not to close down opportunities too early; broaden horizons and challenge inaccurate assumptions; and create relevant experiences and exposure to the world of work, including techniques for career adaptability and resilience, then more needs to be done. The historical evolution of a careers service and profession constantly uprooted by successive governments now requires a more stabilised education and careers system. Finding a way to reduce fractures rather than create new ones is paramount.



A young boy in a school uniform is the central focus, looking off-camera with a thoughtful expression. Behind him, other students are blurred, and a pink bulletin board with various papers is visible in the background.

Reflecting on the journey so far, there are at least six ways to catch this ‘careers cloud’ that has floated, hovered and fragmented in recent years.

1. Take steps to ensure the £20m allocated by government to the new independent careers and enterprise company reaches into schools, colleges and the National Careers Service to support capacity building in leadership and delivery teams.
2. Ensure ‘independent’ and ‘impartial’ careers guidance is available for all students by providing schools and colleges with free and/or subsidised access to independent and impartial qualified careers development professionals, i.e. career coaches, advisers, mentors.
3. Streamline the plethora of careers products and services that have flooded the schools system and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms to reduce both wasted time and money on underdeveloped systems.
4. Recognise young people will experience different careers support at different stages with different levels of intensity. In this regard, support the development of a local ‘careers offer for young people’ but situate and communicate this within a coherent national framework for young people, parents and teachers.
5. Embed labour market intelligence and information more fully in schools and colleges using reliable open source data such as ‘LMI for All’ and support the development of apps for pedagogical purposes within and outside the classroom.
6. Agree a series of controlled trials, working with national and local providers, to support young people’s learning and work destinations, including evidence of the impact and added-value of local careers provision.

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Becoming a character education-led school

Andrew Wood, Head of Science, Steyning Grammar School

Steyning Grammar School in West Sussex is working hard to develop an ethos of character education being at the core of what we do. Here are the reasons why, what we are already doing, and what we intend to do in the future.

What is character education?

Character education is an umbrella term meaning the teaching of children to develop various positive character virtues such as grit, self-control or social intelligence. We are basing our work on the work of Professor Martin Seligman who has identified 24 character virtues which can lead to a sense of well-being. Well-being contains five elements often referred to as PERMA, an acronym standing for positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement.

These character attributes are grouped as follows:

1. Wisdom and knowledge: creativity, curiosity, love of learning, perspective, judgement.

2. Courage: bravery, grit (persistence and resilience), integrity, zest (energy and enthusiasm).
3. Humanity: love, kindness, social intelligence.
4. Justice: fairness, leadership, teamwork
5. Temperance: forgiveness, modesty, discretion, self-control.
6. Transcendence: appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope (optimism), humour, spirituality.

At Steyning Grammar School our character education aims to develop these character strengths. We have encouraged teachers involved in our character education programme to consider their own character development by measuring these attributes using the 'Values in Action' online test. See www.viacharacter.org.

Why character education?

More education-specific work on character education has been done by Professor Angela Duckworth and Dave Levin (one of the co-founders of the KIPP schools in the USA).

In the KIPP schools, Levin had succeeded in raising the grades of difficult students through employing and training better teachers, combined with setting high standards. However, he was finding that the greater numbers of students the schools were sending on to college were not achieving as well as their academic background may suggest. To improve the students' ongoing outcomes Levin realised he was going to have to put character growth at the heart of what his schools did. He did this through teacher training, changing expectations, and making the feedback that students and parents received more character-based. The programme has been enormously successful and KIPP students now have much better outcomes in their post-school lives.

At Steyning, many teachers felt that students were not always being the best they could be and that often we 'spoon fed' students making them over reliant on us. Teachers listed the reasons for underachievement as students not caring about their learning, and being lazy or complacent. Many also displayed a fixed rather than a growth mindset.

We felt that these problems had to be tackled with a constructive framework where students were aware of their strengths and weaknesses, could utilise their strengths, and work to address their weaknesses.

What we have done so far – the evidence

We wanted to confirm that there were trends between student character attributes and corresponding achievement in our school. We therefore adapted work by Character Lab (<https://characterlab.org/>) to make questionnaires that students fill out to self-assess their character attributes. These surveys concentrate on the attributes which have the strongest correlations with achievement, these are: grit, optimism, self-control with school work, interpersonal self-control, gratitude, social intelligence, curiosity and zest.

We cross-referenced results against student achievement in the examined year groups and found strong positive correlations with some of the character attributes. For example, the graph

below shows the correlations between scores on student character assessments and point scores in AS exams.

We found strong correlations between the 'achievement' characteristics of grit, optimism and self-control in school work with exam results. We have also found the 'healthy mind' characteristics of curiosity and zest to have a moderate correlation. Although the 'social' characteristics of interpersonal self-control, social intelligence and gratitude did not strongly correlate in the general student population, the students that make the lowest levels of progress measure significantly lower in these areas than the norm.

What we have done so far – impacting character development

We were convinced that character education had the potential to significantly impact the results of students as well as improve their ongoing life outcomes. Therefore, we set about designing some pilot structures in the school to see if we could improve student development in these areas.

The data we had on the students and their character attributes was used to produce a 'Character Growth Card'. This compared the students' scores in each of the characteristics with the overall school average and produced a simple report which was issued to students. On the reverse side advice was given on how to improve the weakest of each student's character attributes.

Steyning Grammar School Character Growth Card

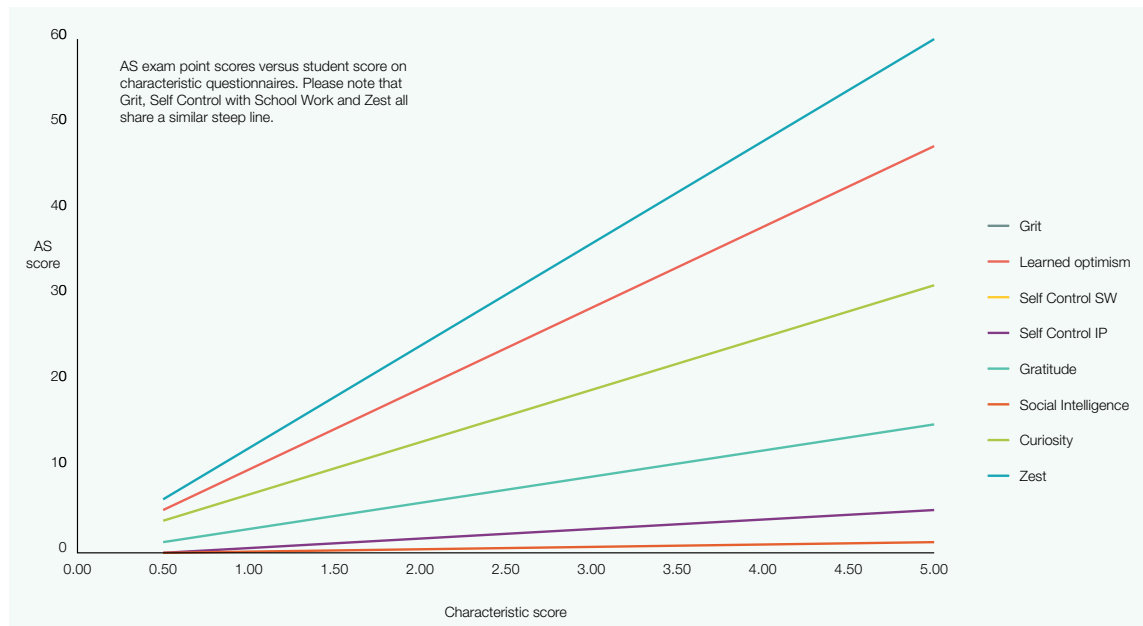
Name: A student
LM group: 8TG Date: 10th Nov 2014

The table below shows a summary of your 'learning characteristics' survey.

If the number in the +/- column is positive it means you have rated yourself to be good at this
If you thought you were really good at it then you will see 'Really Good at this'
If you thought you really struggled with something you will see 'Work to Improve this'

Characteristic	+/- Yrs	Comment
Grit Staying committed to goals and finishing what you begin even if along the way you experience some failures	-0.3	
Optimism Believing that effort will improve your future and knowing that when things go bad you can use the experience to improve next time	1.3	Really good at this
Self Control (School Work) Being organised with your work, paying attention and following instructions without getting distracted	-1.9	Work to improve this
Self Control (Interpersonal) Remaining calm when challenged and respecting other peoples points of view	0.4	
Gratitude Recognising and showing your appreciation for what other people do for you	0.9	Really good at this
Social Intelligence Caring about other peoples feelings, finding solutions to conflicts and adapting to different social situations	-0.4	
Curiosity Eagerness to explore new ideas and ask questions when you are learning. Taking an active interest in your learning	-0.1	
Zest Showing enthusiasm for activities and always actively participating in them. Enjoying new things	-0.5	

The idea of this was to stimulate a meaningful conversation between the student ➡



Characteristic	Associated behaviours
Learned optimism	Believes effort will improve their future
	Displays evidence of sustained independent practice in their learning
	Uses strategies given in feedback to improve subsequent work
	Craves further feedback

and their tutor or mentor which would allow them to go away with practical targets they could use to try and improve.

We backed this up with training for the teachers who were involved in this pilot study. Teachers received training on what the characteristics were and the student behaviours associated with them. An example of characteristic-associated behaviours is shown above.

In addition, training covered how teachers can display and foster a growth mindset with regard to character growth, and how they can make difficult conversations

positive for the student. Teachers have been optimistic about the Character Growth Cards, frequently commenting that they 'sum up' the student and that they are a useful tool to open meaningful dialogue that leads to improvement.

A further pilot was based on adapting project-based learning lessons in KS3. One class in each year was taken away from their normal projects and instead did learning associated with learned optimism and grit. At the end of this academic year we will be re-measuring the characteristics of the students involved to see if

they have made progress above the year group average. Already, qualitative evidence on this project has been very positive with lots of encouraging comments from parents and students about the value of the new courses.

What we intend to do in the future

For character education to have a significant impact on students it needs to be fully embedded into the ethos of the school. To this end, we have seconded a member of staff to the leadership team to champion character education and consider how we might develop in the next two years.

Ideas that are likely to happen in the near future are:

- » the modification of 'project-based learning' to 'character-based learning' with more courses similar to the pilot described above
- » the changing of our reporting system to be character based and address the 'life without levels' agenda
- » further training of teachers and work with parents so they understand the school's character growth agenda.

It is early days in our development and we are coming to the realisation that students will need the message to come from every aspect of school life if we are to have a positive impact on student character. We are committed to character education being at the centre of our school's development and need to consider how all our school systems could be developed with this in mind. The change is going to take a long time but we are absolutely convinced of the benefits for our students.





A cluster-based organisational structure of governance at the Harris Federation

DfE case study

As the number and variety of multi-academy trusts grows, and as the number of free schools and university technical colleges is scheduled to significantly increase, we revisit a DfE case study considering the approach to governance at the Harris Federation. The case study shows a large multi-academy trust (MAT) with a cluster-based organisational structure in which the central board set the overall direction for the trust, and local governing bodies are responsible for the day-to-day governance of schools.

BACKGROUND

The Harris Federation was founded by Lord Harris of Peckham when, in 2003, Lord Harris approached Sir Dan Moynihan, an outstanding headteacher, to lead the city technology college in Crystal Palace. Sir Dan quickly transformed the school, receiving an 'outstanding' rating in 2004. Due to this success and the desire to improve the educational standards for more students, the Harris Federation took on two more failing schools in the area and turned them into academies. After establishing a MAT structure in 2006, the Trust now governs 35 schools in close geographical proximity across London comprising primaries, secondaries, a sixth form college and a pupil referral unit.

After growing to five schools, it became apparent that Sir Dan could no longer be the full-time head of just one school and he was made the permanent chief executive of the Harris Federation.

Harris' vision is to achieve the best possible outcomes for students within their schools and they do this through a tight geographical model.

STRUCTURE

Initially (during 2004/5), each academy existed as a part of its own trust with an overseeing central board and members. However, in 2006 Harris moved to a MAT structure and has grown steadily since. They introduced two subcommittees from the main board; finance and general purposes, and audit as well as giving local governing bodies (LGBs) the power to run clusters of schools.

Harris ensures schools are a maximum of 90 minutes away from each other so that they can maintain a strong local focus, easier communication and share best practice. This also enables a number of the LGBs to oversee two schools with the ability to grow. This is decided on a case-by-case basis. Sir Dan notes that 'when Harris takes on a new school, previously in difficulty, we can absorb them into an existing and successful cluster and extend the local board's responsibilities, rather than finding a completely new board of governors.' This ensures continuity and consistency in the quality of governance.

BOARD MEMBERS

'Just as headteachers are held to account, we hold governors accountable for their performance and contributions in board meetings.'

*Sir Dan Moynihan,
CEO The Harris Federation* ►►



In addition to four members, Harris has 19 trustees (one of whom is also a member). Most are either retired or current businesspeople with significant business experience, which enables them to provide advice on technical matters from legal contracts to accounting and HR.

Harris operates with a strong central board that focuses on the federation as a whole. Small and effective LGBs govern clusters of schools and use their local knowledge to hold their schools to account, raise standards, and achieve excellence.

Harris has found that if LGBs have too heavy a focus on representation rather than on expertise and effectiveness, it can render them less effective. LGBs tend to have 12 to 14 members. This includes two elected parents and a staff member. All other governors are sponsor-appointed governors.

