

ISA

INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

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THE JOURNAL FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

ISA JOURNAL



Changing Perceptions of Independent Schools

- NOT ALL TOP HATS AND TOFFS
- THE TRUTH AND HOW WE CAN GET IT OUT THERE
- DANGEROUS MYTHS
- EARLY YEARS: NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE



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Welcome

FROM THE CEO

Neil Roskilly



The UK independent schools sector has a problem and it's one that it is only just waking up to. Parents at our schools love our schools, but that love is rarely replicated in parliament or the press. It's forgivable for Joe and Joanna Public to think that independent education in this country is expensive and only for the elite. Even if they could afford the nosebleed-inducing high fees often quoted, they wouldn't choose to mix with the offspring of toffs, money-launderers and oligarchs that reportedly infest our corridors. It's a miscalculation perpetuated by a press that seems obsessed with a few expensive schools, particularly if an alumnus happens to have committed some criminal act or has just fleeced a pension pot. The reality, as many of the articles in this edition of the ISA Journal show, is of course somewhat different.

It's a classic PR challenge turning what some see as a toxic brand into a firm of aspiration and endearment: cigarettes into Apple iPads, or fetid water into Chablis. Few of the public have any sympathy for the challenges the sector faces over local business rates, charitable status or pensions. Independent-educated parliamentarians rarely raise their voices in our support. Many parents who choose independent education don't broadcast the fact too loudly, afraid of becoming social pariahs. Even where huge sacrifices make reasonable fees only just affordable, independent education is presented apologetically and as a necessity due to poor state provision.

The sector has spent years countering this decline in public aspiration and affection with a barrage of facts, outlining increasing bursary provision, growing partnership activity, contributions to the local economy and even the savings parents make by not educating their children in the state sector. Little of this gains much traction, it seems.

So, what's going wrong? Parents from all backgrounds want the best for their children and education is often top of their list. Overseas parents flock to our doors, despite the barriers that the Home Office raise, so why is it that we can't seem to break through the superficiality of public perception when it comes to our

schools? If those delivering news about our sector only serve to perpetuate the misconceptions, perhaps it's time to let the real stories sing out, from the thousands of parents and children who recognise that our schools are simply life-changing. It's their stories of love, care and achievement beyond the wildest expectations that will, slowly but surely, change the mood. It couldn't come a day too soon.

Neil Roskilly
ISA CEO

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Front Cover photo: Kingscourt School (ISA LW)



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Get Vital Updates from ISA

Make sure that you get the latest sector updates from the ISA newsletter. Its full of advice on important issues that affect your school, so don't miss out. Check your spam filter and ensure ISA has your direct email address, as some PA's have been known to delete and not pass on. Also, sign-up to ISA's online community for instant updates and community-wide support. Just email neil.roskilly@isaschools.org.uk for access.

School news

SCHOOLS FROM ACROSS THE ISA SHARE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS



Families plant 70 trees to create a forest trail

ABBEY GATE COLLEGE (N)

Families from Abbey Gate College Infant and Junior School came together to plant 70 young trees to create a new forest trail for outdoor learning. Families were invited to sponsor a tree and participate in a tree planting afternoon. Parents arrived with spades at the ready to plant their tree with the help of their children. Trees were tagged with a number and planted randomly so future generations can search for their family tree. The trees were planted to enhance the current outdoor learning facilities which connect pupils to nature by providing rich learning experiences. Headmistress, Marie Hickey said: "Pupils and their families will be encouraged to visit their trees and keep in touch with Abbey Gate College as they grow and progress through life. An enjoyable, educational and fulfilling afternoon was had by everyone."



Showjumper selected for Team GB

HULL COLLEGIATE SCHOOL (N)

Holly, a Hull Collegiate School student, is one of four showjumpers from across the UK to be selected by British Show jumping to represent Team GB, at the under-16s Show Jumping Nations Cup.

Alex Wilson, Headmistress of Hull Collegiate School, said:

"We are all incredibly proud of Holly and will be thinking of her when she competes. She has shown real commitment and determination to get this far and thoroughly deserves the success she has achieved."

The selection process is notoriously competitive with numerous showjumpers competing for a LeMieux Team GB place in the Nations Cup, but Holly managed to secure her position after several top ten finishes in multiple competitions over the last year. This includes reaching the finals of the World Cup Pony Show in Belgium last December.

Holly is competing on her stallion Rexter D'or – a Connemara cross Selle Français grey pony – which she has been riding for the last year. She said:

"I'm ecstatic that my pony and I have been selected. It's always a real honour to compete for your country; I'm really looking forward to it and hope to do myself proud."

The competition, which pits European show jumping teams of five riders against each other, took place in Opglabbeek in Belgium last April.



SCHOOL NEWS

If you want to share with us some exciting news about your school, please send a press release for our website and/or journal to jennie.quillen@isaschools.org.uk. Please don't forget to include high-resolution pictures.



MJS student shines light on global issue

MALVERN ST JAMES (M)

Lily, a Year 12 pupil at Malvern St James Girls' School (MSJ), has raised over £600 for a leading marine charity after creating a fashion show to raise awareness of the damage that plastic is doing to our oceans. Lily drew on her love of fashion for her Extended Project Qualification to design and make 14 unique outfits that were modelled in a catwalk show – 'Trashion' – at MSJ. She chose to support Ross-on-Wye based charity, Marine Conservation Society, the UK's leading charity for the protection of our seas, shores and wildlife. 'Trashion' was endorsed by Elle Magazine UK and the Herefordshire-based company Two Farmers. Lily used upcycling and recycling to create her designs, bin bags, shower loafers, party tablecloths, bags, foam netting, straws and duct tape were just some of the plastic 'trash' that Lily used in her designs. Mrs Olivera Raraty, MSJ's Headmistress said, "Lily's event was a real triumph. She spoke so confidently and passionately about the pieces she had created and gave the audience some very powerful messages about upcycling, and playing our part to protect the environment through the day to day choices we make."



Infant and Junior pupils enjoy special learning power week, powered by parents!

LVS ASCOT (LW)

Pupils as young as four enjoyed a special themed timetable as parents and teachers came together at LVS Ascot's Learning Power Week in February. The event allowed Infant and Junior pupils to enjoy parent-led sessions across a range of talks and activities. Fascinating talks and demonstrations from parents included Louise Holmes, part of the Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue Team. She brought in two dogs called Risk and Diesel to demonstrate, by hiding away pupils in the school playground, how the dogs track missing people and alert the team when found. Further parent career talks from jewellery designer Mrs Andrews and Mrs Southam from Cisco IT were followed by pilot Mr Jenner who captivated his young audience with details of flying planes and how to forge a career in the aviation industry. Sessions on empathy and reflection, with a range of mindfulness activities, perfectly rounded off an exciting and engaging week that brought parents and teachers' expertise together to advance pupils' knowledge.

Head of LVS Ascot Infant and Junior School Rachael Cox said: "It's a very unique and rewarding way for young pupils to develop key skills. Learning Power Week helped them work in a really engaging way. All our pupils learned a lot of new things, worked together and had fun along the way, which fits perfectly with our ethos".

School news

CONTINUING OUR COVERAGE OF EVENTS AND NEWS ACROSS THE ISA COMMUNITY.



Healthy Schools Award for The Gower School

THE GOWER SCHOOL (LN)

As a result of completing and meeting all the criteria on the Camden and Islington health and wellbeing review, The Gower School is now recognised as a Camden and Islington Healthy School, also being awarded the Healthy Schools London Bronze award. A 'Healthy School' is one that demonstrates that an effective foundation to support pupils' health and wellbeing is provided. The Gower School provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to be physically active; both as part of the curriculum and after school hours and school menus that are well balanced and drawn from a range of cultures providing pupils with a wide range of tastes and flavours. Helen Cameron, Health and Wellbeing Manager at School Improvement Service for Children, Employment and Skills, Islington Council said: "Miss Haigh has done a great job in ensuring the school meets all the relevant criteria. The completed review clearly reflects the range of activities and practices you have in place to support pupils and your school community."

Learning about Fairtrade

DERBY GRAMMAR SCHOOL (M)

Derby Grammar School's Year 6 pupils have been learning all about Fairtrade and have been trying out what they've learnt in Christian Aids' Chocolate Trade Game. The school works closely with Tanya Noon, Central England Co-Op member and Community Relations Officer to deliver the programme. Initially Year 6 visited the local Co-Op store in Littleover to find out more about ethical sourcing of products, before taking part in the Chocolate Trade Game workshop back at school. The game highlights the role of international trade in the manufacture and marketing of the chocolate and the way that the trading system affects the lives and livelihoods of the farmers. The roles within the game include Fairtrade and independent cocoa farmers, Fairtrade and independent chocolate companies and supermarkets. By taking part in the game pupils can see for themselves the difficulties experienced by the workers in the chocolate trade and the benefits of fair trade. At the same time, they work together as teams, negotiating their deals.



Cundall Manor School celebrate 60 years

CUNDALL MANOR SCHOOL (N)

A leading North Yorkshire school is celebrating 60 years since it welcomed its first pupils. Pupils and staff at Cundall Manor School, based between Thirsk and Ripon, gathered to



celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the school opening. On January 27 1959, Cundall Manor opened its doors for the very first time and has seen the school go from strength to strength. Sixty years later, pupils and staff gathered in the late January sunshine to celebrate with cake on the lawn in front of the original manor house. The anniversary celebrations will continue throughout the academic year with a series of events planned, culminating in the Diamond Cundall Ball on Saturday 22 June 2019. Joint Heads, Amanda Kirby and John Sample, were on hand to lead the celebrations. John Sample has been teaching at the school for nearly 20 years. He said: "It is an honour to lead the 60th anniversary celebrations. Days like this will live long in our collective memory and we are delighted that we can provide so many wonderful opportunities for our pupils."

ACS Cobham win gold at the world school games

ACS COBHAM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (LW)

ACS Cobham International School Girls Soccer team won gold in dramatic style at the World School Games in Dubai in January, defeating reigning champions St.Saviours from Nigeria 1-0 after extra time. The World School Games is an annual multi-sport three-day event for U11 students from schools across the world. A brilliant goal in extra-time by Tournament MVP and Golden Boot winner Natalie Vernier won ACS Cobham the gold medal on its debut in the competition, sparking jubilant celebrations at full-time. Adam Hault, Lower School PE teacher

and team manager was full of praise for his fledgling squad, "We are extremely proud of how our girls team performed throughout the tournament in winning this prestigious event in Dubai. They were unfazed on the big stage and played some quality football. It has been an enriching experience for our younger students to travel and compete against schools from different countries."



Bronze award for the second fastest growing independent school in the country

MYDDELTON COLLEGE (N)

Myddelton College, an independent co-educational school in Denbigh for students aged 9 to 18 have extended their commitment to our Armed Forces and have received the bronze award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) having already pledged to align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. Myddelton College, the second fastest growing independent school in the country, have been recognised for their commitment to support those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families. Furthermore, Myddelton College will offer a 20% discount on school fees to the sons and daughters of serving or retired members of the Armed Forces, a gesture that aims to give something back to those who have served our country.



New boarding house at Sherborne International School

SHERBORNE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (SW)

Sherborne International continues to improve its boarding facilities to keep pace with increasing demand. In January 2021, the School plans to open a newly built boarding house with accommodation for up to 40 pupils, only a short walk from the main School campus. Tim Waters, Principal of Sherborne International, said "I am delighted to announce the planned construction of a brand new, purpose-built, boarding house for Sherborne International pupils. The new boarding house will be modern, more cost efficient and will ensure our students have top quality rooms to match the exceptional care they receive from our House and Teaching staff. These improvements will ensure that the School continues to provide our pupils with the very best possible introduction to British education and culture". This exciting work is part of a wider strategy to restructure the School to reflect changes in demand for its services and to better meet the needs of its pupils.

