



# **SSAT**

*A celebration of  
30 years*

1987-2017



*Sir Cyril Taylor presenting Sue Williamson, then headteacher at Monks' Dyke Technology College, with the Findlay Publications Award – Achievement Award Technology Post-16 – in 1999.*

# **SSAT**

## *A celebration of 30 years*

1987-2017

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**SSAT, the Schools, Students and Teachers network**

*The mission continues*



# ***Foreword***

## **Welcome to this 30th anniversary celebration of the specialist schools and academies movement.**

We have come a long way since 1986, when prime minister Margaret Thatcher asked me to organise a conference for the Centre for Policy Studies on how to tackle the problem of youth unemployment. As a result of that conference, attended by Mrs Thatcher, Kenneth Baker and 20 leading industrialists, it was agreed that a new type of school should be founded to focus on teaching technical skills so that young people would be prepared for the job market when they left school. Kenneth Baker, then education secretary, invited me to become a special adviser on the initiative, a role I held serving 10 successive education secretaries until 2007.

Over the years 600 sponsors have contributed over £300 million pounds to the initiative, founded as a charity in 1987. It has developed from the initial 15 city technology colleges to specialist schools and academies with a wide range of specialisms, raising educational standards and developing expertise in teaching methods and practice.

Remarkably, it transcended party politics over that time, with both major parties recognising the extraordinary role that these schools have played in improving the standards of our children. I pay tribute to those sponsors who have given so generously of their time and money, many serving as governors and engaging with their schools.

Despite funding for SSAT being withdrawn in 2010, Sue Williamson and her team have now transformed it into a country-wide schools' association promoting best practice and improving school standards in this country. Today we celebrate the 30th anniversary of this powerful example of what can be achieved in improving the life chances of our young people. Above all, this is a celebration of all the teachers who have taught and nurtured our students over the years and believed in our vision.

***Sir Cyril Taylor, GBE, Founder Chairman, SSAT, (1987-2007)***



# ***Introduction***

**SSAT in its various guises has been important for me since 1993. As a deputy headteacher, I was exploring what technology college status might mean for a school.**

When I started as headteacher of Monks' Dyke High School in April 1994, I talked to the staff of the possibilities and, it was fair to say, not everyone shared my enthusiasm – many teachers did not like what they were hearing about city technology colleges. My research had led me to visit two CTCs – Brooke Weston and Thomas Telford – and I had been impressed by their focus on teaching and learning and their links with business. I asked Gareth Newman, principal at Brooke Weston, if I could bring my staff and governors to visit so they could see the college in action and speak to the staff. It was a turning point for my staff and in 1995 we became a technology college.

This status gave Monks' Dyke the impetus to embark on a determined drive of school improvement. As a headteacher, I found myself in a network that was focused on sharing and getting better results for all young people. At the annual national conference, my thinking was challenged and the gauntlet thrown down to do even better. I was determined that we would win an award and we did – four in fact.

In those early days, our improvement plan was monitored carefully and I remember two visits from Ken Shooter, HMI – one to see our work in design and technology, and the second to see if we could do better in science. A highlight was the visit of Sir Cyril Taylor to open our new art and science block. 'Why don't you call yourself a technology college?' was his first question. So we became Monks' Dyke Technology College. We enjoyed examination success, but, most importantly, we saw our students going on to pathways that they had never thought possible, and the staff developed into a formidable team with high expectations of each other and every child.

In 2002, I joined SSAT as director of affiliation with responsibility for membership and the national conference. In 2011, I became chief executive



*Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, delivering the trust's first annual lecture in 1996.*

just prior to the old company going into administration, and in 2012, I led the management buyout.

We were determined to keep SSAT going, because we believe it is an essential part of a school-led system. SSAT has always promoted collaboration, innovation, and links with employers; and learning from the best thought-leaders and practitioners from around the world. SSAT always encouraged headteachers to lead the system.

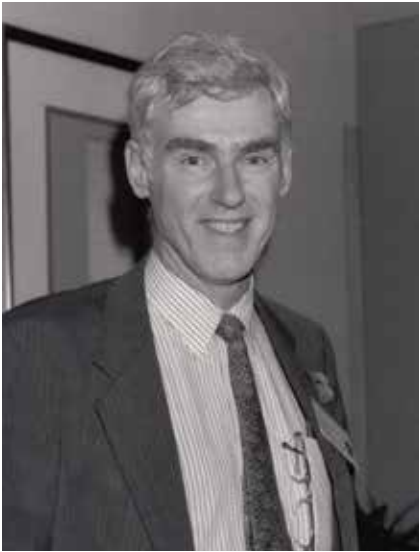
In 2010, Michael Gove had effectively ended the specialist schools programme by no longer ringfencing the funding, and stopping SSAT's grant. He saw little value in our network of schools, nor the support work that we had been doing successfully with the original academies. While we have not been able to maintain the specialism networks, we have kept the secondary, special and primary networks. The Conservative Party's manifesto for last week's election was advocating a maths college in every major city – until the 2010 government, the country had this, and much more. They also had the other specialisms, including sport run by Youth Sport Trust. These networks could and should have been driving a school-led system – which is what we are now working towards, with partners including the Chartered College of Teaching.