Sir Dan notes that 'Harris seeks individuals who are willing to be a "critical friend"', and that the majority of governors are business professionals familiar with questioning and challenging as part of their daily lives. This ensures that governors are providing a useful set of skills as well as providing the correct level of support for their academies.

Harris regularly recruits through a governance one-stop-shop (SGOSS) which they have found to be an effective way to recruit professionals with the necessary business acumen (e.g. lawyers). SGOSS is a governor recruitment charity providing a service

whereby governing bodies recruit highly skilled new governors, particularly from the world of work. This service is available, free of charge, to all types of school, including academies.

All local governors are interviewed by the CEO. The most talented often assume the role of chair and may be selected to sit on the central board. The central board also monitors LGB meetings to ensure all governors are attending regularly and contributing effectively. Board members that do not attend regularly or contribute in meetings are replaced.

Harris runs regular governor training sessions with courses once a month on topics ranging from data interpretation to safeguarding. Principals are actively trained on how to manage and work with LGBs ensuring that governors are presented with timely, useful and manageable information.

SCHEMES OF DELEGATION AND REPORTING

Central board

The central board meet termly and are charged with setting the Trust's vision and policies, maintaining strategic oversight and ensuring that the LGBs perform to the highest standard. They receive recommendations on key issues from the finance and general purposes subcommittees to ensure that Harris as a whole is operating in compliance with regulation. Following recommendations from LGBs and two subcommittees, the central board are also charged with approving budgets for each local board.



LGBs

LGBs also meet termly and will each report their schools' data to the central subcommittees. They are responsible for the implementation of the central board's policies and priorities (which are set collectively by chairmen of governors), and are expected to question, challenge, support and hold academy leadership to account. The LGBs are responsible for ensuring that the academies within their cluster are meeting attainment expectations and raising standards. In addition, they hire the schools' staff but are only responsible for recommending (rather than approving) the budget; this is set by the central board. In practice no budget to date has been altered. The responsibilities delegated to LGBs are the same throughout the chain.

As many of the chairs of the LGBs also sit on the central board, there remains a strong focus on the schools and the quality of education children are receiving. Governors are held to account and are expected to contribute as part of their role as a 'critical friend'. The strong connection between the LGBs and the central board means that all aspects of governance are constantly scrutinised.

LGBs should provide highly effective challenge and support to academies. Their model is to operate with a relatively small governing body with as few subcommittees as possible.

Subcommittees

The subcommittees will meet a short time before the

central board, who also meet termly, to amalgamate and prepare papers. They are responsible for making technical recommendations to the central board on key issues. This ensures that the central board can receive accurate, school-specific data while still maintaining a strategic overview of the federation.

Reviews

The success of the federation, including assessing the effectiveness of their governance structure, is measured on the outcomes for children and Harris conducts regular reviews of governance to quickly highlight any issues with current arrangements.

Key learning points:

- Governors should be equipped with the necessary skills to be effective either through training provided or career background
- Governors should be held to account in a MAT system in the same way that schools are, and should be changed if they are not willing to contribute
- Have tight systems and controls for managing your finances.



Wind of change: reflecting on Vision 2040

*Stephen Tierney, Executive Headteacher,
The Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust,
and Chair, Vision 2040 Group*

‘Wind of change’ is an evocative phrase which may conjure up in your mind anything from a gentle soothing breeze to a powerful destructive hurricane.

‘The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not...’. From Harold Macmillan’s famous *Wind of Change* speech in early 1960, stating the British government’s intention to grant independence to former British colonies, to the Scorpions’ *Wind of Change* song produced thirty years later in 1990, celebrating glasnost and the fall of communist governments across Eastern Europe, change has been messy, often unpredictable and at times sadly violent.

Fast forward another thirty years and, in our Vision 2040 Redesigning Schooling pamphlet we are predicting a similarly seismic event for education in 2020, with the establishment of a Royal Commission for Education following years of excessive, poorly thought through, and badly implemented educational change.

The Vision 2040 concept was conceived by Sue Williamson,

and brought into being through the tireless work of the group’s first chair Tom Sherrington. Since then a committed team of people, running this work alongside their day jobs, sought to propose an education system beyond the topsy-turvy five-year political cycle. Thanks to Kev, Michael, Annie, Sapuran, Rachel, Nigel, Alex and Rosanna for all their hard work. Vision 2040 was born.

April 2015 saw the launch of the Vision 2040 pamphlet, which seeks to describe what might be, over the next 25 years, from the perspective of a newly qualified teacher joining the profession this September. We cannot pretend that we have any special or privileged insight into the future. What might be and what will be are two different things. The Vision 2040 Group has attempted to produce a meta-narrative describing significant change to: professionalism & professional cultures; learning (pedagogy, curriculum and assessment) and governance (structures and systems) over the coming decades.

Setting the scene

The coming Parliament is going to be a difficult one for education. The impact of austerity will reach

schools’ budgets, with leaders and governors already concerned about where 10% cuts can be made. The Global Education Reform Movement (GERM), with its competition between schools, standardised tests, narrow curriculum priorities, pernicious accountability and business capital model, will continue to drive many more teachers out of the profession.

The much less drastic, slowly evolving, pincer-like demographic changes will have a significant impact by 2020. The baby boom generation of the 1960s will retire and the increased numbers of children in primary schools will increase further, and feed through to secondary schools. Teacher recruitment targets have been missed for a number of years. Approximately a fifth of people who train as teachers don’t enter the profession at the end of training, and too many leave before having any real impact. At a time when we arguably need more teachers, we will in fact have fewer. The Decade of Deregulation (2010-2020) comes to an end. We’ve deliberately painted a pessimistic scene to trumpet the arrival of the Royal Commission for Education in 2020. It will fan the winds of change.

Family matters, family matters

We need to organise our way out of the current structural chaos. Let's keep it simple. Local families or clusters of schools which work together, to advantage all the children they are responsible for, reaching out to their shared families, with a flexible governance structure determined at a local level. The same 'freedoms' shared by all.

'The Royal Commission determined that there would be one standard governance model for all, based on a small number of schools (no number was ever given, but the most common groupings had 7-12 schools) working in deep partnership. The schools were always geographically close to each other and as a family of schools could always identify who 'our children' were. The freedoms available to some schools in the previous decade had been revisited and a common core of freedoms was agreed to benefit all schools.'

These families will be the deep partnerships from which extended relationships will form to add value to their work. Possibly the most radical suggestion is the formation of an extended Royal College of Teaching with regional establishments, home to HMI teams, as a means of wisdom building and wisdom sharing.

None of the above

The current different and disparate routes into teaching have various strengths and weaknesses but if asked, I would vote for 'none of the above'. It's time for a radical rethink. The proposal for one high-quality extended

route into teaching will not be welcomed by all. Many powerful organisations have vested interests in protecting the status quo. However, a Masters level qualification which covers subject content, pedagogy and managing classroom behaviour will serve future teachers well.

'The system of teacher training quickly began to cohere and the prestige of the profession was transformed with a speed that I hardly anticipated. The early years of the teacher's curriculum was focused on subject expertise and pedagogy, leading to a Masters qualification. I missed out on this but instead embarked on one of the second Masters available to teachers, after five years in the profession, which focused on becoming a researcher in the classroom. Teaching went from being a no Masters to a two Masters profession overnight.'

The professional development of teachers moves to a whole new level. Understanding and engagement in research is endemic within and across the profession. We seek what works, not silver bullets.

Increasing agency

Our story contrasts the national curriculum changes which have been imposed on children and schools over the past 25 years – our storyteller was in nursery when the first national curriculum was imposed in 1988 – with a very different model, started in 2025.

The story is one of schools and teachers engaged in and leading large elements of educational change, particularly those aspects of which they have

greatest knowledge: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment define our professionalism.

From closing the gap to don't allow the gap to appear

Closing the gap is a good thing but not allowing the gap to appear is a better thing. Our Royal Commission for Education sets in place 'core values for the education system of equity, quality and agency' with 'a wide set of metrics covering the three strands of educational outcomes, personal outcomes and social outcomes for children' to evaluate the effectiveness of schools.

The pamphlet envisions a system, with high equity at its core, leading to a rethinking of what it means to require learning support and an extensive school-based set of professionals uniting education, health and social services.

As the story moves from the Decade of Deregulation to the Decade of Reconstruction (2020-2030) and through to System Maturity (2030-2040) the system's core values become shared and lived out:

'Equity, quality and agency are interdependent, mutually supportive values which produced a positive spiral of improvement. They form the key values on which our education system has been built and they permeate the life of our schools. These values guided our direction of travel towards 2040. They are the touchstones of policymaking at a system and school level.'

This article is based on a blog post at leadinglearner.me.

A vision for education – beyond five-year policy cycles can be downloaded for free from ssatuk.co.uk.



Insights from the Educational Outcomes Celebration and Networking evenings

*Caroline Barlow, Head of Innovation &
Alex Galvin, Head of Curriculum, SSAT*

In May, SSAT held six regional events all over the country and met over 300 of our members. Certificates were presented to schools that had achieved an Educational Outcomes Award, and together we explored current issues and priorities around curriculum.

We asked a series of questions to help shape these discussions, which proved to be a valuable opportunity for attendees to benchmark their experiences and share effective ideas.

From these conversations, we have collated schools' 'top concerns' and some sample strategies from the list of those shared. This article is abridged from the full write-up, available to members at www.sssatuk.co.uk/theexchange.

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT KS4

Key questions we asked:

1. What changes have been made to options structures to accommodate Progress 8/ Attainment 8/EBacc? Are there any groups of students that consequently have a different offer than they might have done previously?
2. Are you 'offering' EBacc to all pupils; do they have a choice?
3. Has the balance of academic/vocational offer changed? What changes have you made to ensure qualifications 'count' or has your offer remained unchanged?
4. What changes have been made to your curriculum model in the light of changes to

specs: Fat Maths; greater focus on SPAG? What's gone in order to make room?

5. How far have budget constraints influenced your decision-making around curriculum?
6. What is the impact on your SEND students likely to be in the light of greater rigour and more challenge? What strategies have you found effective so far?
7. What impact have these changes had on your staffing model? What impact are you experiencing in recruitment?

You told us you are most concerned about:

- » how curriculum is being narrowed by Progress 8 and budgetary restraints
- » how policy changes will affect different groups of students
- » how to balance performance measures with managing the needs of students
- » recruitment and increasing pressures on current staff
- » funding is a major concern.

Sample strategies

Curriculum structure

Some schools were exploring or had already got versions of a three-year KS4.

- » Option phase 1 in year 8 to choose six options. Option phase 2 in year 9 reduces these six to four. Languages compulsory for all until the end of year 9.
- » Early entry technology in year 10. Early entry for some subjects in year 9 and 10 to enable extra time for other subjects.

- » five-year programme approach to GCSE, no changes to KS3 but extra maths and English in years 9-11.

Additional support and intervention

- » Keep up not catch up! For example, an hour a week called 'managing learning' allows for cycles of the core subjects; others start phonics, numeracy and offer extra literacy in year 7, taking students out of MFL.

Keeping breadth in the curriculum

- » Examples included two hours of enrichment/creative activities in the curriculum (cooking, languages, first aid); carousels of a creative curriculum to create breadth.

Supporting achievement in core subjects

- » Additional maths and English time was being found by reducing the number of options and time spent on art, DT and ICT.
- » Some schools were increasing or overstaffing in English, maths and science, going as far as reducing breaks to enable more staff contact time and create more short lessons for English and maths.

Progress 8/Attainment 8

- » The use of 4 Matrix or other models for Progress 8/Attainment 8 modelling is informing target setting and tracking.

Recruitment and staff well-being

- » You believed in developing staff in-school. This could mean using very good teachers across the curriculum, not just their subject. Schools felt strongly about the power of making staff feel supported: Friday breakfasts; fewer briefings; getting behaviour right so staff can enjoy the job; healthcare plans...

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT KS3

Key questions we asked:

1. What links do you have with KS2; have you changed how you work on curriculum continuity, data transfer and transition in the light of curriculum reform?
2. What changes have been made to the delivery and SoW at KS3 to reflect what pupils have learned in the new KS2 and to prepare for KS4/5 knowledge skills and understanding?



3. Levels or no levels?
4. Have you adjusted the time given to maths and English at KS3? How, and at what cost?
5. To what extent has the delivery of SPAG been developed at KS3 to prepare for KS4/5? Has it been in all subjects?
6. Have you considered end-of-year exams and memory retention skills development for KS3 as part of the preparation for KS4/5? How?

You told us you are most concerned about:

- » assessment and life beyond levels
- » preparation for new GCSEs
- » transition
- » literacy development
- » increased emphasis on maths and English
- » the KS3 curriculum.

Sample strategies

Assessment without levels

- » There were examples of primary and secondary working together to devise a scale. There were also examples of collaborative approaches to developing a new KS3 assessment model; certainly many had adopted an assessment working party to ensure cross-curricular involvement.





Developing literacy skills

- » There was a clear understanding about the increased emphasis on SPAG. Many evidenced more time for literacy in form time. A number of schools spoke of separately marking and recording a SPAG mark on all internal assessments, spelling games and activities. This was often evidenced in work scrutiny and book samples.

Developing wider skills

- » Some viewed year 7 as prime for a focus on skills and attitudes for learning. Others had taken a step further and were starting thinking skills formally (OCR years 8-9). There were interesting views around overtly teaching memory skills; some viewed this as essential whereas others valued thinking skills above memory skills, arguing that if we teach for understanding, the retention follows.