KEY

SW-SOUTH WEST ■ N-NORTH ■ E-EAST ■ M-MIDLANDS ■ LN-LONDON NORTH ■ LW-LONDON WEST ■ LS-LONDON SOUTH

For more ISA school news, please visit www.isaschools.org.uk/category/isa-news/

Changing public perceptions of the independent sector for the better

Julie Robinson



When I was a prep school head, I was amazed to hear prospective parents say that my school was “not for people like us”. Even fee-paying parents would frequently say “we are not your usual kind of parent”. There was a prevailing assumption, perhaps, that parents who pay fees are posh or snobby or different in some way from other families. We know that our sector is more varied and accessible than its portrayal in the media suggests. How can we get the reality across despite a generally hostile media and unsympathetic socio-political mood?

The image of the independent schools sector has been problematic for as long as we can all remember. On the one hand, our parents seek the best education for their children’s needs and they are willing to pay for that choice. A typical independent school family has two working parents and one of their salaries pays the fees. They often make sacrifices in order to prioritise this choice and are clearly doing what they feel is best for their

children. It is their right, after all, to spend their own money how they wish and at the same time they are saving the state by not taking up a state school place which they have paid for through tax.

On the other hand, the reputation and portrayal of private education in the national media centres on embarrassingly elitist institutions charging the highest boarding fees for children who are increasingly alienated from reality, wear strange uniforms, feel arrogantly entitled to all the best jobs to the detriment of meritocracy... and speak in a strange way. How dare we support such divisive and classist institutions?

Of course our schools are not like that. Why is our image so outdated?

Partly, it is because people with no first-hand experience fall back on stereotypes and fiction book portrayals. Partly, because the media treats our sector as a minority sport, deliberately using extremely old and misleading photographs of boys in top hats to illustrate most independent school stories. Also because much is written about classist inequality in society and our schools are used as a symbol of this, symptomatic of all that is wrong with upper class, entrenched privilege.

The reality, as revealed by ISC’s annual census findings , is very different from the lazy stereotypes. The average independent school is more likely to have under 350 children, charge lower fees than those frequently quoted in the media and look and sound just like any school that wants the best for its children. Thanks to parental fee income, our schools are able to operate with a higher budget than state schools.

ISA schools, whether or not they are charities, understand the importance of social responsibility. They are engaged in

collaborative work with a range of other school types and ISA heads and teachers do their very best for their children, as in any school. They take a wide range of children from different backgrounds as well as, importantly, actively supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities. They are far more accessible than the public is led to believe by our critics.

“Current parents should not feel embarrassed or guilty for doing what they feel is best for their children”

How can we turn public perception around?

It seems that defending our schools with the bare facts does not always cut through anti-sector rhetoric effectively. The majority of the population lacks experience of the true nature of our schools and our challenge is to provide positive, first-hand experience of today’s schools to set the record straight.

When ISC ran focus groups with members of the public, they began with predictable expectations: private schools are all about unfairness and elitism; they are bad for the country. Yet once shown the facts about collaboration between independent and state schools, the facts about taxes paid (over £4billion per year) and state school funding saved (£3.5billion per year) , members of the public became far more open-minded about the value of our sector. I am left in no doubt that if this had been followed-up with experience of an ISA school, those families would have consolidated a far more positive view of the sector.



THE ROCHE SCHOOL (LW)

Unfortunately, we know that politicians and the national media are easily predisposed against us. But on a local level, one-to-one, we really can make a difference and that is the aim of the local engagement work within ISC's public affairs strategy (details available on the ISC website).

It is important to turn around public perceptions of the sector because independent schools are marketing in an uncertain economic climate at the moment so the value and benefits of independent schooling need to be clear. Current parents should not feel embarrassed or guilty for doing what they feel is best for their children. At the same time, independent school teachers in our sector deserve to feel good about their vocation, creating safe and stimulating learning environments in which all children can thrive.

If the wider public, prospective teachers and politicians could see that our sector is a national asset (which we believe it is), rather than a block to social mobility enabling us to better work together for

the benefit of the UK's diverse education system as well as the country's economy.

As the voice of the independent education sector, ISC lobbies ministers, MPs, the DfE, DIT and Treasury, it is case studies and real life examples that make the most powerful difference in lobbying. The same is true when dealing with the media: case studies count.

Anti-sector attitudes pose a potential barrier to the positive good our schools can do because they might block cross-sector collaboration with state schools. One way through this is to develop school links between staff/governors/proprietors/suppliers that enable those involved to discover opportunities for working in partnership and bring economies of scale and other benefits. ISA schools prove on the website www.schoolstogether.org that whether or not they are charities, independent schools can create helpful partnerships in local areas with other schools and across the community.

The narrative change can begin with individuals—your contacts, your parents,

staff and even pupils demonstrating that you are friendly and showing by example that you are a positive force on society.

Your local press can be far easier to deal with than the national media and schools can place positive stories about partnerships, bursaries and community outreach, demonstrating the relevance of our schools to society. In every case, this could help readers re-examine their prejudices and think again about our schools as helpful contributors to the community.

Schools could invite your local MP and councillors in to demonstrate interest in local issues and to show how you are serving local people, employing constituents and benefitting the local economy. An online tool to calculate your school's contribution to GDP is available on dataportal.isc.co.uk .

By reporting partnership working more effectively on schoolstogether.org and measuring the impact of projects (ISC's impact evaluation tool could be useful here), each independent school can demonstrate its value.

There is no substitute for personal experience, so any opportunity you provide for local people to visit your school helps move us towards a better understanding of the reality of the independent sector as a friendly, accessible and important provider of capacity and specialism across the education system.

We should not apologise for our excellent schools, we should be proud to share our successes and it is up to all of us to let people know about and experience the reality of our sector (more accessible than they think and not snobby!). If we don't promote this message, our critics might prevail.

ISA's conference this year included an invitation to Robert Verkaik, author of "Posh Boys-how the English public schools ruin Britain" as well as Professor Francis Green, co-author of "Engines of Privilege-Britain's Private School Problem". This creates the opportunity to engage our critics in conversation about the real independent sector and shows ISA doing its bit to demonstrate the normalities of our sector in the face of their unfair generalisations.

We don't deny that there is inequality in education, we just can't agree that our sector's schools are a cause.

We cannot solve society's inequality problem. But removing us won't help.

Sutton Trust findings demonstrate that independent schools are less socially selective than the top 500 state schools. This kind of unfairness exists with or without the independent sector.

Any perceived barrier between independent schools and other school types is counterproductive but the politics of envy are playing out here: it's not fair, they say, that a disproportionate number of today's top-earning professionals were schooled privately. Well, that proportion is based on people who went to school in the 60s so it's quite out of date.



LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL (LW)

You might remember Michael Gove writing in 2017 in favour of charging VAT on fees "to soak the rich"?

We know that independent school parents are not all rich. Damaging our sector might be effective virtue-signalling but would not help the state sector, in fact it would put more pressure on an already-stretched state system.

When local state schools understand that independent schools are open to working together, there can be an alliance that helps all and that is why ISA and ISC signed-up to a Joint Understanding with the Government in March 2018 that undertakes to encourage partnership working in a range of ways voluntarily, for mutual benefit and according to each school's capability and capacity.

ISC and ISA schools will continue to do all we can in public messaging, lobbying and campaigning to help the world recognise the true nature of our sector. We have to shout about the value of our sector because generally people do not realise how much good our schools do for the

country and there is a tendency to criticise and cut us down. We would like to create a situation where socially and politically we are recognised as useful to broader society and encouraged to thrive because we believe that's better for everyone, including the state sector.

Julie Robinson is the Chief Executive of the Independent Schools Council. Julie was a teacher, housemistress and head of two prep schools.

In 2015, Julie became General Secretary of the Independent Schools Council. ISC's research, data and analysis inform campaigning and messaging on behalf of the sector.

ISC is the coordinating body bringing together AGBIS, GSA, HMC, ISA, IAPS, ISBA and the Society of Heads along with affiliates BSA, COBIS, SCIS and WISC to promote the sector and protect joint interests.



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What ISA Means to Me: “Every Member Matters”

Contributions from eight different ISA Members giving a personal view of the Association

On 28 February 2019, the Lord Lexden OBE, ISA President, kindly hosted a drinks reception in the beautiful River Room at the House of Lords to celebrate ISA reaching 500 members. The event was attended by colleagues from ISA HQ, Directors of the Association and ISA Members from across the country. Lord Lexden presented a toast to the Association and Matthew Adshead, ISA National Chair, responded.

Following the drinks reception, the guests enjoyed a celebratory lunch in the stunning ballroom at the Lansdowne Club, Mayfair. During the lunch, several guests were invited to stand and contribute their thoughts on “What ISA Means to Me”. Some edited extracts from these brief speeches are reproduced for you here.



LORD LEXDEN, RUPERT SNOW, DAI PRESTON

John Wood, Vice President

I is for INDIVIDUALITY: What struck me when I first joined ISA was how diverse and varied our schools were, and indeed how our members and the Association actively celebrated this.

S is for SUPPORT: Foremost for our members; and I can personally attest to the wonderful, and very personal, support I received in dealing with some inevitably difficult times which I experienced during my time as a Head.

Finally, A is for AMITY: For me the fellowship I have experienced and the friendships I have made during my time as a member have been absolutely central in enabling me to succeed in the demanding role we all undertake. We are truly The Friendly Association, and long may that continue!

Paul Moss, Vice President

The most poignant and important point in education is the point where the teacher meets the child. Everything shows itself at that moment, respect, love and knowledge. ISA, although adept at dealing with politics, administration and management, has never moved very far away from the memory of the realism of education and the nourishment of children. Its training, conferences and meetings reveal a fine body of headteachers, in touch with their schools, in touch with their staff and in touch with the needs of children. This has resulted in an association full of humanity, friendship and complete generosity of spirit. It has been an honour to be part of this outstanding force in education.



MADELINE TAYLOR, CRAIG WARDLE, JAMES WILDING

Angela Culley, Vice President

Looking back on 30 years of headship with pride and wonder, I am also looking forward to still being part of this wonderful organisation and hopefully helping the next generation of heads to be able to say the same. ISA: An amazing association which is an honour to both serve and share.

Phil Soutar, Rosemead Prep (LS)

There are those that say that Headship can be a lonely place. Well I say, not if you are a Head with membership of ISA. I am so pleased over the years to have made so many true friends through the association. Friends you can trust, rely on, who understand, listen, share and care.

I am fiercely proud of this association, for what it stands for and the work that it does, what it offers me and my school, and would like to congratulate every one of our 500+ members in making it what it is today.



ISA 500 MEMBERS CELEBRATION,
LANDSDOWN CLUB

Pam Hutley, Hollygirt School (M)

Ode to the ISA
 On the train
 And feeling somewhat bold
 I penned this poorly rhyming ode...
 The Independent School Association is
 The best heads' organisation in the nation
 What we all do for
 Our pupils and teams
 Neil and the office do for us
 It seems.
 They help us through the snares and traps
 Of policy and legal stuff
 Support us through our heads' mishaps
 And guide us when we're not feeling
 Good enough to do our jobs.
 And for those with self-doubt
 Or misguided defiance
 ISA steers all to
 Regulatory Compliance.
 The newsletter, an awesome tome
 Of seventeen pages
 Gives updates, motivation, inspiration which
 Takes ages
 To digest with all its hyperlinks
 And references and promises of high jinks
 At conferences.
 It steers us through the TPS and NQTs
 The ISIs and ISCs
 And even sows a creative seed by
 Recommending books to read.
 We learn our lessons
 Feast our brain
 Whilst Neil and company take the strain of
 Sifting through the piles of matter
 To synthesize our bitesized platter.
 With opps in schools in
 Music, writing, art and sport
 There's no excuse for any cohort not
 Gaining publicity at least (if not fame)
 The bestest thing without a doubt
 Is the fun and camaraderie about.
 And joy of joys for every Head
 To be entertained in Eastbourne by Brian Blessed
 And Level 42- who?
 We should all rise for a standing ovation
 To this most esteemed organisation.