SSAT is well placed for the next 30 years – we have launched our leadership legacy project and have 125 teachers being inspired to become school leaders. This is in addition to our exciting range of leadership programmes – we know that a world-class school system needs outstanding leaders, not managers.

Our system needs great teachers and we have a wide range of professional development opportunities. We have always led on student leadership, and will continue to do so. Most importantly we will continue to give school leaders, teachers and students the chance to lead and to have their voices heard.

Whatever the colour of the government, whatever the structure of the system, it is essential that school leaders work together for the sake of the whole system. SSAT is the network that will stop schools/MATs becoming insular. SSAT has always stood for 'by schools, for schools' – we can do even more for schools now that we are independent from government.

*Sue Williamson, Chief Executive, SSAT*





*Photos (clockwise from top left):*  
Demonstrations at the national conference, showing teachers how to access what was then the latest digital technology; Sir John Lewis, Principal, Dixons CTC; Chris Woodhead, HMCI; Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State; Professor David Jesson; Lord Baker with Sir Kevin Satchwell; Ken Shooter, HMI.

*1987-1996*

***The first 10 years***



**1987**

The **City Technology Colleges (CTC) Trust** is established, with Sir Cyril Taylor as chairman and adviser to secretary of state Kenneth Baker.

**1988**

The first city technology college *Kingshurst CTC* opens, sponsored by Hanson PLC and Lucas Industries (*CTC sponsors are subsequently listed in brackets*).

**1989**

*Djanogly CTC* (Sir Harry Djanogly) and *Macmillan CTC* (BAT Industries) open.

**1990**

*Dixons CTC* (Dixons Group and Haking Wong Enterprises), *Emmanuel College* (Vardy Foundation), *Leigh CTC* (Sir Geoffrey Leigh and the Wellcome Trust) and *Harris CTC* (Philip and Pauline Harris Charitable Trust) open.

CTC Trust appoints six curriculum development directors.

**1991**

A further six CTCs open: *Bacons College* (Harris Charitable Trust, Southwark Diocese and the London Docklands Development Corporation); *Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College* (Haberdashers' Company); *Thomas Telford School* (Mercers' Company and Tarmac plc); *Brooke Weston CTC* (Garfield Weston Foundation and Hugh de Capell Brooke); *ADT College* (ADT Group); and the *BRIT School* (BRIT Trust).

**1992**

*Landau Forte CTC* (Landau Foundation and Forte plc) opens.

A government white paper proposes the creation of technology colleges.

CTC Trust launches its affiliation scheme.

**1993**

*John Cabot CTC* (Cable and Wireless and Wolfson Foundation) opens.

Technology colleges are launched, for grant maintained and voluntary aided schools only.

The first conference for affiliated schools is attended by 64 schools.

June marks 30 years since the start of the City Technology Trust in 1987, which through many changes of government and nomenclature over the years is now SSAT, the Schools, Students and Teachers network. In marking the occasion, we have received many heartwarming messages from former colleagues, school leaders, sponsors, educationists and thinkers with worldwide reputations.

Here are just a few of those messages.



## **David Hargreaves**

*Fellow emeritus, Wolfson College, Cambridge.*

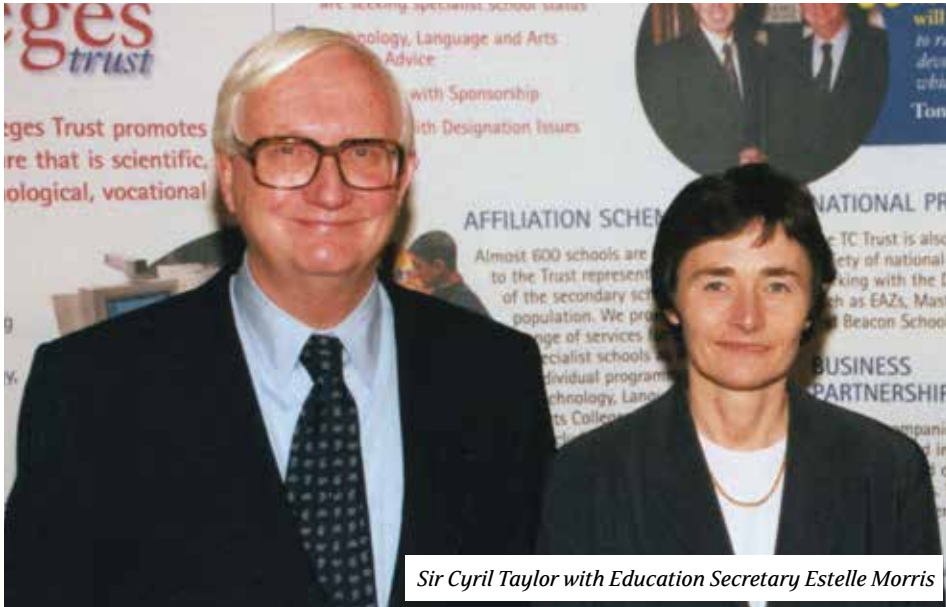
*Formerly professor at Cambridge University; chief inspector, Inner London Education Authority; chief executive, QCA; chairman, BECTA.*

**Working with Sue Williamson, Kai Vacher and Emma Sims on personalising learning, followed by 'the deeps' and then the idea of system redesign was one of the highlights of my professional life.**

The work we did for some five years was based on two simple notions. The first was that, in a climate of top-down government policy and Ofsted practice, school leaders needed to become actively innovative rather than passively compliant if the quality of school education was to improve. The second was our conviction that such innovation was already flourishing in some schools.