Increased emphasis on English and maths

- » A large number of schools had increased time at KS3 for English and maths. Some started GCSE in Y9. Most felt they needed to support KS3 to help prepare the skills required further on due to increased content experienced at KS2 and expected at KS4. Some had introduced STEM as a way to increase time and provide relevance. However many also said adjustments in KS3 maths and English was at the cost of shrinkage in other areas, including MFL and the creative arts.

Preparation for tougher, linear exams

- » Some had increased the exam experience, including more mocks in KS4 and also more exams in KS3 at end of year (e.g. from end-of-year exams for Y7 to formal exams three times a year to prepare for KS4 in core subjects, moving to once a year in foundation). Others

changed the academic calendar for all students to include more regular and formal testing. The practical logistics of this were clearly questions to resolve.

KS2 TO 3 TRANSITION

It is clear is that there is increasing collaboration between primary and secondary, and soft federations are being created to formalise partnerships where chains and trusts do not exist. Shared moderation between KS2 and KS3 was evident and clearly helped to ensure consistency in different levels and systems. An example of a pupil passport included best pieces of work levelled for each subject.

What you told us about the wider curriculum

We asked key questions:

1. What does character mean at your school?
2. How can it be 'taught' or planned for? Can/should these aspects be assessed?
3. What issues are you experiencing around well-being and mental health? How do you manage/mitigate these?
4. What do you celebrate and reward? How?
5. To what extent do you map/plan for every student's 'cultural entitlement'?
6. What do 'British values' look like in your school? SMSC?
7. How important is student leadership? For how many, in what contexts?
8. How are your students prepared for employability and the world beyond school? To what extent are wider stakeholders partners in the process?
9. What provision do you have in place for CEIAG?

You told us you were most concerned about:

- » The mental well-being of your students (parents/ staff).
- » Exam pressure is a key factor with many schools expressing concern for the mental health of students who will sit exams every year in all subjects. Some felt this especially for girls.
- » Safeguarding an increasingly complex area.
- » Re-sits in year 7 - not a good idea.
- » You are not convinced a focus on British values is helpful.
- » It isn't clear how provision for student well-being or British values will be judged.
- » You believe that it is vital to look at the entirety of your students' experiences and that student leadership is key.
- » It is difficult to keep up to date on careers guidance.
- » In parental perceptions of 'good careers', cultural issues are sometimes a barrier.

Sample strategies

Students' personal development

- » Duke of Edinburgh, ASDAN and outward bound experiences are designed to build emotional resilience. Humanutopia do workshops on self-esteem, developing a programme including resilience. Many felt it is important to provide opportunities that are not the 'norm'.

Supporting vulnerable students (and parents)

- » To support mental health, schools are pooling resources with other schools. Citizenship programmes are signposting the way; there is use of non-teaching support staff, outside agencies, PSHE, growth mindset, and strong mentoring. To support well-being, schools are bringing in direct services through CAMHS, in-school counselling, outside experts, local charities, recruiting their own counsellors, and using the HeadStart Project.

Supporting the engagement of all students

- » Use pupil premium funding to ensure that, by a certain age, certain experiences have been had by all students (e.g. a residential, or foreign trip). Overtly track student attendance at assemblies and trips. Establish a clear cultural entitlement.

Approaches to Information, advice and guidance

- » A careers development plan to bring careers awareness lower down the school. Develop

a sixth form team to have expert knowledge and share with KS3 and 4. Employ support staff three days a week for careers, advice and guidance. Make links to universities and organise work experience; offer employability BTEC with local employer (does not count in performance tables).

SMSC and PSHE

- » Have named people in each department responsible for developing subject responses to SMSC. Map your ethos across the curriculum; have explicit attributes overtly developed throughout themes. Many felt that teachers do this automatically but not in an obvious or planned way. Others were delivering through collapsed days. However some schools are cutting PSHE because of curriculum pressures and instead delivering in tutor time, etc. The view was expressed: is it really right to have 'resilience' lessons?

Developing student leadership

- » Leadership development provided from year 7; all sixth formers having a leadership role; mini leadership teams in KS3 and KS4, mini student SLG, behaviour panels, student councils; students as learning/subject ambassadors, sports leaders, observers, interpreters, mentors, peer tutors, tutor group reps, tour guides, interviewers; student-led extra-curricular activities, for example lunchtime clubs or sports clubs. Make non-academic awards: student passport, school visits, leading assemblies, mentoring others, charity work. Broader enrichment activities encourage and develop leadership potential.

Safeguarding

- » Targeted PSHE programmes; prevention training for staff and governors; staff Inset on tackling extremism and radicalisation.

We are very grateful to all our members who participated so openly and honestly with these national conversations.

If you feel you have areas of practice that have proven impact and would benefit others as a case study, or if you would appreciate further collaboration to improve aspects of this work in your school we are waiting to hear from you – please contact us on info@ssatuk.co.uk.



Redesigning Schooling: principled approaches to curriculum design in a time of rapid change

Caroline Barlow, Head of Innovation, SSAT

We are experiencing a bewildering pace of change in education, particularly in relation to curriculum.

The implementation of change in every key stage is matched by the challenges in school budgets and recruitment. It is near impossible under current conditions to do everything we would want or even need for our students. However, with clear vision and careful reflection it is still possible to make sure that the choices we make keep the ship sailing in our chosen direction, no matter how choppy the waters (apologies to Jill Berry – read her blog *Rough Seas Make the Best Sailors*). It has never been more important to know our core principles and to keep them at the forefront of what we do in schools.

For many, those core principles are outlined in the collaboratively-designed, research-informed Redesigning Schooling agenda. At the recent SSAT Educational Outcomes Celebration and Networking evenings, I was struck by the strong moral purpose that runs through our profession. It was a joy to celebrate the educational outcomes of our schools and students but these have also been opportunities to hear and share the solutions that leaders across the country are finding in the face of complex curriculum changes. These nationwide conversations have sought to unpick the impact of change on curriculum structure, the importance of key stage 3 and the role of the wider curriculum. They have confirmed the fundamental relevance of the Redesigning Schooling principles and the imperative for collaboration. Both elements are coming to life on the Exchange, the exclusive online area for SSAT members, in the form of our Redesigning Schooling in Action (RSiA) case studies, showing our solutions-focused profession at its very best: informed, positive and collaborative.

The impact of qualification reform and performance measures on a school's curriculum structure, combined with the current and impending budget cuts, is causing leaders to answer some critical questions in schools. Consideration is being given to restrictions in the curriculum offer, greater 'guidance' given to students who previously have had freedom to follow their interests, and courses and time are potentially reduced. There are genuine questions about the impact on different groups of students. Yet SSAT schools are sharing innovative and creative solutions rooted in principles that address these key questions. The core principles of Redesigning Schooling can be seen in:

- » thoughtful approaches to coherence and integration in models for KS4, which also give more time for Fat Maths and literacy
- » enrichment, rigour and relevance through some models of vertical learning in Y7 and 8, or creative approaches to Y9
- » an acceptance that greater focus and subject expertise in fewer GCSEs might still provide the high-quality outcomes that allow students to progress.

RSiA case studies provide a view into this practice. Huntington School's approach to a mastery curriculum show a five to seven-year approach to subject depth and expertise; at Canons High School a highly personalised and vertical three-year KS4 has produced stunning outcomes and they are now developing no levels approaches to KS3 based on SOLO taxonomy. Equally Essa Academy's highly personalised innovative curriculum offers choices from Y8-11 (see page 34). All meet the requirements for the new performance measures, are effective and efficient in delivery, and yet offer highly personalised,

enriching and innovative curricula, delivering each school's vision to the huge benefit of their students.

There is a potential danger that the drive for performance measures at KS4/5 leads to KS3 becoming a forgotten landscape, instead of a valuable, rich training ground for future success. Redesigning Schooling principles echo Tim Oates' advice to deliver 'fewer things in greater depth', as KS3 opens up the potential to develop literacy, numeracy and digital pedagogy alongside invaluable opportunities for student leadership and broader skills. SSAT networking events show member schools describing their developing links with KS2 to build on the new curriculum. They are committed to finding ways to deliver the new 'robust' expectations without losing what is valued.

RSiA case studies highlight St Mary's Catholic College in Blackpool (see page 37) whose approach to immersive 'Dynamic Days' deepens knowledge and understanding within enriching experiences. Bohunt School's innovative approach to CLIL learning shows that students develop an immersive knowledge of Mandarin alongside excellence in their 'traditional' schooling. The Weald School's approaches to student leadership include peer tutoring that develops students' confidence, trust and leadership in securing excellent outcomes in the core subjects. Shenley Brook End School developed an embedded skills-based approach long before 'no levels' that underpins all key stages and provides a language for academic and personal growth.

All our case studies reflect interesting practice that allows the expectations and demands of the new programmes of study to be met while enhancing the important knowledge and skills that students will need for KS4, 5 and beyond. These schools are showing that by prioritising values and ethos, a language and framework for excellence is clear to all, paving the way for success academically and personally. Moreover, it is unique to their context and their students.

However, it is the context of students that is raising increasing disquiet. In considering the wider curriculum – as Dylan Wiliam puts it, 'the lived daily experience' of schools – each school has a need to balance their ethos and unique culture with external requirements. While expected to demonstrate their 'British values' and 'character', schools are increasingly fighting on the front line of social deprivation and austerity in its widest context. Concerns about students' mental health may escalate in the future if they are unprepared to face a future of increased competition

in education and employment, raised standards and tougher examination pressures.

The SSAT schools I have worked with this year passionately feel a responsibility for the whole child – not simply their performance outcomes. Those working most effectively on this recognise the reality that we cannot do it alone. Along with a priority on ethos and relationships, schools in every region are giving examples of their partnership work with other agencies and stakeholders, utilising trained staff and providing opportunities for all students to develop essential self-esteem, employability and interview skills.

In our RSiA case studies, Devonport High School for Boys share the entrepreneurial experiences they plan for students, equipping them to operate successfully in any environment. Ormiston Venture Academy's comprehensive approach to school leadership ensures students hold a belief and expectation that their view counts and they can make a difference; consequently they have huge impact across their school and community. The popularity of SSAT's Mind the Gap Conference in April shows how highly schools rate this area of work, but its application requires thought and support, balanced against other pressures. We cannot do this on our own.

The discussions held at our Educational Outcomes regional network meetings reflect the views of our members. We focused these conversations on the evidence from the RSiA case studies and the current issues surrounding curriculum, but the core principles of Redesigning Schooling are much broader.

Increasingly they are the starting point for informed strategic improvement planning as schools resist singular, reactive policy-driven responses. Those that are committed to principled approaches and working collaboratively with others are finding a voice to share their experiences and solutions. We are collating those voices and providing a conduit for professional collaboration. There are no silver bullets and context is everything but together, over 100,000 teachers in over 2000 SSAT member schools have the potential to make a difference. I do not believe it is naive to suggest that – despite the choppy waters – there is a way through our current storm to a profession of excellence that has all the autonomy, integrity and respect we crave.

The Vision 2040 group's imagined paradigm for the next 25 years in education is achievable and we are seeing it emerge – what will your role be?

Redesigning Schooling in Action: a futures-oriented personalised curriculum at Essa Academy

Caroline Barlow, SSAT and Essa Academy

This case study shares principled approaches to curriculum design and delivery that genuinely meet the needs of the students and community that the school serves. This article is abridged from the full RSiA case study available to SSAT members on the Exchange.

Essa Academy is located within the community of Bolton, 15km from Manchester. It is a community of at least 40 nationalities and many different languages and cultures. Essa Academy was established in 2009 as a 'new school' focused on the use of contemporary learning approaches. The majority of students who attend the academy live within a five to ten-minute walk of the school.

The leadership team spent 18 months working with architects to achieve a physical learning environment that would enable the attainment of their philosophy and vision. They moved into the new buildings in 2011. The physical building promotes the school's three ideals of equality, democracy and transparency, primarily to enhance positive relationships. The academy's mission is to ensure that 'All will Succeed', built on a foundation of belief (in its people and mission), community (acting together with a common purpose) and access (to the finest facilities and resources, at any time

and in any place). The use of personalised communication technology devices is the key means to personalise, deepen and accelerate learning.

Academy status gave the school a chance to redesign the curriculum with a view to changing the culture and mindset for what was possible and the desired outcomes for Essa students. The school took this opportunity to develop an approach to curriculum design and delivery that puts the skills the students will need to be successful in life at the heart of everything they do. Curriculum planning and delivery is focused on cognitive acceleration that leads to high-quality outcomes for the students' all-important next steps in life. They decided to provide a rich, deep and immersive approach to curriculum delivery which builds on the expansive learning skills provision in the year 7 curriculum framework into a mixed age strand-based approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.



'A curriculum that combines real world experience with an intrinsic drive to succeed.'

The New Basics year 7 curriculum, using the Australian New Basics model, provides the students with 21st century skills. The curriculum model is 'transdisciplinary' – in other words, rather than focusing on subject areas in isolation, students cover all areas of knowledge at GCSE level and beyond while tackling real life issues and organising events. Literacy and numeracy remain at the heart of New Basics. Year 7 is the only group in which it is taught discreetly; for 70% of the week year 7 students work in 'pods' – English, maths and PE are taught separately. Each

pod contains approximately 60 children and there are three pods in a year group. Each pod has two teachers and an additional teaching assistant. Other teachers and support staff contribute to lesson delivery as appropriate. The pod leaders are primary trained and oversee integration. The curriculum provides four rich tasks over the year which cover all the knowledge and learning required:

- 'British National Identity'
- 'Science and Ethics'
- 'Away with Words'
- 'Unlock Your Future'.