James Wilding, Claires Court (LW)

I have been in education for five decades, and in headship for four. What I found on first meeting with other ISA members was not 'someone in charge' but something of even greater value, that being a collective wisdom of headteachers and proprietors which inspires and informs me still to this day. I am honoured still and proud to be an ISA member, and don't plan to give up anytime soon.

Ian Sterling, Castle House School (M)

As a new Head of a School which has previously faced challenges I have the responsibility to ensure we are compliant and informed. To be able to share this responsibility by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of all at the ISA office ensures that the decisions I take on a daily basis are well guided and are in the best interests of staff, pupils and parents. The ISA office has been a well-used, 'speed dial' option I have frequently relied on, for an immediate, reassuring and professional response.



LIZ BROWN, PHIL SOUTAR, PENNY FORD



ISA 500 MEMBERS CELEBRATION, LANDSDOWN CLUB



ISA 500 MEMBERS CELEBRATION, LANDSDOWN CLUB

Gareth Collier, Cardiff Sixth Form College (SW)

Today is about celebrating the progress that ISA has made as an organisation in expanding to reach the milestone of 500 Members. This is an admirable and noteworthy achievement and I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the celebration and for Lord Lexden's arrangement of the House of Lords for the official reception. However, it is a little ironic that we gather here today to celebrate such a large number as for me, the ISA is special as it treats every member as an individual. No mean feat when the organisation is so large. The message that I receive when making contact with ISA officers is that "I am important to them, more important than anyone else at that time". This promotes the idea that for the ISA, 'Every Member Matters' and I believe that the message of the association going forward would do well to let everyone know that this is key to our appreciation of their services.



ISA 500 MEMBERS CELEBRATION, LANDSDOWN CLUB

Changing perceptions of independent education today

Claire Osborn

Claire Osborn, ISA Vice Chair and Headmistress of Braeside and Normanhurst schools, is thankful for the diversity in independent schooling today, and for the positive contribution our schools are making to lives within and beyond our school communities.



What is it really like to be part of independent education today? One thing is for certain: it is unlikely to be anything like the elitist stereotype often presented in the media. The diversity of schools within ISA is a remarkable thing. Each of our 500+ schools is different; each has its own identity and character, its own vision and values, yet there are principles that many ISA schools seem to share. Value for money, breadth of opportunity, nurturing the individual child, partnership with families, a focus on the future, a desire to work collaboratively with other types of school and a commitment to enabling as many families as possible to benefit from what we can offer are just some.

Perceptions of independent schools are often skewed. When we do hear and read

about independent schools in the press, we are usually being presented with the image of establishment bastions of privilege, accessed by only the most wealthy, with a culture of entitlement and which seem removed from real life today. This may be offset occasionally by individual examples of schools 'making a difference' and opening their doors to young people who would not have the opportunity to attend otherwise. But not often.

My experience of independent education in the UK today is very different. Were I to be asked to sum up independent schools today and to describe the sector as I recognise it, I would say that independent schools are outward-facing, connected and do not want to be little islands out of touch with the real world. They are collaborative and used to working together with other schools, just as often in the state sector as otherwise.

Far from being flooded with money and sitting on sizeable trust funds, many are working hard to steward resources wisely and to provide the best they can to the pupils in their care. They see themselves as part of, and contributing to, the community around them.

As ISA President, Lord Lexden, wrote in a recent letter in *The Spectator*: 'The Independent Schools Council has some 1,300 members, varying in size from 50 to 1,700 pupils. Few possess lavishly equipped theatres or vast playing fields. Just 68 have top-class athletics tracks. Most of them stand at the heart of the local communities from which their students mainly come, and work closely with their neighbouring state schools which often share their (usually limited) facilities. Half of them are non-selective. Fees vary greatly, with an average gap of some £2,000 per term between schools in the north and south of the country. More than a third

of families pay reduced fees. Parents are well aware that diversity and openness are the independent sector's most striking characteristics today. Will commentators with their obsessions about exclusivity ever wake up to reality?'

We remain popular with parents because they see us as values-driven, pupil-centred and relationship-focused. We look with imagination at the curriculum and opportunities we can offer, ever mindful of the financial commitments made by parents for their children's future. Unbound by the latest Government initiative or campaign, independent schools can take the longer view, maintain a broader perspective and hold firm to their core educational beliefs whilst preparing their pupils for the exam system.

It is interesting that after years of being almost entirely data-driven, Ofsted now recognises that 'broad and rich learning' is significant and that from September 2019 schools will be expected not to be teaching to the test and narrowing the curriculum in order to do so. There will be a 'quality of education' judgement with the curriculum at its heart and 'separate judgements about learners' 'personal development' and 'behaviour and attitudes'.

If I look at my group of schools, our pupils play in local sports leagues, we host events, have been recognised by the local borough as a 'gold standard' contributor to sports; we visit local care homes, support the work of our local libraries, contribute charitably locally and overseas, volunteer to support the local environment and offer support to the governance and development of a local school.

We care about our pupils. Every pupil matters, and so does their family. We care about their wellbeing and we care about their academic and personal progress and development.

This is all part of providing a broad and rich educational experience. The education we offer is relevant, inspiring and exciting. Our pupils are working hard in the classroom, secure that we know them individually and are committed to supporting them to achieve the very best they can in every aspect of their lives. Their learning often extends beyond the buildings' four walls. Teachers and assistants give up their time to arrange trips, invite speakers and to think creatively.

“Independent schools are diverse, inclusive and future-focused communities, with a heart to nurture excellence in our pupils and in our staff”.

Our pupils appreciate that we are giving them the opportunity to develop personally and helping them be ready for life beyond school. This isn't about privilege, it's about perspective.

When prospective parents visit, they see a happy and purposeful community bound together by a shared set of values and with a clear sense of direction. They see children who know they are part of something bigger than themselves, something to which they can contribute, something in which they are significant and valued.

Alongside this understanding of independent education that I would wish to see more widely shared, I want to broadcast the joy that it is to teach in a school where your love for your subject, and your teacher's heart, is more important than 'ticking a box' to say that your children now know each individual element of the SPAG test, in which talking and sharing is foundational to how we learn because teachers have a relationship with their pupils rooted in mutual respect.

Of course, schools of whatever sort, are bound to have their flaws and inconsistencies. They are, after all, communities of people, not merely bricks and mortar, sports fields and facilities. However, the intention of the doer matters. How would I challenge perceptions of independent schools today? I would say:

come and see how dynamic we are. Independent schools are diverse, inclusive and future-focused communities, with a heart to nurture excellence in our pupils and in our staff. We support our pupils and their families. We are compassionate and outward-facing. We take seriously the investment our parents make in the education of their children. We recognise the intrinsic value of the individual and we nurture it.

I think there is much we do well!

Claire Osborn is ISA Vice Chair and Headmistress since 2010 of Normanhurst and Braeside schools, two all-through schools in the Oak-Tree Group of Schools in North Essex.

She worked in the state sector from 1991 to 2002 in a number of non-selective schools before moving across to the independent sector. She is a member of the ISA Executive Council and was Chair of the ISA Education Committee. She has been the ISA representative on the IStip Panel for the induction of newly-qualified teachers and is currently a member of the ISC Strategy Group.



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- Epsom College
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School	Head	Area
Mander Portman Woodward (Cambridge)	Markus Bernhardt	East
Meadows Montessori Primary School, The	Samantha Sims	East
Oaks International School	Amanda Gibbard	East
Conifers School. The	Emma Smyth	London South
Eveline Day School	Eveline Drut	London South
Russell House School	Craig McCarthy	London South
St George's Preparatory School	Cormac Timothy	London South
Boundary Oak School	James Polansky	London West
Saville House School	Claire See	Midlands
St. Michael Steiner School, The	Amanda Bell	London West

New Overseas Affiliate Members

School	Head	Area
Insight International School	Ekaterina Ivanova	St. Petersburg

Transfer of membership

School	Head	Area
Buxlow Preparatory School	Darren May	London North
Lyceum, The	Hilary Wyatt	London North
Mount House School	Toby Mullins	London North
Red Balloon Centre, NW London	Cathy Taylor	London North
Windrush Valley School	Amanda Douglas	London North
Blanchelande College	Robert O'Brien	London South
Bricklehurst Manor School	Christine Flowers	London South
Duke of Kent School	Sue Knox	London South
Gad's Hill School	Paul Savage	London South
Radnor House Sevenoaks	George Penlington	London South
Abingdon House School	Tanya Moran	London West
Danesfield Manor School	Jo Smith	London West
DLD London	Irfan Latif	London West
Hampshire School, Chelsea	Pamela Edmonds	London West
Meoncross School	Mark Cripps	London West
Reddam House Berkshire	Tammy Howard	London West
Sherfield School	Nick Brain	London West
St. Catherine's School	Johneen McPherson	London West
Derby Grammar School	Ruth Norris	Midlands
Edenhurst Prep School	Mike Hibbert	Midlands
Polwhele House School	Chris Curl	South West
St. Christopher's Staverton	Alexandra Cottell	South West

School Associates

Name	School
Chantal Hill	Saville House School
Donald Barr	Sands School
Joseph Matthews	St. Gerard's School
Neil Pockett	Insight International School
Sarah Key	St Gerard's School
Sarah Mackintosh	Roxeth Mead School
Steven Wade	Bellevue Education International Ltd

Not all top hats and toffs!

An alternative view of independent education

Cate Mawston



What is the image that the press show whenever private schools are being discussed? Almost without exception- boys in top hats and funny uniforms. This perpetuates the myth that independent schools are only for the elite, the super wealthy and the really posh.

It reinforces the stereotype of an 'us' and 'them' society; the privileged few and the rest. The reality of private education is very different. The press do a disservice to parents by this 'lazy' presentation of independent schools. Even the most prestigious schools have generous bursary programmes to support talented children from different backgrounds.

What do parents want for their children? I think the answer to this is quite simple – a school where their child will be happy and do well. To provide this we need a wide range of different types of schools because children are all different. One size does not fit all.

My school, Dodderhill Independent Girls, is set in a semi-rural haven on a hill above the quiet town of Droitwich Spa. We have some super, well maintained facilities but do not have a theatre, running track, boat house, squash courts or teach Latin or Greek. Most of our parents have come to us as 'first time users' with no experience of private education. Many are relieved to find parents who are like them- hard

working, making sacrifices and wanting a different experience than the one in a large state or independent school. Parents have not chosen us because of any 'snob' value to sending their daughter to us; they just want the best for their child.

“I suspect that many of us have not been privately educated ourselves but may have chosen to educate our own children privately and are passionate about the freedom that we have to make educating young people our mission. I cannot understand why a journalist chose to describe Theresa May as being ‘Headmistressy’ as a negative jibe”.



The clue is in the name 'independent', we are not part of a 'sausage machine' turning out young people to a set formula. The joy of being in independent education is that we can put the child first, set our own agendas and create our own ethos. Some schools cater for the parents who are looking for an academic hot house and a fast track to Oxbridge but many parents are looking for something else, more distinctive. We love 'quirky' we positively encourage our pupils to be different and not to follow the crowd.

When I meet with other independent school Heads I have to acknowledge that



DODDERHILL SCHOOL (M)

there are some seriously clever people in the group, but that they are all refreshingly unstuffy and unpretentious. I suspect that many of us have not been privately educated ourselves but may have chosen to educate our own children privately and are passionate about the freedom that we have to make educating young people our mission. I cannot understand why a journalist chose to describe Theresa May as being 'Headmistress' as a negative jibe.