The courses for school leaders that we ran and the pamphlets we wrote were inspired by and drew on this outstanding practice. Our task was: to conceptualise it in ways that made it more coherent than a mere list of what to do next; and to disseminate it.

The need for continuing innovation by school leaders remains, as does so much outstanding practice. Fortunately SSAT is here to support, lead and distribute it. Happy birthday! Hold true to your mission as you set out on the next stage of your productive life.



Sir Cyril Taylor with Education Secretary Estelle Morris

**1994**

The first 50 technology colleges are approved.

The programme is opened up to all secondary schools.

Language colleges are announced.

**1995**

The first 16 language colleges are designated.

**1996**

Arts and sports colleges are announced.

Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, delivers the trust's first annual lecture.

The trust becomes the **Technology Colleges Trust**.

The number of specialist schools reaches 182, and there are more than 300 affiliated schools.

Shadow Education Secretary David Blunkett addresses the annual conference.



## **Baroness Sue Campbell**

*Chair, UK Sport 2005-13; chair, Youth Sport Trust*

**It makes me very happy to be able to say happy 30th birthday SSAT. It has consistently been a pleasure to work with SSAT, right from the hard yards run together during our shared focus on establishing specialist schools through to SSAT's current resurgence as a leading network for schools, students and teachers.**

You have always focused so clearly on identifying and sharing practitioner best practice and remained so close to the profession and their needs. It has been this, combined with strong values and a commitment to quality, that has supported your significant contribution to the education landscape in this country and beyond.

It was a pleasure to speak at your conference last December. As I talked about the journey from good to great I could easily have been talking about SSAT and your striving to provide the best possible support to schools and young people. It has been this moral purpose which has been the cornerstone of your longevity. So, from one Sue to another, may you continue to seek excellence and I fully hope to celebrate your 40th in ten years' time.



## **Marva Rollins OBE**

*Headteacher, Raynham Primary School, Edmonton, London*

**SSAT has opened up the world of schools across the country to each other, thus encouraging schools to look outward and share at a more national level. I value being a member and having the opportunity to visit schools, and to host events on behalf of SSAT. Many leaders and teachers now have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, share expertise and feel part of a team through SSAT extending its remit to include primary schools.**

It also offers members to be part of Think Tank opportunities which I have taken part in and found extremely valuable.



*Photos (clockwise from top):*  
Cyril Taylor with Tony Blair; and  
John Major and Princess Margaret on  
member school visits.



## **Stephen Tierney**

*CEO, Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust*

**At a meeting of SSAT's Redesigning Schools Group, over a decade ago, I gained a real sense of what great leadership could be and could do. I alternated between a sense of total admiration tinged with utter disbelief; these schools and leaders were doing things that seemed a million miles away from my daily life in a Blackpool school.**

My experiences with SSAT and the System Redesign work, in general, have guided much of my thinking, attitude and approach in the intervening years. It provided challenge; it taught me that the seemingly unobtainable, at times insane possibilities, are achievable. The fabulous annual conferences have been a regular booster, reminder and opportunity to meet up with old friends and valued colleagues.

To SSAT, Sue Williamson, David Hargreaves and the many other people who have worked for and with the Trust: I owe you so much. Thank you for the last 30 years. And here's to the next 30 years of influencing education and developing the people in it. For schools, by schools, with schools; Happy Birthday to you.



## **Pasi Sahlberg**

*Finnish educator; author, Finnish Lessons 2.0; visiting professor at Harvard University Graduate School of Education*

**It's been an honour during the past years to share my thoughts with SSAT's community. What SSAT celebrates is an open and honest exchange of ideas for better quality and equity in our schools. Personally I have also been privileged to meet interesting individuals both in the fields of research and practice through SSAT, for which I am grateful. Long may you run!**

*1997-2006*

***A specialist  
system***





**1997**

The first arts and sports colleges are designated.

The community dimension is introduced.

**1998**

Education Action Zones are introduced.

There is a new target of 500 specialist schools by 2000.

The programme is opened up to special schools.

**1999**

The first three special schools are designated.

The Excellence in Cities programme is launched.

**2000**

Affiliation numbers pass 1000.

The trust publishes its first analysis of educational outcomes.

The new academies programme is announced.

**2001**

A government green paper sets new targets of 1000 specialist schools by 2003, and 1500 by 2006. It also introduces four new specialisms: science, mathematics and computing, engineering and business and enterprise.

**2002**

A 'specialist system' is announced by education secretary Charles Clarke, with the removal of any cap on new designations. The Partnership Fund is introduced.

The trust's first full-time regional coordinators are appointed.

Prime Minister Tony Blair addresses the annual conference.

**2003**

The trust becomes the **Specialist Schools Trust**.

There are now 1444 specialist schools; affiliation exceeds 2000.

Two new specialisms – music and humanities – plus a rural dimension are announced.

The Leading Edge programme is announced.



## **Alma Harris**

*Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy,  
University of Bath*

**In 2005, I had the privilege of writing a pamphlet for SSAT on the theme of distributed leadership. More than a decade later, what has changed? What follows is not only a reflection on the pamphlet but also a recognition of the significant and transformational work of SSAT.**

Turning first to distributed leadership. In 2005, the idea was still emerging and, for some, was a little too radical and destabilising. Essentially, distributed leadership implies that we see leadership as practice rather than role. It emphasises that teachers have leadership influence and that their collective expertise and influence is a force for good in school and system transformation.