Years 8-11 are taught in an integrated structure: the Chilli curriculum, delivering nine strands through three levels of cognition (Chilli 1, 2 and 3). Subjects include:

- Science
- Sport
- English
- Maths
- One World
- Languages
- The WEB (work, enterprise and business-related learning)
- Arts (art, drama, music, performing arts)
- Well-being (e.g. food tech, nutrition, sociology, psychology, childcare, health and social care).

PSHE is delivered throughout the nine strands and mapped to ensure content delivery. Strands have a physical allocation in the school building as well as a curriculum allocation; these are clearly signed and personalised

to the area of study. All students study all strands in all years, however there is significant choice in how and when.

Every strand must lead ultimately to a level of certification, however students have four years to get to this point and therefore within each strand various courses can be tried. Each course will lead to an appropriate qualification, but the path to this is informed by each individual student's decision. Students follow courses in each of the nine strands from Chilli 1 through to certification. Some strands are single subject strands, e.g. English, maths, science, and students therefore select courses along that route. Other strands (the arts, the WEB, well-being, humanities and languages) offer a range of courses.

The academic year is split into two semesters across the three terms, so each strand therefore has 19 weeks to deliver the chosen learning journey. At each change point the students opt for their preferred pathway for the next semester. Choices are available to them based on their aptitude level (not their age), labelled Chilli 1, 2 and 3. Although generally Chilli 1 will tend to be year 8/9, Chilli 2 will tend to be year 9 with some 8/10 and Chilli 3 will tend to be year 10/11. Personalised exceptions are allowed.

To identify these levels and measure progress, the school uses a combination of baseline assessment and thorough formative and summative assessment; they are currently working to develop Dylan William's

REDESIGNING SCHOOLING

THE CAMPAIGN FOR A SCHOOLS-LED VISION FOR EDUCATION

formative assessment framework across the school. On entry, year 7 students are baseline tested using a range of measures, including prior attainment, reading age and LASS. The elective programme is informed by students making choices based on their performance in the previous Chilli level. Students who have demonstrated sufficient cognitive development as determined by formative and summative assessment within each strand can progress to the next Chilli level. If however they have not shown sufficient cognitive development, their elective choices would be a course/courses at the same Chilli level.

Lessons are taught over nine periods in the week, in morning and afternoon sessions which last three hours each. On Friday afternoon the students depart by 13:20 after a session of (compulsory) extracurricular activity, after which the staff stay for Friday afternoon collaborative CPD.

Each strand has a single slot, providing the opportunity to deepen learning. There is a degree of flexibility, for example one of the courses, 'Xtra Factor', is offered by English and maths ►►



so that students can switch between provision in these two areas. This is a model the school is looking to extend. When considering the balance between the benefits of immersive learning and interleaving knowledge and experiences, the school secures revisiting through the use of iTunes U which means that learning sessions or sections of learning sessions can be revisited at any time and place. At Chilli 1, 2 and 3 there is a rich task/challenge-based approach to learning referred to as 'just in case learning'. As students progress through to certification the focus shifts to 'just in time learning', with a more overt exam preparation delivery.

There are clear attributes and skills developed across the curriculum in all experiences:

- the 'Productive Pedagogies' which seek to develop students' thinking and communication skills across all subjects and lessons
- a clear culture of equality and transparency: all students and staff eat in the restaurant space, which doubles up as a meeting space as there are few offices
- significant adult time (tutor time) ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff all have a role in ensuring quality personalised care
- learners leading learning: students collaborate and co-construct the learning with staff highlighting the social capital investment being made
- the approaches to CPD show investment in all teachers to ensure they are equipped to develop skills and understanding in the students, using resources and approaches that will make the difference (e.g. iPad, iTunes U, pedagogies).

The impact is clear. The school has improved its performance significantly over five years (2009-2014), moving from the bottom ranked school in their region to the third highest over this period. The accountability data shows the success in terms of measured outcomes, plus a valued added score of 1014.8 and virtually no gap for disadvantaged students. Essa was placed fifth out of 55 similar schools in the performance tables, with the third highest Progress 8 figure in Bolton. In January 2014 Ofsted rated the school as 'good'.

Significant improvements have equally been evidenced in engagement with learning, sense of value, and purpose in both staff and students. The school points to anecdotal evidence alongside the records of behaviour logs and evidence seen by the frequent presence of senior leaders in classrooms. SLT are 'out and about' throughout the day; they greet students as they arrive and are present as they leave at the end of the day. They know their school. Staff consciously choose to work here and clearly do so with passion and commitment to the vision and the students.

This is an unusual school in many ways. The ideas and practice are thought-provoking and pose challenging questions. There is no doubt the school has taken the autonomies available and made them work for the students, in their context, to great success.

For more details about how this model works in practise and the school's journey to this point, read the full case study at SSAT's member-only website:
www.ssatuk.co.uk/theexchange

Redesigning Schooling in Action: curriculum coherence and relevance through Dynamic Days at St Mary's Catholic Academy

Caroline Barlow, SSAT and St Mary's Catholic Academy

Dynamic Days are nine days of project work spread across the year, sometimes cross-curricular, sometimes departmental and sometimes ethos based. This article is abridged from the full RSiA case study available to SSAT members on the Exchange.

St Mary's is an 11-18 catholic academy in Blackpool. Their mission statement reads:

'Our mission is to provide an outstanding whole-person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God'.

It is part of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The 2011 Ofsted report states that St Mary's is a good school with many aspects of outstanding work.

Dynamic Days grew from the seed of 'Wonderful Wednesdays', fortnightly days of project work, sometimes cross-curricular, sometimes departmental, and sometimes ethos based. This was in the days of a daily diet of five one-hour lessons.

These Wednesdays were part of setting the school on the path of deeper, more varied ways of learning and played a useful part in preparing both staff and students for 100-minute

lessons which have now been part of the curriculum for four years. However, St Mary's still recognises the value of a whole day spent on one project and has incorporated nine Dynamic Days into each academic year. From a very practical point of view, Dynamic Days can be an efficient way of incorporating external activities without upsetting normal curricular activity. Activities have included GCSE examination or coursework preparation, field trips or end-of-term reward trips, opportunities to access specialist facilities and visit universities.

Having the luxury of a brand new building, the school wanted to ensure that best use was made of learning spaces while still making the learning relevant and authentic.

'We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted.

Knowing that they hold future promise.'

Prayer by Oscar Romero



The underpinning of moral and spiritual themes is important to St Mary's. The year 8 Holocaust project is a typical example of creativity in time and space, cross-curricular influences, real world examples and links to the local community.

The day begins with a lesson aimed at encouraging the children to appreciate the richness of pre-1933 Jewish life in Poland and Germany. Footage is shown and Klezmer music played during the activities. The children are randomly given an identity; some Jews, others Germans or Nazi officials. The students then fill in documentation (passports, etc.) for their person, restoring the humanity of the victims. Following this, the students engage in a role play in the main drama hall

focusing on the experience of Jews and Germans when the Nazis came to power. Students are organised into separate lines for processing: 'Jews' are marched down the corridor to the hall in silence, harassed in line, and yellow stars distributed. 'Germans', on the other hand, are treated respectfully and given refreshments. Students then have a guided walk through the stages of the Holocaust: segregation; the ghettos, the camps; the gas chambers. This is incredibly powerful and has an enormous impact on the students. For the final part of day, the local Rabbi is invited to speak about the evils of prejudice and discrimination. Local clergy are also invited and the day finishes with a liturgy of commemoration.

Other days reflect the vertical nature of their learning house structure. One 'ethos' Dynamic Day involved the older students working with younger forms to choose a patron saint for their learning house and writing appropriate prayers together. Regular Dynamic Days are devoted to careers advice and option choices prior to key stage 4, and 'futures days' for year 11 and sixth form students to synthesise a real results day and the decisions which follow. This enables the students to visualise what they would do if the results they received on that day were a realistic view of the future. The time spent in dialogue with each student can change outcomes.

Learning to learn is delivered through subject teaching at St. Mary's, developed further through a Dynamic Day. This year, team learner skills were developed through a whole series of science activities in year 9. Maths and ICT delivered a STEM day incorporating a problem-

solving oil trading game. Teams of students were given job roles relevant to the oil trading industry. Each team was allocated an amount of money and was shown three international news stories. After each one, decisions had to be made on whether oil prices would increase or decrease. Each team planned its market strategy under time constraints and the team with the greatest amount of money was deemed the winner.

Following on from these days, St Mary's are now into a fourth year of 'Wonderful Week' in July where students select from 17 published options. All activities are open to any students in years 7-10, enhancing vertical learning. This provides an opportunity for excursions directly linked to the curriculum without losing curricular time in other areas, e.g. science & geography field trips or MFL trips. In sixth form, a handful of students take part in essential curricular trips while a bespoke programme is in place for the majority. This involves preparation for applications and interviews for university, apprenticeships and the world of work.

There are many sporting activities for years 7-10, from a free football experience with coaching provided by Fleetwood Town Football Club to golf and basketball. 'I love big books and I cannot lie' is a must for budding writers and keen readers, with a visit to the RSC in Stratford and to the Harry Potter Studios. In 'Tickle your Tastebuds', students learn how to cook and present food with an international flavour culminating in a celebration buffet at the end of the week to which families are invited. Artistic, photographic and technological opportunities abound. To capture the essence of the week our future journalists work on 'Live

from Wonderful Week', reporting and broadcasting from our local City Learning Centre.

The success of Dynamic Days and Wonderful Week does not happen by accident. The planning is time-consuming, the organisation critical and good communication between staff essential, but the outcomes are most definitely worth it. There are costing and staffing implications that are manageable but require planning and thought, as does the planning round the school calendar and the quality assurance that means the experience is rich and meaningful. More details of these and how St Mary's plan for success can be found in the full case study on the Exchange.

Wider opportunities such as those described would not be possible without the planned Dynamic Days. The impact on students is far greater than that obtained through the usual fortnightly timetable allocation. The reflection and opportunities given for working with others enable students to learn in a different way, renew enthusiasm for knowledge and inspire a thirst for understanding. Additional opportunities are offered to practice transferable competencies of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving.

The learning that takes place during Dynamic Days and Wonderful Week is often deep, collaborative, authentic and effective. The relationship building that occurs student-to-student, staff-to-student, and staff-to-staff is highly valued.

Read the full case study at
SSAT's member-only website:
[www.ssatuk.co.uk](http://www.ssatuk.co.uk/theexchange)
/theexchange

Stronger together: museum learning at The Langley Academy

*Jenny Blay, Head of Museum Learning,
The Langley Academy*

‘Come, friendly bombs and fall on Slough!’ What were over 180 teachers, students and culture professionals doing in Slough on a sunny May afternoon this year? The poet John Betjeman described Slough as a town of ‘tinned minds’. Yet it was to Langley, on the outskirts of Slough, that delegates from all over the south east travelled to learn about and be inspired by a radical vision of schools and museums working together.

The Langley Academy

As the head of museum learning at The Langley Academy I have an extraordinary job. With a science specialism, this academy in Slough has over 1100 students and a thriving sixth form of over 210. It recently became a multi-academy trust, encompassing Parlaunt Park Primary Academy and The Langley Academy Primary, opening in September 2015. The academy had a ‘good’ from Ofsted in 2013, raised from our previous inspection. We are travelling in the right direction. There is a lot of energy in our academy, a shared belief in success. Being inspired by cultural heritage helps bring us together. In the museum learning team our role is to assist teachers to use the resources, skills and partnerships that museums offer to help students. With museums in the teaching mix, we want students to exceed their expectations. In the words of Professor Justin Dillon, our evaluator from Bristol University,

‘There is no such thing as educational overachievement’.

This approach takes us to some exciting places and into some profoundly moving experiences, as I hope the delegates from our conference would agree.

A unique museum school

When you first visit The Langley Academy it is clear from the start that things are different here. Emblazoned above the door are three words: **Curiosity Exploration Discovery**. On entering the building you can see a huge double helix art installation (year 7 students) alongside an aeroplane (Brooklands Aviation Museum) and a glowingly beautiful wooden boat (River & Rowing Museum). Right in the centre of the academy are our professional-standard museum cases. Among our many exhibitions, we’ve had ceramics (V&A), trainers (Northampton Museum), and armour (Windsor Castle). It makes for



an inspiring environment, and students take pride in being part of the country's only museum learning school. But beyond the glamour of these objects, museum learning defines our approach to learning and teaching.

Curiosity Exploration Discovery

Curiosity comes naturally to children; it is the spark that helps them learn about the world. The rigours of life can squash or mask this natural enthusiasm, but all good teachers tap into it. Curiosity Exploration Discovery is our learning ethos. It is an enquiry-based model that draws on this instinct to learn and gives power to the students to make their own discoveries. We use museum objects like we use yeast in bread – as the zing that adds emotion to the process. Knowledge learnt through working with museum objects brings depth and academic rigour to the process. The skills students learn from museum projects are relevant across the curriculum and beyond. Far from Betjeman's 'tinned minds', it is an approach that gives the students the power to learn and a cultural confidence that will last a lifetime.