It is time to stop using these tired, well-worn phrases of a bygone era and step into the 21st century. When the debate turns to the rights or wrongs of private education I would love to see a journalistic view that represents the reality of this sector- normal children, parents and teachers who have exercised their right to choose what is best for them.

There is not a heightened sense of entitlement at Dodderhill- our pupils have an awareness of their responsibilities to society. They are grounded, down to earth individuals; we have educated them to have character, confidence and spirit. No need for flapping of old school ties and no silly hats.

The real joy of independent education is that no two schools are alike and I rejoice in the fact that there is no other school quite like Dodderhill. No tiaras or helicopters necessary!

Cate Mawston has been the Headmistress of Dodderhill Independent Girls School (ISA Midlands) since April 2011. Previously she was Deputy head at Channing School, Highgate and held numerous posts at St Albans High School for Girls. Cate is committed to girls only education since Dodderhill is her fifth girls school. She was commissioned in the RAF as an Education and Training Officer, leaving as a Flight Lieutenant. She is the mother of twins who were privately educated since Year 1. Cate will be setting off into the sunset in her campervan at the end of this academic year, as she has recently announced her retirement.

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DEVELOPING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

4 June | ISA House, Essex (near Cambridge)

Who should attend?

Heads, Leaders and Teachers

'A good curriculum is one in which we address the physical, mental, spiritual, cultural and intellectual health of the child in a joined-up way'

The aims of the course are:

- To deepen understanding of the skills children need to flourish
- To gain knowledge of how to educate the 'whole' child
- To understand how character is 'caught' through the 'hidden' curriculum
- To learn how to plan and teach character within your existing curriculum so it is 'caught' and 'taught'
- To leave inspired to be a school community of virtue where every child and adult can flourish

MENTAL HEALTH: HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE WELLBEING PLAN TO SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEES

6 June | ISA House, Essex (near Cambridge)

Who should attend?

Office managers, HR managers, Heads and Deputies, and anyone interested in wellbeing within schools

Programme outline:

- How to create an effective well-being plan/policy for your school – leading to raised awareness of mental health issues and their impact, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and engagement across all areas of the school
- Stress indicators, environment, culture and ethos in schools today
- The value of communication and the effects of technology
- Setting boundaries and collaborative working
- Putting together your action plan
- Support and resources available

CONFIDENT COMPUTING AND CODING IN THE EARLY YEARS AND KEY STAGE 1

11 June | ISA House, Essex (near Cambridge)

Who should attend?

All Nursery & Early Years practitioners, Year 1 & 2 teachers, ICT Subject Leads, and Directors of Studies or School Leaders looking to enhance and enrich the computing curriculum across their setting and strengthen their own teaching and subject knowledge.

Are you unclear on where to start with the computing curriculum, or would like ideas on how to bring computing to life? This course is designed to support teachers in ensuring they have a complete understanding of coding and computing and how to confidently deliver the curriculum in ways that spark the imaginations of our younger pupils.

Programme outline:

- The Computing Curriculum for non-specialists: The 8 things you need to know
- Computational thinking in the EYFS and KS1
- Approaches for bringing computing to life
- Teaching coding with and without a computer
- Making space for computing in your setting
- Teaching strategies, lesson ideas and where to obtain a wealth of quality resources

DRUGS NOW: NEW SUBSTANCES, NEW TRENDS, NEW ISSUES FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

13 June | ISA House, Essex (near Cambridge)

Who should attend?

The course is suitable for all staff who require up to date information on drugs issues and how to work with pupils who may be using or thinking of using any of these substances.

This one-day course draws upon the most up to date research to explore the rapidly changing drugs trends in the UK. We will examine the issues raised for Independent Schools, including the pros's and cons of drug testing pupils.

Learning objectives:

- To explore how and why patterns of drug use are changing
- To examine the impact of new psychoactives substances
- To gain an understanding of the problems associated with poly-drug use – in particular, the impact on mental health
- To understand the increasing role that the internet and social media (Snapchat, Instagram) are playing in drugs culture
- To investigate appropriate harm reduction advice to give to those using New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)
- To understand where further help, information and advice is available
- To consider the issues around advising pupils

SENCO TRAINING – FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEND PROVISION

20 June | More House School, Farnham

Who should attend?

This flexible course is suitable for experienced practitioners and those who have only recently joined the special needs workforce.

This course is designed to re-appraise the role of the SENCO. Finding alternative methods which support the subtle changes in an evolving curriculum, delegates will learn to appraise specific needs and develop best provision.

At the same time they will learn methods for sharing innovative ideas with their teaching colleagues to ensure a whole school approach.

Programme outline:

- The role of the SENCO
- Support with reduced resources – working cunningly
- Engaging and motivating the rest of the staff to help
- Admissions – key role of the SENCO, formal and informal assessments, reading professional reports
- Specifics – what can be done with and without therapeutic support
- Subject support – what advice might the SENCO give to support teachers in best practice?

Delegates will have the opportunity of seeing the More House Learning Development Centre in action, if they so wish. More House has 460 students aged 8 to 18 all having some form of SEND and has developed its own methodology to give provision across the curriculum as well as in specialised group sessions.

Additional courses for 2019-20 are being arranged on topics such as SEND, teaching and learning, performance management and leadership. If you have any specific requirements for training e.g. location or topic, please email melissa.skelton@isaschools.org.uk.

Independent Education

A force for good

Daniela Shanley



When I was asked to write a piece for this magazine about changing the perceptions of the Independent School sector, I readily agreed, thinking it wouldn't be such a hard slog. However, on reflection, it does rather throw up some interesting challenges. An education system that has both fee-paying private and state school alternatives is by its very nature segregating and arouses emotive and personal responses. At the moment we live in a divided society of Leavers vs Remainers, Left vs Right and we are being asked to firmly take sides, we are being made to choose an identity, nail our colours and blindly stick with it whatever the cost, often choosing to ignore the facts in order to keep the argument going. Remember Swift's bitter factional dispute between the Big Endians and the Little Endians? A nonsense and futile argument over which end to crack a boiled egg? The analogy seems wholly appropriate in this current climate. And it is against this monochrome backdrop of division, that we in the independent sector have to work even harder to keep banging our end of the egg against the resentment and ill-informed spite often levelled against us in order to justify our very existence.

I don't think I have to tell you what the general perceptions are of us out there.

You may be well versed in having to defend yourself against sneery accusations of 'privilege', 'exclusivity', 'snobbishness' and so on, but are we unwittingly preserving those views by apparently barricading ourselves in behind Latin mottos and regal coats of arms? Are we residing in a self-serving cloistered echo chamber where dusty tradition prevails? The media of course doesn't help. When exposing some minor fracas at a private school, lazy journalists accompany click bait headlines with stock photography of boys in boaters and high collared tailcoats. Of course, these perceptions are hackneyed nonsense but are we inadvertently perpetuating this crusty image, and ought we be trying to shift the emphasis to become respected as schools that are crossing the divide, are less socially alienating, offer something broader, more empathic, pioneering and modern? Whilst people have resolutely made up their mind that Tory Toffs obviously had a say at aged 6 which public school they were going to go to, and Damian Hinds advocates a vision for all children to adopt the "Public School Swagger", it would seem we still have a very long way to go.

Of course, there is always the murky subject of fees. We can't get away from fees. Fees will always be an obstacle to many, but not enough headlines are made of the incredible bursaries and financial aid that independent schools offer. What the lazy hacks choose to ignore is the £400m provided in means-tested fee assistance for pupils at independent schools last year, and that it is not just 'rich' people who send their children to independent school. This is something the sector should be rightly very proud of but why is it generally met with a shrugging "so what?".

There has been some talk recently of the brilliant initiative of independent /

state school partnerships. And that is a very good thing. According to the ISC report 'Celebrating Partnerships', 86% of ISC schools are in mutually beneficial partnerships with state schools, sharing expertise, best practice and facilities. So why is this public benefit being ignored? Is it being criticised as rather patronising and is the suggestion that schools only do it to retain charitable status? What do we have to do better to overcome this fixed mindset? Damned if we do, damned if we don't.

We have come a very long way since the ancient philanthropic efforts of the great people that pioneered schools such as Eton, and Roedean, and the progressive pedagogy that inspired schools such as Bedales and King Alfred's. Many independent schools were created by incredible change makers whose benevolence, ideology and social conscience spearheaded transformation, disrupted the status quo and made a real tangible difference for children, society and education.

Today we see this in action in academy and free schools whose wealthy philanthropic sponsors replicate the visionary social entrepreneurship of their predecessors albeit often in a more corporate box-ticking, hand's-off way. But those with integrity seem to be stealing a march over independent schools. I believe we need to make more of our own corporate social responsibility and identify an authentic moral purpose if we want to garner support and have the public see us in a more wholesome light. The population is changing, and the direction of travel is incompatible with old fashioned ideologies. At the risk of pitching stereotype against stereotype it appears that the Millennial and Gen Z generations are all sitting in the lotus position texting each other vegan recipes



ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL, LLANELLI (SW)

whilst discussing schools. They quite rightly want their children to be well educated, but they also want them to be happy, broad minded, ethical global citizens with a social conscience and healthy dollop of sustainability and mental wellbeing thrown in for good measure. We are currently in the grip of a youth mental health crisis and schools are being told to focus on children's wellbeing within a system that seems determined to destroy it. Of course, mental wellbeing and academic achievement are not mutually exclusive. Not at all, in fact, they depend on one another. The Trad v Prog debate is a false dichotomy and it is time to rethink the educational landscape where academia and mental health share the same stage and our sector becomes the activist for change.

We all know the workplace is changing. Suits are no longer de-rigueur and many jean-clad techies hot desk and co-work in indoor golf courses and fairground themed spaces. I believe if we truly want to change public perception, we need to start by modernising what goes on in our schools, become a truer reflection of

our society and that doesn't just mean by merely embracing tech. It means actively questioning and challenging the old regimes, wondering why we put children in expensive old-fashioned uniforms, paying attention to the latest findings in neuroscience to influence the way children function and begin to gear our young people up for a future that is very different to the world we grew up in. Looking backwards will not move us forwards. We need once more to be admired as pioneers and changemakers with a social conscience and stop hiding our lights behind woollen worsted blazered bushels.

In an age where graduates are seeking out and favouring employment in companies that are created on a bedrock of corporate social responsibility why are we surprised when profit making hedge fund backed independent school groups are viewed with cynicism and disdain, the assumption being that they only exist to rack up a healthy property portfolio rather than putting the child at the centre of their word. What came first, the building or the child?

On the face of it, it would seem that despite all the good it's doing, the independent sector needs a re-branding and stop perpetuating traditional stereotypes. As a product of independent education myself (Channing and Oakham) from the outside and to the uninitiated, very little has changed. But on closer scrutiny there is an area of the independent sector that is all too often ignored and overlooked – much like the children who attend their schools.

If I am reading the statistics correctly (and I hope I am) according to the DfE, independent and non-maintained special schools account for 65% of all special schools in England. 65% - that's more than a Brexit majority! Why aren't we slapping that on the side of a Boris bus and touring the country with it I wonder? The vast majority of these schools are for children with Specific Learning Difficulties closely followed by children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties. These schools take children from all backgrounds and it is in these schools that you will see innovative, empathic and alternative approaches that could

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

work extremely well for all children not just the ones who depend on it. Most of the pupils at my school, Beech Lodge in Maidenhead have been adopted from the care system and have experienced significant trauma, neglect and abuse in their lives. We work with 12 local authorities who place and fund children at the school and like many other special schools offer training to other schools to understand our area of expertise. Not only that, like many other independent special school founders, I took the risk, put in my own investment and set up the school due to my personal family circumstances. A big plug for the independent special schools is what I believe can help shift those negative perceptions away from being self-serving to something broader and more altruistic.