Fast forward to the present day, and distributed leadership is now a well-established and well-researched leadership model. It is no longer the 'new kid on the block', as professor Peter Gronn once described it, but instead has been elevated to be a globally recognised concept supported by a great deal of empirical evidence and practical interpretation in schools. The main point here is that SSAT, through its 30 years of writing and development work, has remained open to new ideas and readily tested them out with the profession.

Unlike many other organisations, SSAT continues to push the boundaries of knowledge and to challenge the status quo. For this reason, and many others, it remains one of the most grounded, influential, and principled organisations that acts on behalf of the profession.

As we face challenging and turbulent times, we need to recognise, celebrate, and thank SSAT for continuing to bring new ideas, fresh perspectives and new knowledge into schools and classrooms around the world. Its moral purpose has never wavered and the leadership of its current CEO has never failed to inspire. I have been enormously fortunate, both personally and professionally, to be part of this journey.

The trust establishes a National Headteachers' Steering Group.

Two new specialisms are announced: humanities and music.

## 2004

The number of schools affiliated reaches 2500.

Plans for 200 academies, and a new SEN specialism, are announced.

High Performing Specialist Schools (HPSS) are announced, including schools with a vocational second specialism.

The trust launches RATL (Raising Achievement, Transforming Learning) and iNet (International Network for Education Transformation).

The personalising learning campaign takes off. Professor David Hargreaves, associate director at the trust, holds a series of workshops with 250 schools, which produce nine 'gateways' to personalising learning. A series of conferences then explore the gateways, focused on assessment for learning, student voice, new technologies and learning to learn.

## 2005

2005 is a landmark year: schools affiliated to and working with the Specialist Schools Trust are collectively educating over two million children, to an increasingly high standard. Given responsibility for the academies programme, the trust changes its name to **Specialist Schools and Academies Trust**.

Its international arm, iNet, now includes schools and educationists in Australia, South Africa, Chile and Hong Kong.

## 2006

The total of over 2500 designated specialist schools nationally represent 80% of English secondary schools. Twelve pilot special schools enter the special education needs (SEN) specialism.

Over £8 million of sponsorship is secured by the trust from companies, individuals, trusts and foundations for aspiring specialist schools.

The 14th National Conference, held at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham, is attended by more than 1800 delegates from 964 schools. In his speech to the conference, Prime Minister Tony Blair says, 'This is now the largest education conference of the year and the trust the most dynamic education organisation in Britain.'



## **Barry Carpenter**

*Hon professor at universities of Worcester, Limerick, Hamburg and Flinders (Australia); former director of DfE research project on children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities.*

**In the area of special educational needs SSAT supported some ground-breaking and innovative work. As hosts of the DfE funded research project on complex learning difficulties and disabilities, they enabled teacher creativity to be released in the development of new and innovative pedagogy that truly addressed the needs of this new generation of children with complex SEND. These contributions continue to influence today, as demonstrated though the latest reforms in the field.**



## **Dylan Wiliam**

*Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment, University College London*

**When the City Technology Colleges Trust was founded in 1987 I was sceptical, and the subsequent use of the programme as a vehicle for the policies of successive governments did little to change my mind. However, as government funding declined, and the Trust increasingly had to rely on providing services that schools wanted, it came into its own, and really began to live its mission of being 'by schools, for schools'. It is now one of the most important membership organisations for schools in the UK, with reach and influence across the whole of the UK education sector and internationally. Happy 30th birthday, and best wishes for the future!**



*Photos (clockwise from top left):*  
Charles Clarke, Secretary of State; Tony Blair and David Blunkett on a school visit; David Miliband, Minister of State who inspired SSAT to lead the personalising learning agenda; Professor David Hargreaves who led SSAT's work on personalising learning.



## **Andy Hargreaves**

*Brennan Chair in Education, Boston College, USA*

**More than 10 years ago, SSAT approached me and my Boston College team to evaluate one of its projects called *Raising Achievement: Transforming Learning (RATL)*. It was a breakthrough. Three things made a lasting impression on our team; things that are integral to the lasting value and brand of SSAT globally.**

First, RATL taught us that you can raise achievement by getting schools to work with one another, by enabling struggling schools to recognise they are all in the same boat, and by connecting struggling schools to stronger partners. It had a huge impact on us and still does on many other systems that use our ideas.

Second, you can and should collaborate even, indeed especially, in market competitive systems. Left to themselves, markets widen inequities and isolate professionals. It needs strong professional forces and voices to provide countervailing influences and this is what SSAT has done. Paradoxically, therefore, while England has been one of the most robust promoters of market competitiveness, SSAT has significantly helped ensure that it is also an international leader in how to get schools and local authorities to work together and take collective responsibility for everyone's success. This is what the business literature calls co-opetition (a finding from later work on business, sport and education that SSAT supported).

Last, our first draft evaluation of RATL had some difficult findings as well as praise. The project raised achievement more than it transformed learning. But, to the delight of my US research team, these limitations were not treated as a fatal blow by SSAT but as a spur to further change and improvement. Openness and dialogue were possible and palpable in research partnerships with sponsors.