Attainment

Evidence for a link to attainment is growing. In a recent drama project with Amersham Museum, year 8 students went up a sub-level in a half-term (potential for rapid progress?). Working with The Langley Academy, Henley College adopted museum learning for a post-16 Travel and Tourism BTEC project. Grades are typically high but the teachers noted that:

'It was the way in which they were able to approach assignments and discuss the museum itself in much more detail... that has really shown the benefits.'

Professor Justin Dillon of Bristol University and Dr Catarina Correia of Kings College London said in their recent evaluation report that there was evidence of students' increased 'well-being, interest and motivation, and engagement with learning'.

According to the evaluation, students were

'...very enthusiastic about their museum learning experiences, and were very vocal on how meaningful these learning experiences had been for them.'

One design technology teacher commented on how the impact of museum learning on behaviour has lasted beyond the scope of the project:

'Students now attend lessons excited and ready to cook and learn.'

Our determination continues to showcase the link between museum learning and students' attainment.

What we do

Museum learning at The Langley Academy is directed at students' needs and is a regular feature of academy life. We design our projects so that students work with museums to support three or four learning objectives. At least one objective is always to encourage the joy of learning. The other outcomes will typically relate to subject skills and knowledge, to positive attitudes and values or to aspirations for the future. Some examples that demonstrate this:

- Year 13 English students worked with the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading University. They developed analytical skills to interpret Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and saw a slice of university life.
- Year 9 maths students visited the Oxford Museum of Natural History to explore symmetry in nature.
- Year 7 science students visited the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford as part of a project examining the link between ideas and evidence.
- Year 7 and year 11 students worked with staff on our recent exhibition 'Make the Engines Roar' which uncovered Langley's hidden but vital aviation heritage. Students learnt research and display skills, with the older students mentoring the younger.
- Year 10 health and social care students created and delivered an early years activity with the River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames.

This is just a sample. In the 2013-14 academic year we had 1462 places for students on 41 trips and 6502 places on 112 on-site learning sessions.

Partnerships – stronger together

'This has been one of my favourite experiences in teaching so far. It has expanded my enjoyment of teaching and shown me the importance of both cross-curricular projects and museum learning. My only future wish is that I could do it all again!'

ICT teacher

We are fortunate to be sponsored by the Arbib Foundation and the SUVA Trust. However, we wanted to see whether there are cost-effective ways to grow museum learning. In 2014, with our partner the River & Rowing Museum, we received a grant from Arts Council England. Called 'Stronger Together,' the project encouraged schools and museums to work in partnership. The results were overwhelming. Twenty-two teachers from 11 secondary schools worked with 11 museum professionals on projects in nine different subject areas. One example is Arbour Vale, an SEN school that worked with the Stanley Spencer Gallery. The connection is continuing into the next academic year with the gallery taking an original Spencer painting into the school for a cross-curricular dance project. You can see the results and tips on how to create your own partnership project on our website: www.langleyacademy.org/strongertogether.

Cultural confidence

Museum learning gives students cultural confidence, inspiring lifelong learning. It can underpin British values and engender active citizenship. If schools form mutually beneficial partnerships with the cultural heritage services on their doorsteps they will find museum learning is the antithesis of Betjeman's tinned minds.

In the words of a year 9 student:

'Museum learning can transform our lives and should be accessible, relevant and enjoyable to everyone.'





The next steps in Ofsted inspection, 2015-16

*Justine McNeillie,
Programme Coordinator: Accountability, SSAT*

In September 2015, Ofsted will implement the latest inspection regime for our schools and colleges. The changes have been drawn up after an extensive consultation with the sector and stakeholders.

The first key change is to support parents and other stakeholders in understanding the current education landscape by ensuring that the same framework and terminology will be used for all inspections. The vehicle for this is the Common Inspection Framework.

Inspectors will make judgements on the same areas across all sectors: schools, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools, and registered early years. While each will have its own sector inspection handbook that reflects the requirements of each, the terminology of the main judgements will be the same in the hope of ensuring that stakeholders have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the different education opportunities available.

The new judgements largely mirror the existing ones:

- » Effectiveness of leadership and management
- » Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- » Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- » Outcomes for children and learners.

The criteria for leadership and management will continue to focus on issues such as the effectiveness of safeguarding, the vision for the school, and the rationale behind, and effective delivery of, the curriculum.

Released in February this year, *Better inspection for all: A report of the responses to the consultation* states:

‘The new framework will place a greater emphasis on the breadth and suitability of the curriculum and the type and range of courses and opportunities offered by providers.’ (para 67)

This suggests that, just as now, schools should be mindful of

their statutory duties or funding agreements regarding publishing details of their curriculum online. The existing judgement criteria for the quality of teaching looks at assessment and teaching and learning over time in schools, but the descriptor name now mirrors the one for FE and skills.

A sector-specific example of the criteria for this judgement might be to provide clear details of expectations of the quality of vocational education in FE, but in the early years the expectations of childminders would be key. The criteria are expected to move away from the term ‘lesson observation’ to ‘observing teaching’, and the grading of individual lessons during a school inspection will not be reintroduced in school inspections. Consultation with FE on this issue is continuing.

As the inspection criteria currently make clear, schools should be clear about how ‘rigorous’, ‘robust’ and fit for purpose their different assessment methods are, rather than just focusing on marking. This will include the quality of internal and external moderation.

Similarly, the criteria for the personal development, behaviour and welfare judgement would be quite different dependent on key stage although there will be new common themes, such as having a greater awareness of how to be a successful learner and how to keep healthy.

The outcomes judgement will focus on the progress of pupils and pupil groups. As expected, in the consultation school leaders were concerned about the evidence that would be used to reach this judgement in the 'world without levels' and that short inspections may become too data heavy.

Ofsted's response was that inspectors will:

'...continue to [look at data] in full and short inspections under the new Common Inspection Framework. They will use a range of data to judge a school or provider's performance. In all cases, the school or provider will have an opportunity to present their own data and also explain the context around those data to inspectors.' (para 91)

It is worth noting here that the Conservative Manifesto wanted to use data as a way of reducing the 'burden' of inspections on teachers so it will be interesting to see how a balance is ensured.

The other of the major changes is that schools previously judged to be 'good' will now be inspected approximately every three years, although this will only be for one day. This is a step to ensure that inspections are more proportionate to need. Certainly initially these inspections will be led by HMI, probably one in

a primary school and two in a secondary, and will be checking to see whether the quality of education has remained as good, has declined or has improved, and that safeguarding requirements are effective.

Where the school is deemed to have improved, headteachers will be given an opportunity to request a full inspection so that they can move to the next stage, although this may not happen immediately. If performance is thought to have declined, or there is a safeguarding concern, HMI will request a full inspection within two to five days.

'Outstanding' schools are still exempt from Section 5 inspections by law but are likely to be subject to the existing risk assessment arrangements whereby if there was, for example, a drop in performance or a safeguarding concern, the school could be inspected. Already last term some schools were inspected where the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils was not closing considerably. 'Good' schools and FE and skills providers will no longer be left, for three to five years and six years respectively, without an on-site inspection. Providers who are not judged to be good or better will continue to be the focus of more regular inspection activity so that the quality of provision can be driven up for all pupils.

The activities for the one-day inspections will focus on enabling HMI to be able to judge how well leaders are maintaining good provision. These activities are likely to consist of a number of sharply focused meetings and other gathering of evidence that will test the school's effectiveness. Observation of teaching, gathering the views of parents, pupils

and staff, and discussions with leaders at all levels are the most probable activities on the one day. With such a small window to provide evidence, inspectors will want to test how well the school knows the quality of education that it is providing, at classroom practitioner level through to governors, and will be using short inspection-specific handbooks.

As a consequence, schools involved in the shorter inspections will not be awarded grades for the main four judgements but will have an overall statement on whether the quality of education is being maintained or not. To assist with gathering parental views in a short space of time, from September, a free text box will be introduced to Parent View to enable parents to write more widely on their views of the school.

The group likely to be most affected by the changes are good schools, as they will have even less time in which to provide the evidence that they are maintaining the quality of education.

While in theory school leaders should not need to produce information just for Ofsted, it will help them to be in control and best reflect the school's strengths if they are inspection-ready.

A new SSAT Ofsted support guide providing top tips and information from schools and inspectors will be published in September.

It is available to pre-order now by visiting www.ssatuk.co.uk/cpd and navigating to accountability and data.

Justine McNeillie will be sharing further information on this issue with SSAT members in the autumn term.



Teacher development programme at Capital City Academy

*Laura Ellener, Deputy Headteacher,
Capital City Academy*

Peter Tang, our assistant principal and lead for CPD, says 'The quality of learning will not exceed the quality of teaching'. At Capital we believe in investing in all of our teachers, and by working in collaboration with others we can achieve excellence in all of our classrooms.

Effective CPD is not about going on a course for a day, but rather about developing consistent and effective strategies for raising attainment. We aim to deliver as much of our CPD as possible ourselves, as this helps the person delivering to develop their knowledge and skills, and ensures that there is no 'knowledge-implementation' gap that is often a feature of external CPD provision. We provide a termly CPD offer to all staff, so that everyone knows the opportunities that are available.

Action research is an important feature of life at the academy, with successful projects running in conjunction with the Institute of Education. Staff have the chance to develop a particular area of expertise and work as researchers at Masters level in school. Recently we have collaborated with the University of Bristol and the Education Endowment Foundation on different projects, as we want to shape the latest educational research and to lead rather than be led.

We are lucky to have a hard working and vibrant group of beginning teachers for whom we provide weekly professional studies sessions. They are the school leaders of tomorrow and four have successfully applied to be part of Teaching Leaders from September. All teachers have the opportunity to lead staff development through our fortnightly Friday

morning Insets, which are focused CPD opportunities for teachers to demonstrate a particular area of expertise. They are always well attended.

We recognise improvement comes as the result of sustained practice and reflection and that all leaders have a responsibility as leaders of learning. All staff self-evaluate their practice and create a personal development plan which is revisited throughout the year.

Perhaps the most powerful lever for transforming our classrooms after curriculum redesign has been the introduction of our coaching model. A mere hint of 'Lemov' and 'Teach Like a Champion' (TLaC) can cause some teachers to run to the hills, with talk of teaching by numbers and a formulaic approach to pedagogy. Kareen White, our director of teaching and learning, might even admit to being in this camp only 12 months ago. Now leading coaching at Capital, Kareen and her team of coaches can regularly be heard talking of 'show-call', 'do-now' or 'everybody writes'. Although we may not have been early adopters of the no grading of lessons bandwagon, Capital is now a fully signed-up member, believing that the best use of observation is to increase the impact of teaching on learning. Using the TLaC techniques has enabled us to be more precise in our coaching steps and areas for development.

Our coaching is based upon the 'Leverage Leadership' model developed by the Uncommon Schools Organisation (an American Charter management organisation). It provides a focused observation/feedback model based on a weekly fifteen-minute observation and a thirty-minute feedback session. Coaches create and share action steps to provide concise, powerful ways to improve student outcomes.



Observations do not judge teachers but seek to find the most effective ways to improve learning. It is our belief that successful coaching unlocks the potential of teachers in order to maximise their performance and the learning of students. It recognises that teachers are learners and provides time for teachers to talk about teaching and to learn from one another.

Feedback from those being coached would seem to suggest that it is having an impact:

‘Coaching has been very beneficial to my teaching as I have had more time to reflect on my teaching practice, and I have the input of a colleague from outside my department. Setting attainable targets with actions steps has allowed me to succeed.’

‘My coach has been exceptional and I have gained so much in a short time. Coaching time is a very positive experience for me and my coach has set action steps which have enhanced my teaching in the areas of using IT as a teaching tool and in making my lessons more interactive.’

‘It has been helpful to receive support and action steps from a colleague outside my department and it allows for the development of alternative ideas. I feel that this has aided my progress in my role.’

We are currently coaching more than 30 teachers at Capital City Academy and have trained more than 30 teachers to be coaches. Kareen White, has been leading the initiative and led an open training session in January 2015. Many of the coaching steps are drawn from Teach Like a Champion and Kareen and

I met Doug Lemov, its author, at a two-day training session he led in London last autumn.

One element Kareen has always championed is that of the videoed lesson and the power this can give to the coaching discussion. We have invested in STAR cameras so that all teachers can reflect on their own classroom practice. Watching and listening to your own teaching style, individually or in pairs for the brave, can make for awkward viewing. You are your own biggest critic, but the gains from self-reflection are immense. Technology has allowed staff to reflect on their own and others’ teaching, using this to deconstruct practice and gather our own bank of training clips.

In their training, Capital teachers and guests learnt how to observe for coaching, give feedback, model (a key part of the philosophy) and practice teaching strategies, as well as hear from some of our coaches and those they coach. They said:

‘I am looking forward to getting started with leverage coaching and can honestly say that it was one of the best training days I’ve attended since becoming a Teach First Ambassador.’

‘It was great to see fellow Teach Firsters being developed with the skills required to become effective middle leaders.’

Key readings

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Links

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The Sutton Trust, *Developing Teachers, Improving professional development for teachers* (2015). www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/developing-teachers

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0117 314 5202

Chloe Brunton
cbrunton@vwv.co.uk
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Best practice in education

Are you ready to show-off your talented middle leaders to Ofsted? Seven suggestions to help

Louis Coiffait, CEO, NAHT Edge

Middle leaders are firmly on the agenda as we understand more and more about the vital role they play in school improvement. A school-led system has middle leaders at the heart of it. Organisations as diverse as SSAT, Teaching Leaders and NAHT Edge are all focused on their development.