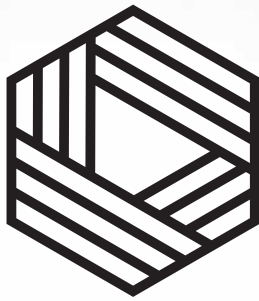
There is no doubt that the independent school sector is responding and adapting to address negative public perception, but it still has a long way to go. Work going on in much of the independent sector is truly enriching and admirable, but if we want to change public perceptions it is not enough for us to moan about the injustice and criticism heaped upon us citing bursaries and partnerships, as clearly the message is not getting through. So let's not expect public perceptions to change unless something radically changes within our schools. I would like to see the independent sector take back ownership of innovation and once more become the modernisers, the ground-breakers and risk takers. Lead the charge, challenge convention and be truly admired for the work that you do.

Daniela Shanley is co-Founder and Proprietor of Beech Lodge School in Maidenhead. She set up the school in 2013 inspired by a lack of suitable provision for her adopted son then aged 9. Beech Lodge is a small progressive independent special school for children with emotional, social and learning difficulties often arising from traumatic early life experiences.

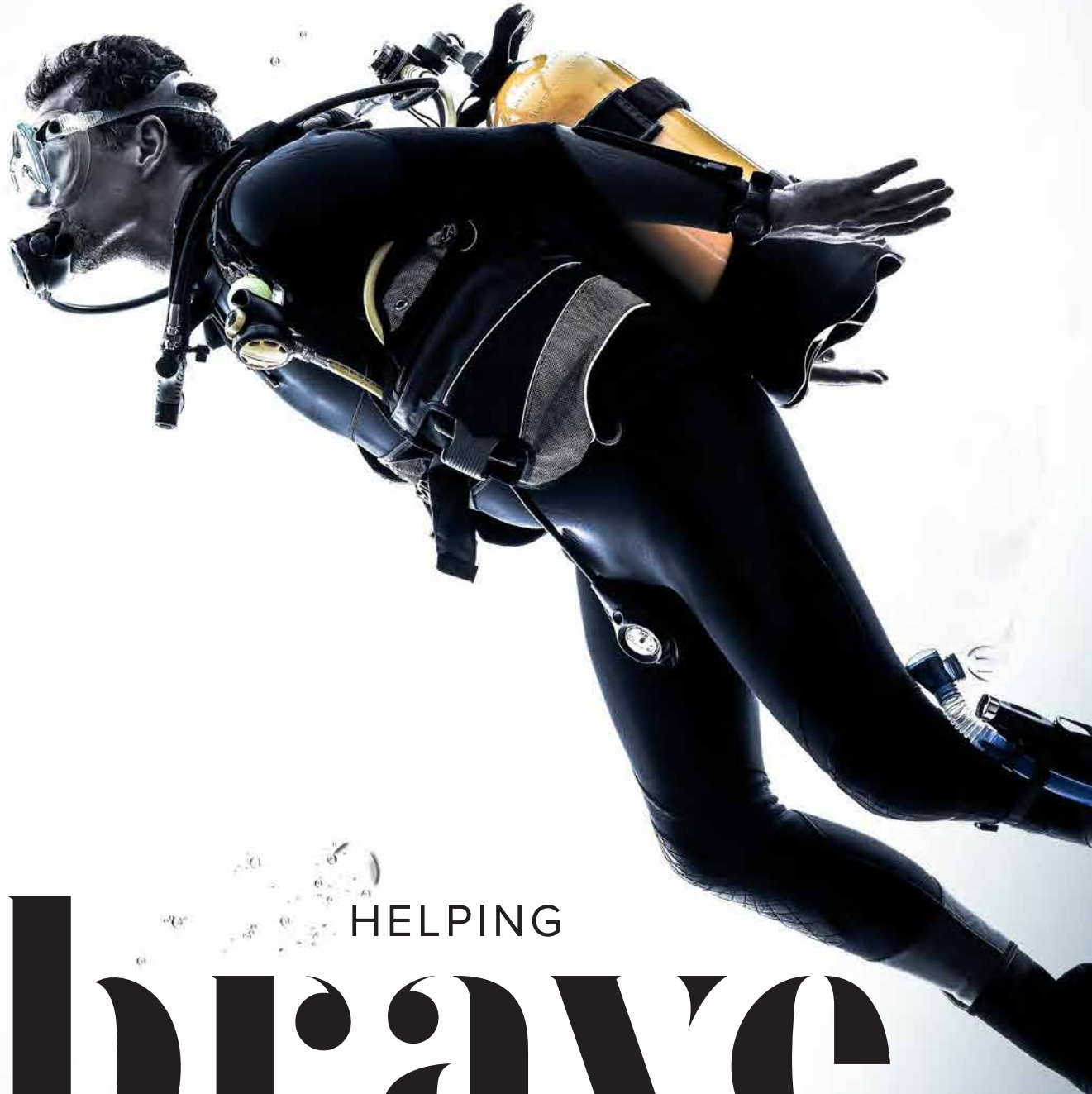
Daniela has a strong personal commitment to the needs of vulnerable children, is Development Director of Fagus Educational Resource and a Governor of Berkshire College of Agriculture.



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Early Years Education is no longer fit for purpose!

Can the independent sector lead the way?

Pat Preedy



Twenty-five years ago, “Start Right: The Importance of Early Learning”, led to the creation of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), free nursery places and recognition of the importance of early learning. However, if early childhood education is in good shape, why is it that in 2016-2017 there were 4,245 fixed-term exclusions and 170 permanent exclusions issued to children aged 5 years or younger in state funded schools in England? Why are almost 1 in 4 children and young people showing some evidence of mental ill health including anxiety and depression (ONS, 2016) and, according to estimates from Public Health England, two thirds of adults and a quarter of children between two and 10 years of age are overweight or obese?

It is now time to take into consideration recent research and changes in society including the technology revolution. ‘Tweaking’ the EYFS is not sufficient. It is time to re-define early childhood education and to replace the EYFS with a coherent curriculum from nought to seven years of age taking into account the stages of child development, the latest research and a world that has become

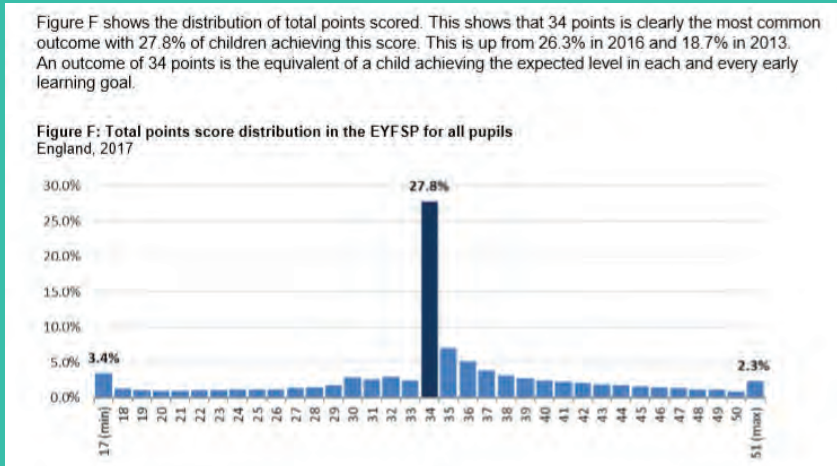
international and made smaller by travel and technology.

I believe weaknesses in the reliability and validity of the Early Years Foundations Stage Profile (EYFSP) are masking underachievement and are at the root of a divide between Reception and Year One. Early Years practitioners spend a great deal of time assessing children against the early learning goals with local authorities moderating and producing statistics that indicate things are improving. In 2013, 52% of children reached a ‘good’ level of development. By 2017 this had risen to 71%. In 2017, the percentage of children achieving at least the expected level within the 17 early learning goals ranged between 80% and 90%. However, when I conducted the *Movement for Learning* project through Loughborough University in 2016 in state and independent schools, we found that most children in the research project began the Reception Year below the norms for physical development using a test that had been standardised 10 years previously. Yet, these children

were assessed as meeting or exceeding the early learning goal for physical development! After a year of specific intervention for ten minutes a day the intervention group came back on track – the comparison group got worse!

Analysis of the distribution of total points scored for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) shows a distinctive spike at 34 points – the equivalent of a child achieving the expected level of development.

Clark (2014) found a similar pattern when she analysed the results of the phonics test administered to all children in state schools in Year One. There was an increase in pupils passing the test from 58% in 2012, to 69% in 2013 and 74% in 2014 with 88% of pupils meeting the expected standard by the end of Year Two. Following regression analysis, Clark suggests that the spike at the threshold of meeting the expected standard indicates that pupils on the borderline may have been marked up. I believe that this also applies to the EYFSP. It is time to stop this time-consuming and unreliable system of handling qualitative data using quantitative methods.



(DFE 2017, P4)



THE ROCHE SCHOOL (LW)

At the launch of *Early Childhood Education Redefined* at Blenheim Palace (January 2019) we proposed the following manifesto for change:

- Provide parents with relevant education and training in order that they can support the development and learning of their children.
- Replace the current Early Years Foundation Stage with the new KEY Stage 1 devised by Pat Preedy covering 0 – 7 years.
- Implement the principles of early childhood pedagogy first iterated in the Start Right report of 1994.
- Stop the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP): combine teacher/practitioner assessment with standardised assessment against national norms in language, mathematics and physical development.
- Provide the funding and resources required to implement the changes required.

I detail my proposed curriculum framework in *Early Childhood Education Redefined*. It suggests the following areas of learning coherently planned from nought up to seven years of age:

- Health, Safety, Personal, Social and Emotional Development including mental well-being
- Physical Development
- Communication, World Languages, Citizenship and Universal Understanding
- Mathematical Development
- Scientific Development
- History, Geography and Environmental Development
- Digital Learning (Appropriate for young children)
- Creativity, Art and Design

The original curriculum framework developed by Kathy Sylva referred to science and to history and geography. Wrapping these into Understanding the World has created confusion and has in my opinion, watered-down these areas of learning. I have therefore re-instated these areas as well as adding digital learning as a separate stand.



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL (LN)

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

In my view, it is not possible to identify prime areas of learning as for the young child all learning is integrated and connected enabling them to develop the executive functions of working memory, inhibition and cognitive flexibility described by Karen Morris in Chapter 7 of *Early Childhood Education Redefined*.

Revising the curriculum as I suggest will also mean that we can implement the elements of effective pedagogy throughout the stage of early childhood – up to age seven.

- Many and varied opportunities for children and adults to talk and communicate about learning.
- Learning activities which are concrete, real and relevant to the lives of young children.
- Educators who acknowledge and utilise purposeful play as a powerful medium for learning.
- Adults who support and develop each child's self-esteem and identity, involve themselves in learning activities and

extend children's learning by asking and answering questions, and by stimulating the child's curiosity, imagination and wonder.

- Opportunities for children to choose from a variety of activities, materials and equipment.
- Provision for large groups, small groups, individual and solitary activities.
- Outdoor experiences on a daily basis.

· Periods of uninterrupted time to enable children to explore and engage in activities according to individual need and involvement.

- A balance of movement and rest in the daily programme.
- An achieved aim of ensuring that learning is fun.

(Start Right Report, 1994)

Age	Adult to Child Ratio	Minimum Qualification Requirements
Under 2	1:3	Level 3 for all practitioners.
2 +	1:4	Level 3 for all practitioners.
3+	1:8	Early Years Teacher for the leader of this year group + Level 3 Assistants.
4 + (Reception)	1:10	Early Years Teacher per class + Level 3 Assistants
5+ (Year One)	1:10	Teacher per class (must have relevant EY training and or experience) + Level 3 Assistants
6+ (Year 2)	1:15	Teacher per class (must have relevant EY training and or experience) + Level 3 Assistant.