These things are the essence of SSAT as an inspiring and open partner of learning, advocacy, leadership and networking in education in the UK and across the world.

*2007-2011*

***Internationalism  
and system  
redesign***





## 2007

By year end almost 350 primary schools are affiliated as part of the SSAT family of schools. A national steering group of primary headteachers is established.

The trust supports 97 special schools' applications for specialist status, and the year ends with a total of 155 specialist special schools.

We forge good relationships with more higher education institutions, ending the year with 34 affiliated to SSAT.

The 198 schools involved in our RATL programme have improved at an average rate of 4.6 percentage points in the 5+A\*-C measure in the summer 2007 GCSE results, well above national rates of improvement.

The trust forms a system redesign network – initially partnering 10 highly successful, innovative schools – to determine the building blocks of system redesign in education for the 21st century in England.

We offer seven leadership programmes, including those designed for executive headteachers, new headteachers, aspirant heads, developing leaders, newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers. The leadership programmes engage

1075 teachers, from 769 schools. Programmes are accredited by the University of Warwick, enabling participants to achieve a full Masters degree in Innovation in Education.

Over 500 schools are involved with the RATL programme to improve examination performance for students aged 16. A team of 50+ school-based consultant heads and 75+ mentor schools deliver the programme. The results for the year show 75% of schools improving their performance since joining the project.

The number of schools affiliated to iNet, the international arm of SSAT, rise during 2007/08 to 1364, in 35 countries.

## 2008

The structure of the trust's funding has changed dramatically. The DfES specialist schools grant has halved to 24%, with 37% from other DfES-commissioned work, 35% from work won by competitive tender, affiliation fees, events, training provision, etc.

Nine student voice events include: student voice training for students and staff; student involvement in lesson observation and feedback; co-creating teaching and learning with students; and the SSAT/NESTA



## **Kirstie Andrew-Power**

*Associate Headteacher, Gosport and Fareham MAT;  
former SSAT director of membership and national conference,  
and head of programmes.*

**It is over 25 years now that I have been working closely with SSAT. The schools I have worked in have been active participants in SSAT networks from specialism, innovation and educational research, to programmes such as RATL, Leading Edge and TEEP. These personal professional opportunities have continued to influence my thinking and career.**

What has characterised working with SSAT networks has been the challenge, inspiration and motivation that come from engaging with fellow professionals, researchers and academics. This has involved shared 'heads' working on what seemed unsurmountable challenges in or for schools, learning from how another has tackled adversity or challenge, or enjoying the drive an innovation or new thinking provides. Working with and for SSAT has driven initiative or innovation, challenged boundaries, questioned and redressed inequalities. As a result it has secured improvement in and across schools, and supported a strong succession of educational leaders.

My personal highlights will always be the power of SSAT's national conferences to unite and inspire. It is with considerable pride that I reflect on the achievements and influence of SSAT and its networks of professionals over the past 30 years.

The current educational climate is more challenging than it has ever been. The need for the profession to remain in strong and supportive networks that influence, challenge, question and inspire has never been stronger; so the role of SSAT in enabling and leading this work is as crucial now as ever before in its 30-year history.



David Miliband, Guy Weston and Sir Cyril Taylor

student leadership and innovation conference. These events attract 499 delegates from 191 schools.

The 16th National Conference in November 2008 involves 357 students from 58 schools in leading workshops, performing, speaking on the main stage, interviewing and filming delegates, taking on work experience placements at the convention centre and working with the SSAT conference team.

### **2009**

The Lead Practitioner (LP) programme is becoming a significant contribution to the SSAT's objectives of building networks, embedding best practice and creating impact. It supports over 2,300 secondary schools every

year. Lead Practitioner Accreditation programme is launched, after development by school-based practitioners and headteachers working with universities and key leaders in education.

### **2010**

An independent survey of the Lead Practitioner programme finds over 90% of respondents believing that the LP programme makes a significant contribution to their CPD.

In September, the coalition government ends ring-fencing of grants to schools to fund their specialist status. Throughout 2010/11, the organisation decreases in size but continues to win contracts overseas, notably in Abu Dhabi where, as SSAT Middle East,



## **Stephen Farmer**

*Head of Secondary, Cranbrook Education Campus*

**As an SSAT Innovation Fellow, I was able to work with a marvellous group of talented educators from across the UK and an inspirational SSAT team including Sue Williamson, Andrew Macdonald-Brown and Kai Vacher. The skills, knowledge and experience gained as an Innovation Fellow allowed me to demonstrate measurable impact on whole school, cross-school and international levels. This exposure contributed to my rapid progression to Head of Secondary at the all-through Cranbrook Education Campus, part of the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust.**

Based on 'the deeps' research by David Hargreaves, we were able to bring deep learning and deep experience to thousands of students across the UK and USA. With its core message of 'by schools, for schools', being part of SSAT was a rich, varied and exciting part of my leadership journey. It is great to now be on the receiving end of a new and innovative SSAT that provides up-to-date information on educational updates, relevant research and an excellent range of CPD programmes. Here's to the next 30 years.