The Department for Education is expanding a secondment programme from 30 high performing middle leaders to 100. Even Ofsted now explicitly look at middle leaders as part of the leadership and management of a school.

Middle leadership in the latest Ofsted framework

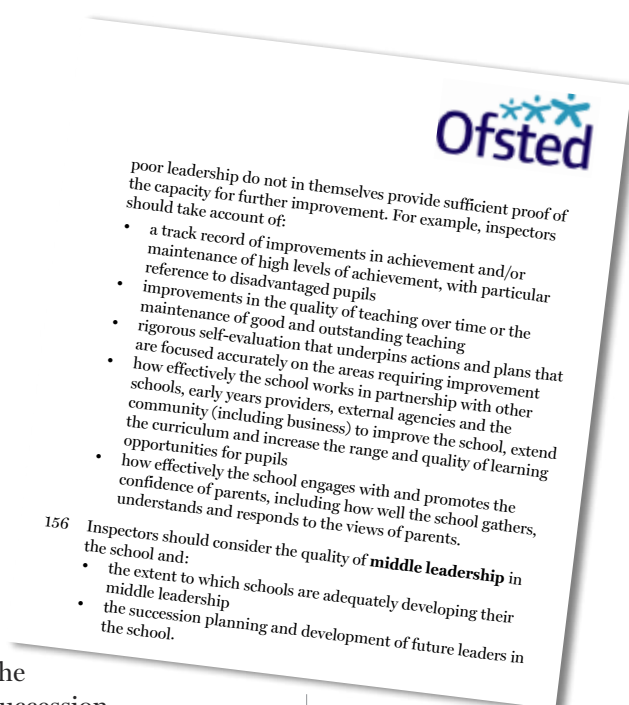
156. Inspectors should consider the quality of middle leadership in the school and:

1. the extent to which schools are adequately developing their middle leadership

2. the succession planning and development of future leaders in the school

But who are these middle leaders, what qualities do they need and how do we help to grow them in our schools? In my role I have the pleasure of travelling the country each week, visiting schools and meeting both senior and middle leaders – often discussing those exact questions. They are increasingly pressing issues, as our recent research with more than a 1000 school leaders found: that recruitment was a growing

challenge for all roles, but most of all when it comes to hiring experienced teachers such as those with a Teaching and Learning Responsibility or 'TLR'. Many schools have to re-advertise or even withdraw such roles – never finding anybody suitable. And this will only store up trouble later on. You can bet we'll have a headteacher recruitment crisis in the near future if we don't get the support and incentives in place now for our middle leaders. As it stands just a third of middle leaders fancy the top job in school and only half of deputies do. ➤➤



And yet many schools and groups of schools seem to manage it, building up a strong, talented and motivated middle leadership team. Based on my experiences of seeing some such success stories here are seven suggestions for how a school can grow and develop a healthy stream of talented middle leaders, as well as some questions to prompt your thinking. I'm sure many schools are already doing these things or have taken different approaches, in which case do get in touch to share your own good practice. In this era of tight budgets and school-to-school support it's more important than ever that we share ideas, challenges and solutions.

1. START BY CLARIFYING THE SCHOOL STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES

Re-examine your vision and strategy documents through the eyes of your middle leaders. Is there a detailed enough articulation of what's expected and needed from them, both now and in the future? How are you assessing whether they have sufficient expertise in the right areas to drive things forward? What's the plan to help them make-up any gaps and have they bought into it?

Start with their teaching and learning capabilities. Are they expert in all the basics of pedagogy, is their knowledge up to date and informed by evidence, and are they spending most of their time in classrooms – both supporting others and teaching themselves? Mill Field Primary School in Leeds was judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted this year, including for leadership and management. Middle leaders were singled out for driving improvement by still being 'fully involved in the checking of pupils' progress'.

Next think about their leadership and management duties. What does 'good' look like at your school and do middle leaders understand and agree with what's expected of them? Mill Field's middle leaders were praised by Ofsted because the 'impact of their actions is being felt across the school in the high levels of collaboration amongst staff'. Does everybody at your school understand the approach for evaluating staff performance?

This is especially important for middle leaders because they'll be doing it with other staff. You can make use of regular appraisals, professional standards and other competency-based frameworks. You can also look at what other schools are doing, sending staff to see them in action and discuss strategies with their leaders. A bit of research online will find a wealth of resources too. Are you encouraging questions and ideas from your whole leadership team, enabling them to seek out a range of different sources of advice and support to inform practice at your school? Are different people given clear tasks, such as examining evidence that can help inform the practice of teaching, managing or leading?

- » Do you know how middle leaders support your school strategy?
- » What skills, knowledge and experience do they need?
- » What culture do you have now and what do you want to create?

2. SYSTEMATICALLY SPOT AND NURTURE TALENTED PEOPLE

Having identified and agreed the qualities that middle leaders need, check that your school's approach to identifying and supporting potential leaders is systematic and transparent. It

should include those who have those qualities now as well as those with the potential to develop them in the future. It's usually better to be as open as possible about both what those qualities are and the school's process of identifying and nurturing them. There should be clear roles and responsibilities for those involved, including governors for more senior positions. You can work with other schools on talent spotting, recruitment and CPD too, to encourage impartiality and fresh thinking. Equality and fairness should be baked-in to the whole process, informed by the nine protected characteristics and the community the school serves.

It's always important (and efficient) to nurture talented people internally. All staff, including middle leaders, should have clear development goals they're working towards. But do these personal goals align with the wider school strategy and are they supported by a systematic approach to CPD? Again middle leaders can lead on different parts of the CPD offer. External expertise can be valuable but with tight budgets it's important to evaluate such suppliers thoroughly – middle leaders can ask for evidence of impact, external indicators of quality and speak with others who have worked with them.

There's also a lot that schools can do for themselves. If established properly, mentoring and coaching programmes can help staff to develop each other. Middle leaders can ensure there are clear expectations and guidance for those involved, as well as evaluating how effective it is. Again, connecting with other local schools can be effective, widening the pool of people involved. Middle leaders are often active in professional



learning communities, usually around their stronger subjects. Such communities can be a mix of in-person and virtual, but you can ask your middle leaders to bring any learning back in to school to share with others.

- » Does everybody know what a good middle leader at your school looks like?
- » When hiring are you casting the net widely to find the best possible people?
- » Are middle leaders involved in developing a systematic approach to CPD?

3. THINK CREATIVELY ABOUT RESOURCES

Schools are having to do more with less, so are having to think holistically and flexibly about resourcing their middle leadership positions. Establishing a wider network of people can allow for sharing talented individuals across schools, either using informal agreements or more structured arrangements, such as

secondments. If you think back to the qualities middle leaders at your school need to support the strategy, chances are you may not always need full-time permanent roles to give the school what it needs. Sharing staff across other schools can be one solution. The CfBT Schools Trust is working in this way, building a team of subject specialists, each working across three Trust schools.

Such roles can be demanding, requiring both teaching expertise as well as the ability to engage and influence busy colleagues. You can also be flexible about contracting arrangements, but make sure staff are consulted properly and are crystal clear on the relationship. It's always good practice to have a rigorous documentation process for such discussions, to avoid any confusion in future.

- » How is your school connecting with other local schools?

- » Are your middle leaders visiting and hosting other middle leaders?
- » Does your school have the skills it needs across the whole team?

4. DEVELOP A PLAN FOR INVESTING LONG TERM

Often the best way to get the middle leaders your school needs is to grow them from within the school. That takes time and a clear, long-term strategy.

Three of the six schools in the Primary Advantage (hard) federation in Hackney form a teaching school. This, combined with their relationship with the UCL Institute of Education (IoE), gives them access to new teachers through the full range of routes into the profession, including School Direct. It takes time to build up such relationships and capacities internally, but they can give you more options as well as access to a wider range of teachers and



skills. The size of the federation also creates capacity, allowing senior leaders to work in other schools, both within and beyond the six schools. This then allows their middle leaders' opportunities to step up, from just a few days a week to full-time.

- » Is the school engaging with talented new people from a range of sources?
- » Is there a one, three and five-year plan for bringing NQTs to the school?
- » Which partners is the school working with?

5. BUILD-IN SPARE CAPACITY WHERE YOU CAN

Leadership development and succession planning should be continuous processes at your school, rather than isolated episodes. However things don't always go to plan. That talented middle leader you've been developing for years, investing time and resources in, may end up taking a job elsewhere, or go on maternity or paternity leave at a crucial moment. Try not to put all your eggs in one basket, building a broad team of skilled middle leaders. Again connections with other schools can help.

- » Have you got an annual plan for CPD and different succession scenarios?
- » Do you have a clear sense of each middle leaders' strengths and ambitions?
- » Can you plan handover periods, to get new postholders up to speed quickly?

6. GIVE PEOPLE CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITIES

The best way for many middle leaders to develop is by learning on the job. However those I meet often get responsibility quickly without sufficient support to go with it. That's not really about salary, that's about creating a process that feels manageable, allowing them to build confidence and experience over time. Not everyone wants to or is able to be either a middle or senior leader. Greater responsibilities don't have to be permanent but it helps if people understand exactly what they're signing up for. Often a good 'leadership' experience can encourage them to want to step up and take more on.

The opposite is also true, so plan carefully. Our members talk about the satisfaction they can get as middle leaders from helping children across the whole school and by working alongside their teachers. Nearly all teachers seem to be perfectionists, wanting to do their best for their children. Becoming a leader is different, as you start to work indirectly, succeeding through others. That requires a degree of letting go, which can be particularly hard for new leaders. The most effective schools seem to give their middle leaders and those they work with a healthy mix of both structure and space.

- » How are middle leaders at your school encouraged to take time for reflection?
- » What can you offer your most talented middle leaders to hold on to them?
- » How are you balancing responsibility and accountability for middle leaders?

7. MAKE SURE THEY HAVE GOOD ROLE MODELS

The recent 'workload challenge' highlighted how much school leaders can influence practices within their schools. Middle leaders are often the ones moderating work, helping colleagues with marking and supporting data collection. Schools can work with their middle leaders to identify efficiencies and avoid practices that don't support learning. Middle leaders are also role models for staff, setting the culture of the whole team, so it's important they can access positive role models themselves. Senior leaders can set the tone when it comes to issues such as work-life balance by practicing what they preach. I know one headteacher who insists on always shutting the school gates by 4.30pm on a Friday, going home himself to encourage his team to follow suit. Leaders have a duty to shield colleagues from some of the pressures of the job, sharing only those challenges and responsibilities that people can do something about. But they can also share the joys and satisfaction that only come with leadership, having a positive impact on a wider group of colleagues and students. Middle leaders can influence the whole feel of a school so encourage them to share both insights from colleagues and to be positive.

- » Is the school culture and mood discussed openly and regularly?
- » What positive anecdotes and stories are middle leaders hearing and sharing?
- » Are middle leaders connected with role models within and beyond the school?



Have you considered SSAT's National Award for Middle Leaders to fine tune your 'engine room' of school improvement?

Middle leaders have an essential role in translating the school's vision into practice and are often described as the 'engine room' of school improvement. Outstanding schools have high-quality middle leaders and seek to continuously develop and build these individuals into high-performing teams.

Programme overview

The National Award for Middle Leaders (NAML) offers 10 course modules for delivering the foundations of successful leadership. These modules cover all the key middle leadership responsibilities. Each module is designed to be two hours in length, delivered as a twilight session or combined as extended training. Module delivery is flexible and a selection of modules can be chosen and configured to provide a personalised course to meet the particular needs of schools.

The NAML is delivered by SSAT-approved licensed schools and trainers across

the county who will make courses and modules available in your area.

Should you wish an SSAT consultant to deliver a bespoke course to your school, this can be arranged by contacting Beth Souster on **01823 446 902** or by emailing on **NAML@ssatuk.co.uk**.

The NAML is certificated by SSAT and provides routes to Masters level accreditation through the University of Nottingham and Lead Practitioner Status. Middle leaders are expected to complete a school improvement project and professional learning journal to evidence the impact of course learning.

Course modules

- Vision and values
- Developing your leadership approach
- Building a high-performing team
- Leading your team day-to-day
- What makes the most effective teaching and learning?
- Observation for improvement
- Using data for impact
- Fostering positive behaviour for learning
- Leading and managing innovation and change
- Supporting your team

Find out more

Email the leadership team on **leadership@ssatuk.co.uk** or call them on **01823 446 974**.

How Leigh Academies Trust is facing up to the financial challenges ahead

*Steve Avis FCMA, Finance Director,
Leigh Academies Trust*

Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) is a multi-academy trust based in Dartford, Kent. It currently has 7,200 students in four secondary academies, five primary academies, one special academy and a University Technical College. With 1,000 staff in Dartford (and 300 in Greenwich and Maidstone) and a budget of nearly £50 million, LAT is the second largest employer in the area.

If we thought the last five years had tested us in the 'Balancing the Budget' exam, then the next few years seem set to challenge us all on a different level. Just before the general election, the Institute for Fiscal Studies reminded us that schools' funding had risen by 0.6% in real terms since 2010 but warned that in the next five years, schools and academies would face at least a 7% reduction in real terms funding.

But don't be too downcast. The economic and educational environment presents some great opportunities for achieving that elusive A* in the Balancing the Budget exam!