OUR LADY OF SION SCHOOL (LS)

If inspection frameworks judge schools against a wide range of outcomes for achievement and personal development, then the curriculum will not be narrowed to the basics of English and mathematics.

Although adult to child ratios have been addressed up to age three, these are not maintained as children move into Reception and beyond. When discussing adult-to-child ratios with Sir Christopher, he referred to the RSA rule of thumb where you simply take the age of the child and doubled it to calculate the ratio of staff required. For example, if a child is aged five, the ratio would be one adult to ten children. This simple formula enables funding to be shifted to younger children as the ratio for older students would become higher e.g. at university ratios would be in the region of 1 to 40.

I was one of the people who represented ISA when we put the case to politicians and the DfE that independent schools should be able to be exempt from the EYFS – as with all other areas of the curriculum. Although this principle was accepted and implemented, relatively few independent schools take up the option.

Schools exempt from the EYFS are free to develop the curriculum without monitoring from their local authority (LA). Above all they are not required to do the EYFSP and submit the results to the LA. The DfE publishes guidance for schools who would like to apply for exemption from the EYFS. The quality requirements are well within the grasp of most independent schools – basically achieving a good or better inspection judgement for ‘overall effectiveness’ and meeting the regulatory requirements.

Schools can apply for exemptions individually or as part of a group e.g. if they are members of an independent school association, the association may undertake to submit a block application on behalf of member schools. Once exemption has been granted re-application is not required unless the quality requirements are not met. The views of parents must be sought and the LA informed. Some schools have told me that they would like to be exempt but that they would lose the early years grant if they did so. However, the exemption guidance states:

A local authority must fund a provider of the parent’s choice if that provider meets the quality requirements and is willing to accept the proposed terms as to payments which would be made to him or her and any other requirements imposed by the local authority.

A local authority is restricted as to the requirements it may impose on a provider; it may only impose those requirements that are expressly set out in the regulations. Schools seeking exemptions need to clarify their position with regard to grant funding and as a group we need to challenge any attempt to link early years grant funding to exemption.

I will end with a quote from Sir Christopher Ball’s Blenheim Palace speech:

If you give all children a good start, with generous professional support, they will learn how to learn independently, and require progressively less support as they mature. Design the system from the bottom up, fund it from the bottom up, and provide all children with the best possible start to their learning and life. That was the key message of the Start Right Report. We should implement it now.

Our idea of a campaign for the reform of the Foundation Stage is an inclusive one. Without the triple partnership of parents, teachers, and society as a whole, we shall get nowhere fast. What I learned in my first school is that we should ‘hold hands and learn together’. Tempting as it may be, we must avoid blame. A strong partnership offers the best hope of success. The campaign we propose is not about ‘taking back control’ but working in partnership for a better future.

Independent schools can use the freedom that they have been granted to reach out and lead the changes needed in early childhood education – please start now in order that all children have the opportunity to ‘start right’.

Dr Pat Preedy has had a long and distinguished career in education including being Head Teacher of one of the first Beacon Schools in the UK, Executive Principal of a boarding school catering for pupils from 3 months to 18 years and a reporting Inspector for ISI (Independent School Inspectorate). She completed her Masters in Educational Management particularly investigating how schools can work in partnership with parents and a doctorate in Education. Pat has spearheaded several projects including developing leadership at all levels, performance and change management, Neuro-Developmental Delay – the link between movement and cognitive development and ‘Accelerated Learning’. As Honorary Research Consultant for Tamba (Twins and Multiple Births Association) Pat has conducted extensive research into meeting the educational needs of multiple birth children. She was part of the team that developed the performance indicators in primary school’s value-added baseline assessments (University of Durham CEM Centre) and enjoys working with schools in the use of data as part of school improvement. Pat has led international research contributing greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the development and needs of babies and young children, and what is meant by quality in the early years. Pat has recently coedited Early Childhood Education Redefined with Sir Christopher Ball and Dr Kay Sanderson.

www.neuroway.ae

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- Preedy, P., Sanderson, K., Ball, Christopher (2019): Early Childhood Education Redefined. Oxford: Routledge.



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Simon Willoughby, Estates Manager, James Allen’s Girl’s School
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Should schools feel like real life, not just preparation for life later

Sean Bellamy

Coincidence is a curious thing. My wife, who is the Head of a small independent school in Devon, returned from a local conference where she met a delegate who told her that independent schools are no longer relevant because they are unable to offer a proper preparation for the real world. They are out of touch and full of the privileged and unrealistic.

Whenever I write an article, or even plan a lesson, I'm looking for that angle, for that hook that resonates with an audience. Well, thanks to this individual and a letter addressed to Government from three thousand Head Teachers yesterday, expressing disbelief that under funding would lead to further damaging

restrictions in all but the core subjects for their three million pupils, while bizarrely being asked by Ofsted to deliver rich and diverse school experiences through a new rounded, real world curriculum, I have my hook.

If we were to measure a teacher's life in units of Ofsted Inspections, then I am eleven inspections old. I have been teaching for thirty-four years.

I taught first at the infamous Dartington Hall School and have always been involved in pioneering education ventures that have been easy to misunderstand. Places that are perceived in equal measure as unconventional and risk

taking and maybe perceived as full of the privileged and unrealistic.

Children learnt to sail, canoe, weld and farm, travelled to exotic places because that seemed like good education.

Thirty-one of those years teaching have been in one school called Sands, which I co-created with fourteen teenagers in 1987. It is a school without uniform and punishment, where children design their own schedules, help clean and cook and run, not only the day to day business of school life, but help select their teachers and prospective students. Children build dens, write their own magazines, study the obscure and irrelevant, swim in rivers



SANDS SCHOOL (SW)

and meet visitors from all over the planet. We think it is the first of its kind; a school designed with children and not for them. Our intake is non-selective and like most of the schools in the network, not just for the wealthy and privileged. Far from irrelevant and a poor preparation for life, we find that ex-pupils tell us how central the experience of this little, independent school has been in their ability to cope with the challenges of adulthood.

I have spent my whole school career defending our values and helping others understand what they are experiencing when they join us.

It has been a long battle against misconception, but over the last five years, as employers and universities have come to a realisation that the qualifications they once valued so dearly are not necessarily so useful for the 21st Century, so too public has perception improved.

The latest Ofsted demand for curriculum innovation acknowledges what we all know, that children need to be adaptable and appropriately skilled for the 21st century. And more than ever, the planet needs compassionate and broadly educated young people.

We have always had a wonderful reputation abroad and are lauded by educators globally. And recently that too has begun to occur locally.

Irrespective, locals see children playing in tree houses and on rope swings and assume little education is happening. It is true that children can spend all day in Art or Woodwork or endless hours in the Climbing Wall supervised by student instructors or spend all morning cooking lunch for everyone else. It is also true that a team of school elected student councillors may spend endless hours investigating poor behaviour and as such miss 'proper learning'.

There may be a reason to explain our changing fortunes, despite the tree houses, sofas and rope swings and it is something that may be at the heart of changing public perception of the independent sector.

Schools that have always encouraged the development of genuine life skills, and that value more than data and the generation of results and put the child,



SANDS SCHOOL (SW)

not the spread sheet, at the centre of the process of learning have a new status in 2019.

And aren't we those schools? Independent Schools across the country that have advocated for the whole child to be educated, without endless reference to the child as a number or cog in the education machine? Isn't that the very thing that ISA has been advocating for since its creation?

“The Independent School Sector has always maintained a commitment to value academic success and personal development equally, resourcing curriculum appropriately. Objective and Subjective side by side”

From this side of the millennium, what I observe is the weakening of the hold that G.E.R.M has upon education. The Global Education Reform Movement was dreamt up by a neo-liberal think tank of the 1980's, and it argued that it was possible to improve standards and drive down costs while increasing the effectiveness of education by encouraging healthy competition between schools; and that the best schools would attract more custom and that in order to identify the 'best schools', we should standardise delivery and measure the quality of the

product leaving the production line, sorry, the school!

Children became fridges. Schools, factories that bar coded and delivered children into the market place and began to use management speak to describe themselves and their successes.

Subsequently, we witnessed the disappearance of invaluable elements of the curriculum that were hard to measure and therefore little use in the evaluation of competing schools.

Add to that the crisis in Government funding to resource what is left and we have an education system that values the measurable, removes the indefinable and then runs out of money for the essential.

It is hard to measure creativity, kindness, empathy and a child's deep love of anything and so schools have been encouraged to abandon the subjective for the objective.

And now they can't afford the objects.

The Independent School Sector has always maintained a commitment to value academic success and personal development equally, resourcing curriculum appropriately. Objective and Subjective side by side.

Heads and staff have fought to maintain breadth and range despite pressure to abandon the obscure for the homogenised. Life has a strange tendency to repeat. What was true a hundred years ago or fifty is still true today. Diversity matters.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

As such, what was once viewed as traditional and out of date, is now seen again as central to the development of rounded young adults.

Public perception may take a little while to catch up with this 'new normal', but if we continue to hold our nerve and value the unmeasurable, and are brave enough to put children not data first, our status will improve as the world catches up with us.

There is another way to think about this.

I taught a young girl who had cystic fibrosis. She died at the age of 23.

School for her **was** life, it was not preparation for life. There would be no life later, so school needed to offer her all the things that a young person gives up in order to gain the qualifications necessary to move onto adulthood.

Those qualifications would mean little to her: living a real life at school would. And when, let us call her Minnie, walked into a classroom, she was giving up an hour or more of what was left. It felt a huge honour, in a school that allows children to choose what they study, that she would choose my Psychology class, or any lesson, to spend a little of what was left.

I share this because most of school life is justified as preparation for life later. Ofsted are still asking this of schools despite the new rounded curriculum they want to see designed and delivered.

But some of the independent schools I have visited across the country feel as if they implicitly understand about school as real life. School days are rich with relationships, a wealth of practical and real experiences from O.T.C to D of E, travels and adventures, sofas, rope swings and tree climbing and if we are mindful of this and celebrate it, then we can better explain the inherent value of our extra-curricula, our smaller classes, our beautiful buildings and grounds, and justify our rich environments and diversity of subject as a respect of life, beauty and the Now, not life in preparation for life later.

Maybe this reads as if I am arguing that we need do little to change the perspective of the public, but I am arguing that many schools embrace an approach which is at the heart of both a respect of the child in the present and the needs of children as they enter their adult life. Government have just articulated the same. These two things are not mutually

exclusive and the synergy of the two within the Independent Sector is worth celebrating and publicising more.

Sean Bellamy is the co-founder of Sands School, The Phoenix Education Trust and I.D.E.C [The International Democratic Schools Conferences]. He was nominated as a top 50 Global Teacher by the Varkey Foundation in 2016 and, when he is not teaching, he works in Korea and in Europe mentoring Human Scale school start-ups. His latest project is as co-designer of Charlotte Church's new school in Wales.



SANDS SCHOOL (SW)



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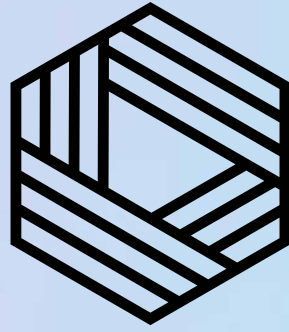
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The Truth and How We Can Get It Out There.

Pam Hutley

We instil in our children from an early age the importance of telling the truth. As teachers we aspire to be transparent in all our communications and to present a fair, reasonable and unbiased view: indeed we are, in Part 2, paragraph 5 (c) and (d) of the inspection framework prevented from expressing views for political purpose or in a partisan way. And yet, the media is systematically behaving in such a way to the majority of schools in the Independent sector.