## **Debra Crouch (formerly Bryden)**

*Australian publisher Debra Crouch now lives in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where she writes science fiction for young adults and publishes an online journal for school leaders*

**I started doing online conferences for the Trust in 2000. I worked with the Vision 2020 group, some of whom I met when they were on a study tour to Melbourne in 1999. I was also editor of iNet's newsletter *Snapshots* for 3-4 years. The work I did with iNet was the most exciting, far-reaching and innovative of my career.**



*Ron Jacobs, DfE and Lady Butterworth, trustee*

it continues to operate a network of schools and work closely with the Abu Dhabi Educational Council.

SSAT publishes five booklets on special needs in education, led by Professor Barry Carpenter, an internationally respected specialist in children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD).

## 2011

The trust's contract with the DfE to support the sponsored academies programme ends in August, but it continues close links with academy principals and sponsors, and supports schools converting to academy status.

SSAT led the school-to-school support strand of the DfE's Gaining Ground programme from 2009-2011,

supporting 400 schools that had been identified as 'coasting.' NfER evaluation found the programme 'made a valuable contribution to enhancing participating schools' strategies, plans and interventions for improving pupil attainment and progression.'

The trust is now supported primarily by affiliation fees from its thousands of affiliated schools and the delivery of its events and activities. As a result, it changes its name to **The Schools Network**, reflecting the organisation's new position in education with its affiliation scheme, regional steering groups and practitioner-led training programmes.

Elizabeth Reid leaves the network in December and is replaced as chief executive by Sue Williamson.



## **Sir Michael Barber**

*Chairman, Delivery Associates and former head,  
Prime Minister's Delivery Unit*

**SSAT has made a decisive contribution to the last 30 years. Certainly during the years 1995-2005 when I was actively involved with developing and then implementing government education policy, I found SSAT an advocate of bold change and a constant source of inspired headteachers and great conferences.**



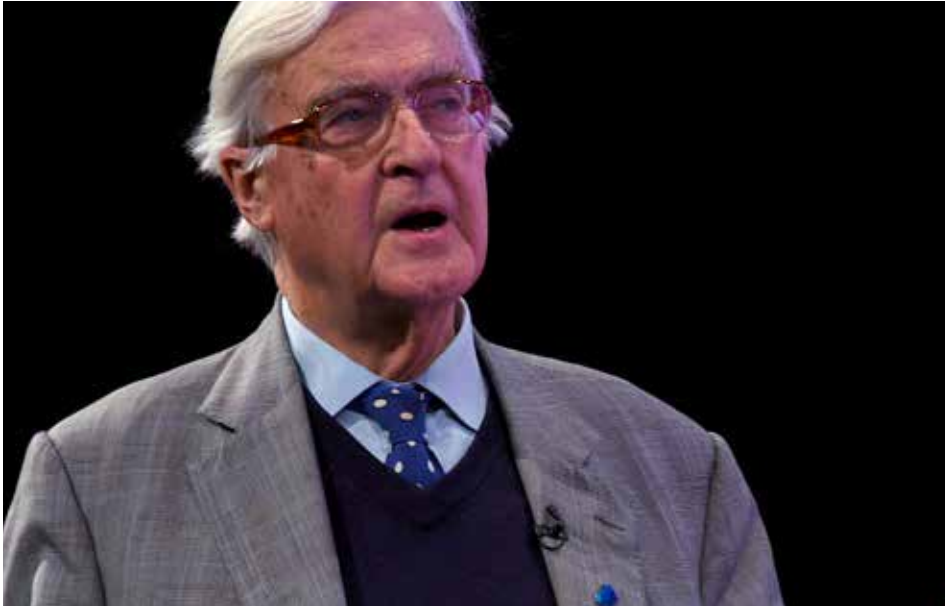
## **Pete Henshaw**

*Editor, SecEd and Headteacher Update*

**SecEd and Headteacher Update have worked closely with SSAT for the past 12 years. During that time the role and place of SSAT in education has evolved, but what has remained constant is that the organisation has always had a crucial influence on the policy agenda as well as on practice in schools. Today, that influence is more profound and far-reaching than ever.**

*SecEd and Headteacher Update* have long worked to spread best practice in education, to make the lives of teachers, support staff and school leaders easier, and to hold politicians and ministers to account. In this regard, I consider our two organisations to hold a close affinity and clarity of purpose.

The expertise within SSAT is what makes it such an influential organisation. It recognises and addresses the key issues facing schools and their leaders; it focuses unstintingly on lifting the barriers to achievement for all students, not least the most disadvantaged in our society; it is not afraid to take on the politicians and ministers in campaigning for what is right and effective in education. Long may this continue.



*Photos (clockwise from top):*  
Lord Baker; Sir John Bond, Chairman,  
HSBC; and Professor Sugata Mitra,  
a speaker at the SSAT National  
Conference 2010.



## **John Dunford**

*Education consultant; former general secretary, ASCL;  
pupil premium champion 2013-15*

**It seems hardly possible that SSAT is 30. With the countless education acts and policy changes during those years, it is important that principled, values-driven organisations such as SSAT continue to bring school leaders together and reinforce the moral purpose of what they do for young people.**



## **Brian J Caldwell**

*Managing Director, Educational Transformations  
Pty Ltd, Australia*

**SSAT has been a world leader in important ways and it has been a pleasure and honour for me to have an association with it.**

I highlight in particular its pioneering in the 1990s and 2000s of building a network of school leaders in many countries through its iconic iNet project *International Networking for Educational Transformation*. This linked school leaders in the UK to those in other countries and vice-versa, and there are thousands of leaders who have been beneficiaries. Its annual conferences have set the benchmark for the quality of input from influential leaders. Pride of place on my desk is a plaque marking my SSAT Fellowship presented in 2003. Long may SSAT have an honoured place in education.