Rising student numbers

The last five years saw an 8% rise in the number of students in our primary schools and academies, and this is expected to rise by a further 5% in the next five years. Secondary numbers are expected to rise by 10% in the period to 2020. So, demand for places in our schools is most definitely out there.

Leigh Academies Trust has been working in collaboration with Kent County Council to help the local authority find places for additional students in 2015-16. Places have been found for more than 30 students whose current school will close; Wilmington Academy will take an additional 20 students in September, funded from Kent's basic need growth fund; a new ASD unit will also open at Wilmington; and a speech and language provision will open at The Leigh Academy. **New places means more income.**

Of course not all schools and academies can expand to take new students, but all can focus on achieving full capacity and meeting their published admission number.

Post-16 – student numbers and efficient delivery

Another area for all secondary schools and academies to focus on is maximising the number of post-16 students on roll. The raising of the participation age again provides schools and academies with the demand for sixth form places. The competition is tough, with the FE sector and apprenticeship schemes fighting for post-16 funding, but there is much that we can do to encourage GCSE leavers to come to our academies.



At Leigh Academies Trust we have developed a Trust-wide strategy with strong collaboration between all secondary academies to broaden the curriculum offer, but with value for money in mind. Key strands of this strategy are:

- developing common option blocks containing academic and vocational courses across academies to support greater choice and economies of scale
- sharing of students where numbers are low to enable less popular courses to be viably run, with transportation between academies provided
- creating more personalised programmes of study, with a reduction in the number of students following four AS-level courses, thereby driving a reduction in the number of teaching hours per week
- bespoke tutor groups and pastoral programmes
- no lessons on Wednesday to compete with local colleges (allows intervention work to take place)
- trust-wide marketing strategy drives applicants through a bespoke post-16 website, a widespread presence on social media and targeted leaflet drops
- open tours and taster sessions ongoing throughout the year.

This strategy was developed following a detailed cost analysis of post-16 provision which the trust commissioned in 2014. Looking at teaching hours for each course, the cost of individual courses, student uptake, group sizes and funding, the analysis concluded that the costs of delivering post-16 provision were greater than



the post-16 funding allocation received, with pre-16 funding effectively subsidising post-16. The analysis also indicated that the breakeven average class size was 14 for post-16 as a whole.

Cost awareness

The availability of comparative cost data between schools has been around for a while, but the ability of an individual school to drive value from its suppliers using this information is very limited.

One of the great advantages of being part of a multi-academy trust is the Trust's ability to use its purchasing power to deliver support services at an economic cost. A single Trust-wide support contract covering seven academies will certainly be more economical than seven individual contracts procured by each academy. Leigh Academies Trust has negotiated significant savings from centralised contracts for cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance, facilities management and energy and is continuing to drive our efficiencies from collaborative approaches to the procurement of resources for teaching and learning.

The provision of centralised services is also key to making our money go further. Leigh Academies Trust provides centrally-managed IT, HR, finance, payroll, business and governance services to its academies. Specialist staff provide day-to-day support in academies while benefiting from the sharing of good practice collected at the centre. The Trust has ambitious plans to develop these central services into income generating opportunities by creating a centre of excellence for service delivery to other schools and academies outside of the group.

Additional sources of income

Maximising income from the hiring of facilities to third parties has long been a revenue generation favourite of schools and academies, but achieving a good return may not be as easy as it seems. There are two key challenges involved: generating the lettings in the first place, and accounting for the profit without upsetting the tax man!

Without careful planning, schools and academies may find themselves liable for paying a corporation tax charge on profits from hiring facilities. In general, ►►



academies will have to pay tax unless they can demonstrate that any of the following three exemptions apply:

- » The academy's Objects (contained in the Articles of Association) enable the raising of income from lettings to be regarded as a primary purpose of the academy. All academies have education as a primary purpose, but not all enable income generation.
- » The letting is for land and/or space only, and does not include services and equipment, including sports equipment. Be careful as

artificial sports pitches can be regarded as equipment!

- » The first £50,000 of net income is free from tax.

To successfully navigate through this, Leigh Academies Trust has established a commercial arm – LAT Enterprises Ltd – which brings all lettings income together in a separate legal entity. LAT Enterprises then Gift Aids all of the income to the Trust on an annual basis generating a tax liability of zero.

The Trust centrally manages a network of business managers who are based in each academy with responsibility for (amongst

other things) selling facilities to third parties. This approach enables the individual needs of academies to be met while maximising the opportunities for major Trust-wide events.

Whichever political party had won the general election, the future funding for schools and academies would have been challenging. The maxim 'more for less' has never been more apt, and school and academy leaders will need to think innovatively to ensure that every pound received is deployed to best effect and that the number of pounds is as high as it can be!



16-19 performance tables: changes for 2017

*Sylvia King,
Head of Post-16 and Vocational Learning, SSAT*

Accountability for KS5 will change for next summer's results with an increased emphasis on types of qualifications so students that started their L3 courses last September will be the first cohort to be reported on.

Level 3 qualifications have three categories:

1. Academic – covering A-level, AS, IB, Applied A-level, Pre-U, the EPQ and free standing maths qualifications
2. Applied General Qualifications – 'rigorous L3 qualifications for post-16 students who wish to continue their education through applied learning and that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills.' (DfE)
3. Tech levels – 'rigorous L3 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry or occupation and that develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable entry to employment or progression to a related higher education course.' (DfE)

From 2017, L2 qualifications will also be included in accountability measures. These comprise Technical Certificates, defined by DfE as 'rigorous L2 qualifications that equip post-16 students with specialist knowledge and skills and enable entry to employment within sectors where employers recognise entry at this level or are required for progression to Tech Level.'

DfE publishes annually a list of qualifications eligible for inclusion in each category.

WHAT ARE THE HEADLINE MEASURES?

From 2016 up to three sets of figures will be published for each school or college focusing on each of the qualification categories offered.

Each set of figures will report on:

Progress – using **KS4** as the benchmark, a **value added measure** will show progress for individual students compared with progress nationally by students with the same level of prior achievement. This is intended to compare progress in one provider against national average progress in each subject.

For academic qualifications, the starting point will be student achievement in **GCSEs** only.

For applied qualifications, the starting point will be achievement in all prior qualifications (including applied courses) at **KS4**.

Completion and attainment – these measures will be used for Tech Level and tech certificate qualifications to recognise the weak relationship between these courses and prior achievement in academic subjects at KS4. Similar to the above measure, it will compare individual achievement (showing proportion of grade achieved above or below) with the national average in that qualification.

Non-completion of a course will be treated as a 'fail' for the measure unless the non-completion was because of transfer to an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship.

Attainment – will show the average grade achieved by students **only including** those who complete a course and are entered for its examination or, for vocational qualifications, have a recorded result. ➡

Retention – will report the proportion of students who complete the core aim of the course.

Destinations – currently being developed as a measure, this will report **only when data is felt to be robust enough**.

Progress in English and Maths – will focus on students who start without a grade C in either or both subjects, showing relative progress against national average of students in that category. It will report as a whole school or college figure and not as separate subjects.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

For **ACADEMIC AND APPLIED GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS** the average prior achievement at KS4 by each **individual** is mapped against their A-level or BTEC results.

Progress achieved by the whole **cohort** will, similarly, show their outcomes against prior achievement at KS4.

Individual achievement will also be compared with **national average achievement for students with the same prior achievement**. This will show an outcome of a positive, neutral or negative value added figure expressed as a grade or fractions of a grade.

For **TECH LEVEL AND TECH CERTIFICATE** a similar approach will be used but with each grade being given a **points score**. The results for a **particular qualification** in a school or college are 'scored' and averaged and then compared with the national average score to give a measure of the institutions relative achievement.

The relative attainment scores **across all such subjects** are aggregated to give the total Tech Level or certificate score. This average point score is translated back into a grade equivalent to show the institution's **average grade performance against the national average**.

A detailed explanation of all measures can be found in the DfE technical guide: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359909/Technical_Guide_final_for_publication.pdf.

OTHER MEASURES AND REPORTS

Attainment in qualifications below L3 – to be phased in starting with L2 achievement.

Achieving at a higher level of learning – the percentage of students achieving a qualification at a

level higher than they achieved at KS4.

A-level attainment – will report the **best three outcomes** of students on **A-level only** programmes and will **not** include AS levels or A-levels taken as part of a mixed programme.

AAB in facilitating subjects – will report on students who achieve **AAB in at least two** facilitating subjects.

Attainment of an approved L3 maths qualification – proportion of students entering with a GCSE grade C or above who go on to achieve an approved L3 maths qualification (including AS, A-level and core mathematics).

Tech 'Bacc' – the number of students achieving the required combination of a Tech Level, a recognised L3 maths qualification and the EPQ.

Traineeships, supported internships and 'closing the gap' – all to be included over time.

EXCEPTIONS

When qualifications are not on the post-16 vocational lists at L2 & L3 they will not count towards the overall achievement measure for any category but other subjects taken by that student will still be included in the appropriate measure. Equally therefore, failure to complete, or low achievement on a non-included qualification will not have a negative impact on the overall measure.

If students start on one level and then 'top up' to achieve a higher level only the higher level achievement will be included in the measure e.g. starting an AS level and then completing the full A-level will be reported only as the A-level result. Similarly, 'topping up' a BTEC 90 credit diploma to an Extended Diploma only the Extended Diploma will count.

If a student leaves or joins your institution at, say 17, the results achieved by that student at his or first school or college will be included in following year's results. Any subsequent achievement by that student at the second institution will be recorded separately at that place and will not include any prior achievement at the first institution. E.g. an AS result at your institution followed by an A-level result at another institution will be counted separately in the second year (usually when the student is 18) by each institution.

If students are completing only after three years of study you can apply to have their achievement deferred by a year through the performance checking exercise each autumn.



SSAT National Conference 2015: Quality & Equity

*Tom Middlehurst,
National Conference Director, SSAT*

This year we are pleased to announce that all SSAT member secondary schools have one place at the National Conference included in your membership.

The conference will combine inspirational speakers and thought-leading academics with over 50 school-led workshops from outstanding and innovative school leaders. Above all, the conference is your annual opportunity to network with other SSAT members, seek support from one another, and find new areas for collaboration and cooperation. We look forward to welcoming all of our members to Manchester on 3-4 December to explore the theme of 'Quality & Equity'.

Delegates will choose one of three strands to focus on for each day of the conference: all of which promote quality and equity in our system:

CLOSING THE GAPS

Identifying and closing the gaps between different groups of students

We are all aware of the need to close the achievement gap between the most disadvantaged young people and their peers, which continues to be a national priority at every stage of schooling. But where are the other gaps in your school? This strand will explore interesting ways of systematically identifying, tracking and monitoring the gaps between different groups of students for different outcomes, as well as innovative interventions that have been used to successfully close these gaps. Different groups of students will include pupil premium, SEND, white working-class, most-able, EAL, LGBT, middle attainers, and many others.

RAISING THE BAR

Continually improving a range of educational outcomes for all students

If we are to prepare our students for successful and fulfilling lives, we need to support them to get excellent outcomes at the critical stages of the school system: at KS2, KS4 and KS5. In part, this strand will look at how school leaders are helping students make the grade, and also preparing for the new assessment and accountability framework in the coming years. However, a student's grades alone are a poor simulacrum for the whole child: if we are serious about social mobility then we need to deliver a range of outcomes. This strand will explore how schools are systematically developing students' character traits, non-cognitive skills, and resilience.

LEADING LEARNING

Putting learning at the heart of school leadership

How do you ensure that, as a leader, every decision you make is focused on the needs of your learners? This strand will look at the strategic leadership of learning across a school or a group of schools, covering curriculum design, whole-school pedagogy, assessment after levels, and student voice. Leading learning will also consider teachers as ongoing learners, looking at innovative approaches to CPD and teacher research.

Turn over to see details of the confirmed speakers so far at the conference.



National Conference 2015: Quality & Equity

3-4 December, Manchester Central

Raising the bar while closing the gaps.

Speakers confirmed so far

Ani Magill is known as a headteacher who challenges and inspires in equal measure. Not only does Ani secure outstanding outcomes for her students, she is also committed to developing her staff, 'producing' four headteachers in as many years and playing a system-driving role as an NLE.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Professor Barry Carpenter OBE is renowned for his expertise on complex needs. He will bring both theoretical understanding of the most vulnerable students in your school, and ideas for interventions and provisions.

Speaking in: morning seminars

Professor Becky Francis was invited because of her work on social identities and educational performance. Becky's work has explored a range of identities including gender, white working class and other ethnicities, and their impact on student outcomes, to find opportunities for making genuine and lasting social mobility a reality.

Speaking in: Closing the Gaps strand

Bill Watkin will set the conference themes of quality and equity against the national policy and school improvement agenda. Bill's interpretation of policy will make sure you leave well-informed and prepared.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Could you present a school workshop?

We are looking for school leaders with innovative practice in each of the three strands. If you think you have something exciting to share with other members, we'd love you to apply to present a workshop. Please visit ssatuk.co.uk/NC15 to download an application form.

Applications close Tuesday 21 July.

Dave Harris is well-known for his work on leadership dialogues, and will explore how school leaders can build a common understanding and shared vocabulary around teaching and learning.

Speaking in: morning seminars

Professor Guy Claxton expressed an interest in working with SSAT members to continue his lifetime's work of identifying what really matters in our schools – that students get brilliant results and are also equipped with the skills and character traits that are needed to lead successful lives in the future.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Professor James Arthur is director of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham. Character is something we know is rightly a key consideration for schools. James is an international authority on character development and its link to morality.