The familiarity of the picture of Eton chaps says it all, then the headlines increasingly castigate the whole sector as 'The British Private School Problem.'

Even those which offer a discursive argument and a not wholly negative debate are led by headlines such as, 'Are British Public Schools a blight on English Society' or the recently published book discussing social mobility: 'Engines of Privilege the British Private School Problem.' Are we a blight? A problem? Is this how we wish to be presented to our 'customers'?

Notwithstanding the minor semantic difference between the public school

and the private school, terms used synonymously in the media for fee paying schools, the language of the headlines is sensational and emotive and always negative. And we wonder why public opinion is changing; why parents are starting to feel shame and pressure for making their personal choice about the education of their children.

Where else is such personal choice challenged in this way? I go to a private dentist. I choose to pay because I appreciate the quality of their service and their more reasonable opening hours for working Heads. Others pay for private Health care. Yet these businesses are not pilloried. Not everyone can afford these privileges but we don't get an outcry about inequality here.

The Independent sector schools, as Lord Lexden, President of the ISA, pointed out in his fabulous letter to the Spectator in February, offer diverse and wonderful opportunities to pupils throughout the country in settings as different from each other as chalk is from an iPad. Each school is as individual as the pupils it serves.

My school, situated in a not overly affluent Midlands town, is not privileged. In common with many, we operate as a small business, fewer than 200 pupils with no economy of scale, relying purely on fee income to pay for our staffing costs and overheads. We have no sports hall, no theatre, no playing fields, no dining room (no parking) and precious little surplus with which to purchase any of the frills the national journalists pontificate about. Indeed our neighbouring maintained schools are better equipped than us in most areas. Parents are not buying the 'stuff' around the edges. They are buying my top quality people who deliver a top quality service in teaching, social and emotional support, who provide opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the pupils. These are not necessarily special needs- these are every need for every individual. If we are fortunate enough to make a small surplus, and I can tell you it is never guaranteed, this goes back into the school to maintain, repair and develop our small site.

The pupils at schools like mine are not rich or privileged. Many of my pupils' parents are ordinary people: taxi drivers, small shop keepers, teachers and nurses who choose to make huge sacrifices to their lifestyle to afford the fee (currently between £9,300 and £12,234 year) out of their hard earned taxed income. Though this is a small fee in comparison to the often quoted £30,000 plus of the media highlighted elite, it is still beyond the pocket of many. We work on a shoe string budget, but we still give away 10% of our total income to try to provide as much support as we can to those who cannot otherwise afford to come. This is not enough to help everyone who would genuinely benefit from a school like mine but goes some way.



HOLLYGIRT SCHOOL (MIDLANDS)



HOLLYGIRT SCHOOL (MIDLANDS)

The pupils at many of the smaller independent schools are not high-flying. Most cater for a mixed ability need, including children who do not thrive in the maintained sector for social and emotional reasons as well as those whose academic needs are not being well met. The pupils come from all backgrounds, are of all cultures and some travel a considerable distance per day to get the benefit of education in a school which stands by its principles and knows what children need from education.

There is nothing to promote the caricature of the sector here and there is nothing salacious in my school's story and so there is nothing for the media to make a story out of. It's not newsworthy. **This is where we must all do better.** We have to learn to blow our trumpets a little louder, to **state** at every opportunity how great (though small) we are. We are not ashamed of who we are, what we have or what we do.

We need to get published, for our names to be more frequently quoted in the press, for our good news stories to be

associated with children not with politics, to try to get our parents' stories out there to make a stronger case to support the fantastic work our schools are doing in their communities.

Here are some ideas:

- Produce some cameo films of our parents talking honestly about their backgrounds and incomes and what they are prepared to sacrifice for the independent education they so much value? Use them on social media; collate them as an association to make a 'documentary' outline for the press?
- Work with one maintained school Head who understands our work to come out with us in discussing the issues being presented nationally.
- Get on local radio or television to discuss the independent school's place in the educational marketplace. We don't have to damn the funded provision to do this.
- Commit to individually contributing to the comments page following a media slamming?
- Stop being wallflowers and feeling second class citizens in our own market place and appreciate that we are all individual, offering something unique to the communities we serve: something of value and to be aspired to.
- Change the local message by debunking the myths of the sector with every parent and with every staff member. Tell the truth!
- Invite journalists to come into school at every opportunity to see for themselves

Pam Hutley is the Headmistress at Hollygirt School (ISA Midlands), she is also a member of ISA's Executive Council.



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A dangerous myth

A response for ISA

Richard Taylor-West

“Nowadays, private greed has been replaced by corporate greed, as schools seek to lure their potential clients with state-of-the-art facilities and raise fees to astronomical heights for overseas students. It is the greed of those who see a market and people willing to pay more and more for their child’s education without asking too many questions.”

-Dr Martin Stephen is the former High Master of St Paul’s Boys’ School. 14 April 2018 – The Telegraph



Having earlier in the year seen an article in the on-line Telegraph quoting a former head of a notable school arguing that public schools’ “corporate greed” is pricing out middle-class families and having read about plans north of the border (The Barclay Report) to burden independent schools with further taxes and rates by 2020, I felt I had to put something in writing.

The idea that independent schools are fat cats that sit on vast surpluses raking in cash for unnecessary arms races (who can build the biggest gym?) is ludicrously broad brush and drastically out of touch with our members, I believe.

I would describe the idea that poor leadership is allowing greedy governors distracted by their lunch to forget about economic sustainability as a misleading Dickensian caricature. It is a myth which is making good affordable

independent schools vulnerable to political scapegoating.

Having served on the governing councils for three very different independent schools, over the last two decades, I have only ever seen governing bodies and senior leaders work hard to deliver an excellent education whilst seeking a sustainable way forward for all concerned – especially the parents and pupils. The annual discussions about fee increases, capital projects and financial sustainability are not those that any of us approach glibly. It represents something of a tightrope act for many excellent schools.

I would also add that there are hundreds of independent schools in the UK who try to provide an education for parents who are struggling to find the funds to put their children into schools that offer high quality inclusive education. There are a significant number of independent schools in the country which strive as a corporate body to balance the books carefully and maintain relatively small but reasonable surpluses that keep a school on its feet, without a hint of extravagance.

I have obvious sympathy with the idea that all independent schools and wealthy public schools must act responsibly and



ST. CHRISTOPHER’S SCHOOL (LS)



LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL (LW)

I do believe that we must avoid getting involved in what some might see as a ridiculous arms race over the top facilities in bids to captivate would-be-customers.

Furthermore, issue needs to be taken with Dr Stephen's view expressed in the Telegraph that the loss of charitable status would not do particular damage to private schools since it only "confers a relatively small financial advantage". Relatively small to whom? That is most assuredly a relative position.

To many schools, who have an operating surplus of circa £200,000 or less per annum, which needs to be reinvested in every aspect of school life, this notion presents a very unhelpful picture indeed. Any changes that have financial implications for many independent schools would be most unwelcome and, over time, potentially disastrous. What choice would we have but to potentially put fees up, or cut costs – and from where? We should also to remember that

our parents pay their taxes as well as school fees to the private sector.

There is a potential political irony here too. If the current government adds costs to our schools through VAT on fees, or to change charitable status, we could see affordable schools collapse under the cumulative weight of extra burdens over time. Therefore, independent education could become more elitist and only available to those who can afford the greater costs of the Clarendon Schools and other such more exclusive institutions.

The government could therefore find itself facing the need to find primary and secondary places for thousands of pupils and in our part of Sussex there are already projected shortages of places for the current Year 5, by the time they reach Year 7 and turn to the state sector for admission.

Frankly, it makes no sense. The government may as well attempt to increase access to food for the wider

population of the UK by taxing Waitrose out of existence and relying upon state funded food booths, which smacks of Eastern Europe in 1989. Perhaps we could all crowd into Fortnum and Mason's on a weekly basis and ask for substantial discounts. That might irritate some of the current Cabinet, of course.

Richard Taylor-West reads English and Theology at King's College London, and has an M.A. in Education Studies from Sussex University. He was Deputy Head and Head of Middle School, at Hurstpierpoint College, in West Sussex for ten years and joined Shoreham College as Headmaster in 2015. He is Assistant Area Coordinator for the London South Region of the ISA and is passionate about literature, history and anthropology, alongside striving to spend quality time with his wife and two teenage daughters in Year 11 and at university, respectively.

Teaching the unreached

Alex Gear

Alex Gear provides an update on ISA's work with United World Schools in Cambodia



Cambodia Visit. December 2018.

As a very proud Chair of the ISA along with fellow National Executive member Tracey Wilson, we visited Cambodia on a ten day tour to visit some of the schools sponsored and run by the United World Schools Charity. In a career spanning over forty years this has to be up there along with my most treasured and positive of professional experiences.

To misquote a well ---v-known lager advert, the UWS team aims to teach in areas where others cannot reach. We arrived in Phnom Penh where we rested and did some sightseeing. We enjoyed a unique dining experience on a floating

raft adjacent to the Vietnamese boat peoples' village on the distant far bank of the Mequon river. We shopped in the city's famous night market and spent many hours in traffic jams and trying to cross the road. Time then to brace ourselves for the ten hour mini bus journey up country to the first of our transit hotels, the Four Rivers. We were joined by our fellow donor representatives from the US, Australia, GB, Vietnam and Dubai. It was very long mini bus ride along miles of made and unmade roads interspersed with some exotic driving. We enjoyed seeing how the moped is regarded as the Cambodian multi purpose vehicle and people carrier. What risk assessment?

The following day our party set off for the ISA sponsored Pong Tek school. After the best part of a three hour off road experience we arrived to be greeted by the whole school who were arranged in a funnel formation that guided us to the front steps of the school. The children were immaculately attired in their uniforms in white and blue, there was a smile on every face and I have never felt more humble or amazed. The school went straight into session and by way of a change I went into

a meeting. A very different meeting this was with the Head teacher, the PTA the UWS rep and translator, the village Chief and members of the government Education department. The only topic was how to keep this wonderful project going and how best to develop the work being done. The classrooms that led off from the central hall were full of eager and excited pupils who were clearly fully engaged. Learning is a new experience for them in this setting. The setting is new, the staff are new and it is clearly the start of their brave new world. As dear Tony once said, education, education, education. That evening we moved on to the Ratanakari hotel.

Tim Howarth is the brilliant young man that heads up the UWS charity. His father Chris founded the charity having left his teaching career in England to go to Cambodia to advise the then government on educational matters. At that time the government had their own ideas on education and so the advisory role was rather a redundant one. Chris and some of his friends along with pioneering local people decided to set up schools in the heartland of the country. On our trip I spent much time talking to Nan Sitha the UWS Cambodia Country director. I will sum up our conversations in brief. As there are few roads in the areas where schools are being considered for development he rides off into the countryside on his moped to locate local tribes and villages. The local tribal chief has to agree with the proposed project along with the village elders. The village has to donate the land to the UWS for the school to be built upon. One critical factor in the decision process is that girls must be encouraged to attend. The UWS provide the training and the teachers but the local people, men and women, are welcomed as classroom assistants. On reflecting on our discussions I would say that Nan Sitha is a visionary and a patriot. In working alongside





UNITED WORLD SCHOOLS

Tim Howarth and the UWS team Nan is rebuilding his beloved country in his own very special way. Nan is the proud owner of a flat cap that his wife brought him for a trip to London. He is my hero.

To visit our second school, we left the Ratanakari hotel and travelled for a couple of hours in our now familiar 4 by 4. As we crossed the umpteenth bridge and as again the driver opened the windows I finally asked why. The obvious answer was that if the bridge collapsed one must be able to swim for it. That is if course if the piranha or snakes don't get you first. We then got into a couple of scooped out long canoes with food mixers at the back and travelled upriver for about 45 minutes. We went ashore and walked through the village to arrive at the Koh Pek. This was a slightly older school but still in the style of Pong Tek. Again there was a love of learning and a total dedication to the classroom activity that was a joy to behold. In one classroom the one teacher was teaching years 5 and 6 simultaneously. The two classes were sitting on either side of the room and each facing in a different direction. Despite the visitors, the cameras and the distractions the pupils steadfastly got on with their work, no doubt thinking...