*2012-2017*

***The Schools  
Network***





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**For 25 years our work has been largely government-funded. In 2012 that funding ends and we change our status. As a limited company we are now independent of government – and proud of it – but still as committed as ever to changing education by encouraging innovation and collaboration between schools.**

**2012**

**SSAT (The Schools Network)**

relocates to Islington, London with around 50 full-time staff.

We launch *Redesigning Schooling* – a campaign to ensure that the future of education is shaped by high-quality practice and research within the profession.

The annual publication *Educational Outcomes* for key stage 4, enabling schools to compare their performance with similar schools, becomes an interactive resource covering the full range of performance measures. Versions for KS2 and KS5 have since become available.

SSAT is asked by the DfE to run a series of national workshops supporting schools to become the new converter academies.

**2013**

Following our earlier work with David Hargreaves on personalising learning and ‘the deeps’, SSAT produces a series of pamphlets on Redesigning Schooling. These cover nine themes, including why change is needed, principled curriculum design, intelligent accountability, student impact in the redesigned school, assessment for learning, and the new professionalism.

Redesigning Schooling: national symposia in partnership with ASCL to include Dylan Wiliam, Chris Husbands, Bill Lucas, Guy Claxton, Tim Oates and Christine Gilbert.

The Vision 2040 group, chaired by headteacher Tom Sherrington, works on innovative research projects from Redesigning Schooling.



## **Scott Garrity**

*Head of Academy, QEGS (Derbyshire)*

**We always feel that SSAT have their finger on the pulse, they are not afraid to tackle head-on difficult questions/issues and they have a genuine student and school focused agenda. I am always reassured whenever I engage with SSAT that students are at the heart of our discussions and the profession as a whole is well respected at all levels, from TAs to executive headteachers, from caretakers to outstanding teachers. SSAT realises that everyone in a school environment has a key part to play – our job is to get the best from them.**

On a personal level I very much value the time to discuss, debate, disagree, think, reflect, challenge and be challenged with other outward-looking leaders. I love my job, I relish every day that I can make a difference to the lives of our future generations. Leading a school is a difficult challenge and SSAT help make the impossible possible!



## **Ross McGill**

*Teacher and blogger @TeacherToolkit*

**SSAT has existed for as long as I've been a teacher and has contributed to many teachers' professional development. Two personal highlights have been working as a Lead Practitioner in 2007/8, which was the beginnings for my 'life as @TeacherToolkit'; collaborating with others to share and create resources to support specific schools, departments and individual teachers. And presenting to my peers at the national conference in 2015. This professional network has given me the opportunity to grow as a school leader and as a classroom teacher.**



## 2014

SSAT becomes a member of the Coalition of Evidence Based Education (CEBE).

## 2015

The acronym of our name is updated to **SSAT, the Schools, Students and Teachers network**.

Trust project on embedding formative assessment with Professor Dylan Wiliam is awarded an Education Endowment Foundation grant: 140 schools are involved in the controlled trial.

SSAT introduces franchised National Award for Middle Leaders (NAML) programme, starting with 29 approved providers. In 2015-16 there were 143 participants nationally; in 2016-17, so far, there have been 493.

Vision 2040 group publish their 25-year vision for education, alongside SSAT's 2015 manifesto ***Building on consensus***.

During the summer, opposition from SSAT and other educational organisations sees a u-turn on the government's plans for a compulsory Ebacc, which the vast majority of educators in the country saw as a retrograde step.



## Colleen Young

*Deputy Head, Newstead Wood School*

**Two features of CPD which have always worked well for me are the opportunities to meet other teachers to exchange ideas, and to reflect through being away from school and mixing with new trainers/colleagues.**

These are what made SSAT's Innovation Fellows programme the ultimate in CPD for me:

- Learning, including about myself as learner.
- Collaboration, and myself as a team player. We talk to our students about being good team workers; we need to apply that to ourselves as well, the teachers becoming learners. The excellent online collaboration between members of my Innovation Fellows team offered the opportunity to practise team skills.
- Technology: I have always been interested in technology; on this programme I have explored many new tools, learned how to use them and how they can help students to learn.
- Writing and reflection: after this experience, I can honestly say to students that reflective writing, though perhaps difficult at first, feels more natural and valuable if you just keep doing it! Writing a story on Storybird for example that others in the class can admire has certainly been motivating for students. Web2.0 tools have given us all, myself and students, a sense of ownership.
- Creating a personal learning network: perhaps most important of all – being part of an online community.

## 2016

SSAT becomes a partner of the Fair Education Alliance.

SSAT's new self-evaluation and school improvement framework, Framework for Exceptional Education, free to all member schools, is driven by Leading Edge schools. So far, over 30 schools have achieved the highest level, 'transforming'.

The SSAT National Conference *Leading: making the impossible possible*, held at ICC Birmingham, includes Baroness Sue Campbell, Sir David Carter, Professor Andy Hargreaves, Sean Harford (the human face of Ofsted), Marcus Orlovsky and many inspiring and influential school leaders including Stephen Tierney, Joy Ballard, Angelina Idun and Nick Wergan.