Speaking in: Raising the Bar strand

Joan Deslandes is a headteacher who has successfully closed the gaps in challenging settings. She leads her school to be at the forefront of developments in teaching and learning, using its language specialism, Confucius classroom status and Leading Edge partnership to help students contribute to the wider life of the school and the local and international community. Joan has twice been named by the London Evening Standard as one of the 1000 most influential Londoners for her work in education.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Sir John Dunford OBE helped inform our thinking about the National Conference themes through his work as National Pupil Premium Champion and his contribution to our 2014 Annual Lecture. Sir John speaks passionately about how social mobility relies on closing the gap between the most disadvantaged students and their peers while simultaneously raising the quality of the education system as a whole.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Dr Lisa Lande is executive director of the Teacher Voice and Aspirations International Center. She has dedicated her professional endeavours to advocating for teachers and students around the globe. It is her aspiration that every classroom in every school is one that she would want her own three children to learn in.

Speaking in: morning seminars

Ross Morrison McGill was the perfect choice to speak on leading learning, having been a dynamic force in promoting lifelong learning for both students and staff in the schools he has worked with. Ross is the most followed teacher on Twitter and was named as one of the five hundred most influential people in the UK in 2015 by Debrett's.

Speaking in: Leading Learning strand

Dr Russ Quaglia is an internationally renowned expert on aspirations and achievement, whose work is well known in the US and is becoming increasingly cited in England. The three principles of the Quaglia Framework offer a practical way to guide the development of educational experiences: self-worth, engagement, and purpose.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Ruth Hunt is the chief executive of Stonewall, the charity that puts the case for equality for LGBT people on the mainstream agenda. A 2012 survey indicated that over half of LGBT young people have experienced discrimination or abuse while at school, and as an official Stonewall training partner, SSAT is committed to helping end homo, bi and transphobic (HBT) bullying in schools.

Speaking in: Closing the Gaps strand.

Shona MacLeod is senior research manager at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Her specific interest in social exclusion and disadvantaged groups has informed her work with a wide range of young people including those at risk of becoming NEET. Shona has recently led NFER's project with the DfE on the most effective use of the pupil premium, and will be sharing her findings at the conference.

Speaking in: morning seminars

Stephen Tierney brings to the National Conference his experience as an executive headteacher, an SSAT leadership programme trainer, and chair of the innovative Vision 2040 group whose vision for the next 25 years is founded on the principles of quality, equity and agency – goals which have inspired the theme of this year's National Conference.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Book your free place now!

Every headteacher in a secondary member school has a free place* at this year's conference.

The standard delegate rate has been capped at £300 to help you and your staff access every strand of the SSAT network's flagship annual conference.

Once you've booked your place at the conference, you will be sent a prompt in the autumn term to make your workshop selections. Make sure you make your selection quickly to avoid disappointment!

*One free place is available to secondary schools paying the full annual secondary membership fee.

Sue Williamson is chief executive of SSAT and looks forward to welcoming you to the conference. Quality and equity are values that have always underpinned Sue's work in school improvement, both in her time as headteacher and at SSAT.

Professor Tanya Byron is a chartered clinical psychologist, returning to the SSAT National Conference by popular demand. Always entertaining, Tanya brings a fresh perspective on young people's psychological well-being and how we can help our students cope with the demands of high-stakes testing and entry into the competitive global jobs market.

Speaking in: whole conference plenary

Professor Tim Oates CBE will be speaking about progress and attainment, providing essential challenge to help school leaders make sure they are always striving for better. Tim will draw on examples of outstanding practice from England and the best international systems to give practical recommendations.

Speaking in: Raising the Bar strand

Tom Sherrington is a headteacher well-known for putting the needs of his students before the perceived dictates of policy. Writing as [@headguruteacher](#), Tom is a fierce advocate for doing right by young people. Tom reminds us that, as Stephen Covey says, 'the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing'.

Speaking in: Leading Learning strand

IT'S TIME TO MOBILISE YOUR NETWORK

INTRODUCING THE NEW FACE OF SSAT MEMBERSHIP

In challenging times, schools need to work together...
learn from each other, share problems, spark ideas and celebrate our successes.

As an SSAT member, you and your colleagues are already part of the biggest, most active network of secondary schools in the country. But now we need to mobilise. It's time to realise the potential of our great community for genuine, purposeful, nationwide collaboration.

Throughout next term you will start seeing some significant upgrades to your SSAT membership, each one designed to help us connect better and more usefully.

YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS WILL INCLUDE:

'I SAW THIS AND THOUGHT OF YOU!' STARTS OCTOBER	WEEKLY AT-A-GLANCE INSIGHTS STARTS AUGUST	FREE NATIONAL CONFERENCE PLACE AVAILABLE NOW!	COLLABORATION WITH PURPOSE STARTS OCTOBER
Your relationship manager – an SSAT adviser specially assigned to your school – listens to your priorities, hooks you up with schools who share your challenges and points you to relevant CPD, research and conversations.	Sunday Supplement delivers punchy news and innovation highlights from the network direct to your inbox. Ask the Expert offers a two-minute policy or research briefing on video, presented by SSAT specialists.	Time for our community to stand up and be counted. For the first time, every member school gets one free place (and further discounted places) to the National Conference, held this year in Manchester in early December.	Share your achievements, locate like-minded schools, get your nagging questions answered and join topic-focused collaboration groups and 'collaboratories' on K-Hub – SSAT's new online collaboration platform.
NETWORKING – ON YOUR DOORSTEP STARTS SEPTEMBER	GAME-CHANGING THINKING AVAILABLE NOW!	INDISPENSABLE TOOLS AVAILABLE NOW!	CPD THAT WORKS AVAILABLE NOW!
Celebrate your achievements and share ideas at our regional Policy Update and Educational Outcomes awards events. Or see what 'outstanding' looks like at the Leading Edge Sharing Practice days.	How innovative ideas turn into proven solutions. Exclusive inspiration via your termly SSAT Journal and the growing bank of case studies on your members-only website, the Exchange.	Benchmark your school's progress with SSAT's unique data aggregation tool, Educational Outcomes and empower your students with our Student Leadership Accreditation scheme – free to all members.	SSAT's 2015/16 programme is about delivering tangible outcomes through rigorous, purposeful collaboration. Membership gives you reductions of 30% and more.

What is the role of the local governing body in a MAT?

In this edition, lawyers Veale Wasbrough Vizards take you through the latest developments in education law.

Are you:

- Thinking about expanding your academy trust to work with other schools within a MAT?
- Thinking of joining a MAT but want to ensure that you retain some autonomy?
- Involved in a MAT and want to ensure that your local governing bodies are working effectively?

The local governing body (sometimes referred to as an 'Academy Council' or 'Advisory Body') is a key defining feature of a multi-academy trust (or 'MAT') and is a matter on which we are regularly asked to advise at Veale Wasbrough Vizards (VWV).

Increasingly, and in light of the funding pressures which many schools face, high performing schools are looking at the MAT option and are wondering how and to what level they can preserve local decision-making. In other cases, we advise established MATs

on ensuring the effectiveness of its local governing bodies in the context of a governance review.

KEY REQUIREMENTS OF LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES (OR LGBS)

Whilst there are certain parameters which legally apply to the operation of the LGB (as set out below), the specific role or function of any LGB is not legally defined and must therefore be determined by the board of trustees. When setting up an LGB the trustees will need to be mindful of the following:

- The LGB is a committee of the board of trustees. It is possible for a trustee to also be a member of an LGB but this is not a requirement. It is possible for there to be no trustees on an LGB.
- The board of trustees retains overall responsibility for the operation of the academies and can determine the level of delegation and the subsequent level of autonomy.



We are always pleased to hear about the legal topics that interest you. If you have a particular concern that you would like us to write about, please get in touch. We will ensure that all case studies are suitably anonymous.

To discuss your topic, please contact VWV partner Chloe Brunton, at cbrunton@vwv.co.uk or 0117 314 5301.



What is the role of the local governing body in a MAT?

- The act of delegation is not a shedding of responsibility but a delegation of a power or function.
- The funding agreement will ordinarily require that the LGB consists of at least two individuals elected by the parent body. It is usual for there to also be elected staff representation and representation from the community on the LGB.
- Depending on your Articles of Association, it may be possible to establish one LGB to oversee more than one school within your MAT.
- The Articles of Association might give power to a third party, such as a Diocese, to approve the terms of reference for an LGB.

The ethos and the local arrangements for governance will however, to a certain extent, be unique to each MAT.

THE ROLE OF LGBS

Even though the duties and responsibilities of running the MAT remain with the board of trustees, the role of the LGB member within a MAT is a valuable one in providing local governance as well as providing assistance to the trustees in the fulfilment of their duties.

Broadly, the role is to provide focused governance for an

academy at a local level. This will usually include:

- the monitoring of the academy's key performance indicators
- acting as a critical friend to the principal/headteacher, providing challenge where appropriate, and
- representing the views of the academy's local stakeholders.

Beyond that, the board of trustees needs to be clear what specific functions it requires the LGB to carry out and this should be set out clearly in written terms of reference.

In some cases, we see LGBs which are established purely as an advisory body. At the other end of the spectrum, we see LGBs with more substantial delegated decision-making power. It might be that in any one MAT there are LGBs which fall at opposite ends of that spectrum depending on the performance of the school and its governors.

Two particular areas where it is important to give detailed consideration are:

- the extent (if any) to which there is local control of the budget, and
- the authority that the LGB (and the school) has to enter into contracts on the MAT's behalf (again, if any).





It is crucial, irrespective of the level of delegation, that the role is clearly defined and that LGB members are empowered to fulfil their role with confidence. The functioning and effectiveness of the LGBs should form an important part of your governance review and the performance of the LGB will also be considered by Ofsted in its inspection as part of the leadership and management judgement.

COMMON ISSUES THAT WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED

These include the following:

- The LGB acts as though it is the governing body of a maintained school (in some cases therefore exceeding its powers).
- The terms of reference do not make it clear whether the function sits with the board of trustees or the LGBs leading to confusion and potential conflict.
- The LGB does not understand its role nor its value. This can lead to inactivity and over reliance on the senior leadership or the board of trustees or the resignation of good governors who have an important part to play in the overall accountability framework.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR LGBS

Through our extensive experience with MATs and through our lawyers' experiences as chairs

of LGB, we have devised some template terms of reference for LGBs which reflect those functions which are most commonly delegated to LGBs.

These terms of reference cover a variety of points such as:

- The composition of the LGB, including any requirements regarding parent representation which might be included in the MAT's funding agreement or any requirements regarding Diocesan representation which might be included in the Articles of Association
- The conduct of staff and parent elections
- The role of the chairman, the vice chairman and the clerk to the LGB (and details of their appointment)
- General provisions relating to the conduct of proceedings and the management of conflicts of interest
- Importantly, confirmation of the delegated powers and authority and the corresponding limits.

In addition, even within one MAT, it is possible to establish different terms of reference for each LGB, perhaps depending on the current performance of the school in question (some MATs refer to this as 'earned autonomy') or in circumstances perhaps where ➤

What is the role of the local governing body in a MAT?

the MAT operates some schools which have religious designation and some which do not.

When putting in place terms of reference and monitoring their effectiveness, the trustees need to ensure that:

- There are appropriate methods for reporting on and reviewing the effectiveness of the LGBs.
- The written terms of reference are reviewed annually.

RESERVING MATTERS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Whilst there are ways of providing that certain decisions and governance functions sit locally with the LGB, it is crucial to remember that the duties and responsibilities that flow from being a trustee (and therefore a director) continue to sit with the board of trustees, irrespective of delegations in place to the LGB.

For this reason it is important to expressly reserve certain matters to the board of trustees. Reserved powers will usually fall within the following categories:

- the law requires that a decision of the board (e.g. the sign off of the audited accounts);
- the academies financial handbook requires a decision of the full board of trustees (e.g. the approval of the budget); or

- the decision is of such fundamental importance that it should be a full board decision (e.g. the appointment of the CEO).

INTERVENTION

On a similar note and whilst the operation of the various tiers of governance will be crucial to the success of the MAT, there might be circumstances where the board of trustees needs to intervene and for example, withdraw delegated authority from the LGB.

It can be helpful to specify the types of circumstances where such withdrawal of delegation will take place. This might include:

- concerns about financial matters; or
- insufficient progress being made against educational targets (including where intervention by the Secretary of State is threatened or is being carried out);
- there has been a breakdown in the way the academy is managed or governed; or
- the safety of pupils or staff is threatened, including by a breakdown of discipline.

WIDER SUPPORT FOR YOUR MAT

Many of the MATs which we work with have also put in place our template Scheme of Governance which complement the terms of reference and which set out the

wider governance structure of the MAT. This includes, for example:

- The role of the members and who they are.
- The role of the trustees including agenda items, their accountability, powers and functions, conduct and risk management responsibilities.
- The appointment of committees and the clerk.
- The role of the CEO/executive principal including their role as the accounting officer.
- The relationship as between the board/CEO, the principals and the finance director.
- Reserved matters (being those matters which must be referred back to the board of trustees for consideration).

We can also support MATs with training for their LGB members on their roles and functions which again, draws on our practical experience in chairing LGBs.

If this would be of interest to you or you would like to discuss the governance of your academy trust, please contact Chloe Brunton on 0117 314 5301.



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