SSAT has been one of the driving partners in the finally successful move to establish the Chartered College of Teaching, which gains DfE financial support for its launch.

## 2017

We launch an enquiry into assessment with ASCL and NFER, resulting in the publication *Refocusing assessment*.



Sir David Carter speaking at the SSAT National Conference 2016

SSAT's primary network consolidates a partnership with University of Melbourne (John Hattie and Janet Clinton) and works with EEF on the Visible Classroom Project.

Our moral commitment to support the development of the next generation of system leaders is exemplified by the introduction in 2017 of the SSAT Leadership Legacy Project. This is enabling 100 high-potential future leaders to take part in an exclusive year-long SSAT initiative to develop their skills, eg through meeting outstanding leaders and seeing and hearing how schools and MATs progress to outstanding.



## **Chris Smith**

*Customer and Digital Consultant at PwC;  
former SSAT leader on student voice*

I will always look back very fondly at my time with SSAT – I learnt and grew a lot. I valued the fact that conversations were centred around students; no one ever lost focus on the ultimate goal of education, which it could have been easy to do. I look forward to the next 30 years!



## **Andy Schofield**

*Visiting Research Fellow, University of Winchester*

All the time I was a headteacher, SSAT provided much of the inspiration and thought that drove educational developments in England. From publications to national and regional conferences, as well as brilliant networking and up-to-date help with whatever we needed, SSAT had a wealth of unmatched expertise. I was delighted to contribute to its work and salute all those who continue to fly the flag.



## **David Hopkins**

*Professor of educational leadership, University of Bolton;  
professor emeritus, Institute of Education, University College  
London and University of Nottingham*

The transformation of our secondary schools in the nineties and subsequently is a direct result of the vision of Lord Baker and Sir Cyril Taylor in the late eighties. It is fitting that we are now celebrating their signal contribution to the reform of our education system some 30 years on.



*Photos (anti-clockwise from top):*  
Lord Chris Holmes MBE and Marcus Orlovsky speaking at the SSAT National Conference 2016; Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive, Stonewall speaking at the SSAT National Conference 2015,



## **Yong Zhao**

*Foundation Distinguished Professor, School of Education,  
University of Kansas*

**I loved working with SSAT, through which I got to know many outstanding educators in the UK and around the world. The innovative culture, the bold visions, and the broad conceptualisation of education made SSAT a unique and exciting community to be a part of. I learned tremendously from my time with the organization. Happy Birthday, SSAT.**



## **Kai Vacher**

*Principal, British School Muscat; Operational Director,  
SSAT, 2002-11*

**My nine years at SSAT were the most incredible preparation for headship I could ever have imagined. I visited hundreds of schools, worked with some phenomenal school leaders and teachers; shared ideas with leading thinkers including professors David Hargreaves, Dylan Wiliam, Yong Zhou and Guy Claxton; and shared the stage at the ICC in Birmingham with the likes of Sir Ken Robinson, Sir Bob Geldof, PMs Blair and Brown, Gareth Malone, Karren Brady and Tanya Byron.**

Most importantly, for nine years I worked with a fantastic team of colleagues whose support, commitment and inspiration I will value for the rest of my life. SSAT believed in me, gave me incredible opportunities to grow, to flourish and to excel. For all that and much more, I shall be forever grateful.



***SSAT,  
the Schools,  
Students and  
Teachers network***

*The mission continues*

**SSAT is continuing its mission of helping schools to lead the way in training and development of teachers and school leaders at all levels, as examples of its successful and long-running programmes below illustrate. It also enables the recognition and celebration of success through awarding ‘status’, for example to TEEP Ambassador schools and Lead Practitioner Learning Centres.**

Among many examples of SSAT’s successful and ongoing work:

**SSAT Leadership programmes** in 2017 included the launch of new programmes for Chief Executives of multi-academy trusts and the High Performance Leadership programme, designed to enable learning from other sectors; alongside work with the University of Bath around middle leadership.

**SSAT Leadership Legacy Project**, sponsoring 125 potential school leaders for a year’s worth of programme, support and structured networking.

**TEEP:** to date, over 15,000 people have been involved in TEEP training since Sept 2010 when SSAT became involved. This includes early years, primary, secondary, UTCs, FE, support staff and prison educators.

**LP Programme:** has been refined over a number of years and used as the basis for a number of professional programmes,

including the Global Learning Programme. To date 845 lead practitioners have been accredited, with nearly 1000 more in the ‘aspiring’ LP state.

**The Leading Edge network:** since 2011, has been led by a steering group of headteachers from within the programme and managed by SSAT. It continues to support collaboration and innovation in high performing schools.

**Innovation Grants:** every school in the Leading Edge network has a chance to bid for £1000 funding to support an innovative project they are working on. Over 30 innovation grants have been awarded.

**The Framework for Exceptional Education** is available to all SSAT members: 34 Leading Edge schools have been accredited as ‘transforming’ in one or more of the ten strands of the framework.





**ssat** the schools, students  
and teachers network

Central House, 142 Central Street, London, EC1V 8AR

**Tel:** 020 7802 2300 **Email:** [info@ssatuk.co.uk](mailto:info@ssatuk.co.uk) [ssatuk.co.uk](http://ssatuk.co.uk)

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