UNITED WORLD SCHOOLS

blinking foreigners.

We were told the tale of the Lego. The company generously donated ten tonnes of Lego and the UWS team dutifully shared it around their many schools. On a particular visit the area UWS worker asked why the little girl was only given three bits to play with. Sensibly the TA replied that it drops through the gaps in the floor boards and it is a nuisance to have to go below to collect it. Each school now has mats for this purpose and the children can play properly with the whole box full. Lego time is fun time and the children go mad for it. The things that make children happy are universal. Play is vital research and work of a critical nature.

The afternoon of the second day's visiting took us to Phum school and village. More driving, more open windows. Here we met some EYFS children who entertained us with a traditional song. Their performance was happiness personified.

We took a look around their village and once again were taken aback at the basic level of their everyday living standards. We were shown an area in the centre of the village set aside for animal sacrifice. The most recent event had been the sacrifice of a bullock in order to promote health and recovery for some elderly inhabitants. Every building that we came across everywhere on our visits, was timber built and set on high on stilts. The rainy seasons are extreme and regional flooding is extensive. No windows to shut. Plenty of young minds to open though.

On our final day we were taken to Chrung school and we also visited a UWS dormitory.

The addition of opportunities for boarding means that boys and girls from the remote regions can access senior education.

We joined in with a round the world tag, chase tag game on the play area. I was tagged, I chased, I lost. The little girl who partnered me took the defeat well. She is already clearly accustomed to some British influence. We laughed together and I promised to get fitter for my return visit.

The schools nearer the larger centres of population are increasing in number and quality. The educational sleeping giant in Cambodia is awakening and the UWS team are helping to lead the way. UWS also have many schools in Nepal and Nee Mah. I have seen a brilliant picture of a new fence at the edge of a play area in Nepal. It stops balls and children from toppling over the edge. It is Nepal, it is a big drop.

It is vital to stress that the UWS is a charitable organisation. It does not get involved in politics whether local national or international. UWS works because it is taken on board by local communities. I have met some of the mums and dads at Pong Tek and they are so proud of their children and of their school.

At this time there is a huge influx of Chinese people and companies into Cambodia. Cambodia is rich in mineral and other natural resources. The Chinese companies build factories and roads. They build houses. No comment.

The UWS schools are running smoothly and to great effect. The children are getting a fresh start to their world and to their future. My school is proud to support the work being done by Tim and his UWS team. The ISA has already over thirty schools supporting the project in Pong Tek. As an Honorary Officer of the ISA I would like to ask you to follow Mr Sitha on his moped deep into Cambodia in order to find new tribes and villages whose children need schools. Open the windows on the world that the UWS supports. Tracey and I are proud to have represented our ISA colleagues on our brief visit. Please join us in adding to the ISA list of sponsors.

Alex Gear, ISA chair 2017-2018 is Headteacher of Oakhyrst Grange School (London South)



Dates for Your Diary

DANCE COMPETITION

Entries now open
 Deadline: Friday 7 June 2019
 Reddam House School:
 Wednesday 2 October 2019
 Abbots Bromley School:
 Wednesday 9 October 2019

FILM & DIGITAL ART COMPETITION

Entries now open
 Deadline: Friday 18 October 2019

EYFS DRAW YOUR SCHOOL

Entries now open
 Deadline: Wednesday 26 June 2019

COVER DESIGN COMPETITION

Entries now open
 Deadline: Friday 19 July 2019

REGIONAL ART COMPETITION

Entries now open
 SW: Thursday 25 April
 LS: Thursday 13 June
 LN: Thursday 3 October
 LW: Tuesday 8 October
 EA: Saturday 12 October
 M: Friday 4 October
 N: Thursday 19 September - TBC

NATIONAL ARTS FINALS:

November 2019, date and venue TBC



BRABYNS PREPARATORY SCHOOL (N)

DRAMA COMPETITION 2019

Once again, we had an incredible Drama Competition with 32 pieces being shown across three days, from junior, middle and senior pupils, the standard being higher than ever this year.

A huge thank you to Tring Park School for the Performing Arts (LN) and The Hammond School (N) for providing another year of excellent hosting and making the event such a success.

Well done to the teachers and pupils for providing fantastic drama pieces and congratulations to the winners: The Hammond School (N), Woodlands School Great Warley (EA), Brabyns Preparatory School (N), Salterford House School (M), Swaminarayan School (LN), Ashbourne College (LW), and Mayville High School (LW).

You can view the full results and comments from our judge on the ISA website.

If your school did not take part in 2019, please contact us to find out more about participation in 2020.

SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION 2019

Well done to the participants and congratulations to the overall winners from Park Hill School (LW); École Jeannine Manuel (LW); St Mary's School (LN); Myddelton College (N); St David's Prep (LS); Arts Educational Schools London

(LW); With over one hundred entries this year's judge author James Hartley was overwhelmed with the top quality of the performances and commented – 'I was very, very impressed – and I am looking forward to going to the theatre to see some, if not most, of you in the future!'

You can view the full list of winners on the ISA website.

PUPILS CHOICE AWARD 2018

A huge congratulations to Harry,W from Gosfield School (E) for winning our Pupils Choice Award. Harry's stunning piece 'Pheasant' shown opposite was voted best by students of ISA Member Schools from 2018's National Art Competition.

EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Congratulations to all those who took part in the first ISA Easter egg competition and well done to the winning schools St. Olave's Prep School (LS), Forest Park School (N), Huddersfield Grammar School (N), Firwood Manor Preparatory School (N), Redcourt St Anselm's (N), Abbotsford Preparatory School (N) and St. Hilda's School (LN).

NATIONAL CHORAL CELEBRATION

Many thanks to all those who joined us for our first singing celebration with Dominic Peckham. Everyone was in fine voice and the sessions were enjoyed by all.



CRANSLEY SCHOOL (N)



PHEASANT BY HARRY.W - GOSFIELD SCHOOL (E)



'EGGIE THE EAGLE' - THE CHADDERTON PREPARATORY GRAMMAR SCHOOL (N)



SALTERFORD HOUSE SCHOOL (MIDLANDS)



FARADAY SCHOOL (E)

ATHLETICS (Requires Qualification)

Wed 19 June 2019
Alexander Stadium

BADMINTON (U11-U18) (TBC)

Thu 5 Dec 2019
Nottingham University

CLAY PIGEON (U9-U18)

Wed 2 October 2019
Oxford Gun Company

EQUESTRIAN (Open)

25,26 May and 30 June 2019
Princethorpe College

FOOTBALL

Girls only (U11/U13/U15)
Tue 8 Oct 2019
LVS Ascot

Boys (U16/18) (Required Qualification)
Wed 18 Dec 2019
Venue TBC

GOLF

Mon 1 July 2019
(Venue TBC)

HOCKEY

(U11)-Girls
Thu 14 Nov 2019
Lee Valley

(U13)-Girls
Thu 21 Nov 2019
Lee Valley

(U15)-Mixed
Thu 28 Nov 2019
Ashford Hockey Club (Surrey)

JUDO (U9-U18)

Sat 1 June 2019
High Wycombe Judo Centre

JUNIOR TRIATHLON (U9-U11)

Fri 4 Oct 2019
Woodlands School, Hutton Manor

RUGBY SEVENS (U10/U11/U16 TOUCH AND CONTACT OPTIONS)

Fri 15 Nov 2019
Bedford Athletic RFC

SAILING (U9-U18)

Fri 27 Sep 2019
Queen Mother Reservoir Berkshire

SWIMMING (U9-U18)

Sat 30 Nov / Sun 1 Dec 2019 (TBC)
London Olympic Pool



“Sport is a major part of ISA activity and there is no doubt that the range and quality of the programme is becoming stronger each year. ISA Sport supports inclusion and opportunity, fair play and achieving your best through endeavour and determination.”

CROSS COUNTRY FINALS AT RUGBY SCHOOL

In defiance of consistent rain and harsh conditions over the past 2 years leading to cancelled events, ISA was blessed with glorious sunshine for the 2019 National Cross Country Finals on Saturday 30 March at Rugby School, Warwickshire. Over 600 children from 158 schools were able to compete this year, all competitors showed an exemplary attitude which further justified their qualification through to the finals. The day saw ten runners from each race reach the podium to recognise what a fantastic achievement they had all gained through their performance. All these runners were lucky enough to meet, shake hands with, and have a photo with Ricky Lutakome. Ricky is a 19 year old GB runner who started off with his first national cross country event finishing 118th, with training and more experience he came 4th, which gained him a spot in the England team. He is now at St Mary’s university and hoping to qualify for the 2024 Olympics. Hopefully he managed to inspire the next generation at the event in Warwickshire.

Congratulations must go to the areas and their consistently high standard of qualifying events. Each of the seven regions - North,

Midlands, East Anglia, London North, London West, London South and South West have held their own area meetings prior to the nationals, so all the competitors had already achieved a significant goal by their selection to this prestigious event in the ISA calendar. This event is the highlight of the season for many of our competitors. The standard of athletes within the Association appears to be increasing year on year. Every athlete hopefully left the event feeling that they were able to do their best whatever the result. Staging these championships takes a great deal of organisation and cooperation. We are very grateful to all the staff at Rugby School and to all the teaching staff who support the athletes in their schools, preparing and coaching them. Without the help of the Area Sports Coordinators and Team Managers this event would not have been possible. They all work tirelessly throughout the year organizing and coordinating their area calendars. These roles are voluntary while they teach full time within an ISA school.

ISA is also indebted to Gwilym Price for his unflinching support and advice throughout the process of organising and running this event.

After all the points were accumulated, London West achieved overall victory. You can see a full copy of the team results below. Well done to everyone who competed, you should be very proud of yourselves for such a wonderful achievement.

Placed	Area	Overall
1	London West	491
2	London South	760
3	North	819
4	London North	840
5	East Anglia	868
6	Midlands	920
7	South West	1387



U9 GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

BOYS U11 AND U13 OPEN HOCKEY COMPETITION AT THE LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

The National Junior Boys Hockey was hosted at the splendid Lee Valley Hockey Centre. Ever popular, this event has attracted 32 teams from 27 different schools representing all seven ISA regions, each given a chance to play on the 2012 Olympic Hockey pitch. With such even competition, many finals came down to penalty shuffles which gave the competition a very exciting finish for spectators. The boys were lucky to have a visit from Harry Martin (GB Hockey player), Despite his youth, Harry has quite a bit of experience to draw on, including the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, the 2011 & 2012 Champions Trophy and the London Olympics. Harry was the first player to be selected for an Olympic Games who has been involved in England Hockey's Single System (long term athlete development pathway). Away from hockey, Harry studied at the University of Nottingham, having delayed the start of his Economics degree by a year to focus on London 2012. He was also shortlisted for the FIH World Young Player of the Year Award in 2012 and competed at his second Olympics in Rio. He is photographed opposite with Langley Prep School at Taverham hall who were the cup winners, along with final placings shown.



LANGLEY PREP AT TAVERHAM HALL HOCKEY WINNERS WITH HARRY MARTIN (GB)

U11 Team Results

Competition	1st	2nd	3rd
Cup	Langley Prep	Cundall Manor	Copthill
Plate	Weston Green	L.O.G.S	Crackley Hall

U13 Team Results

Competition	1st	2nd	3rd
Cup	Langley Prep	Holme Grange	Thorpe Hall School
Plate	Red House	L.O.G.S	Clares Court

U14 AND U16 FOOTBALL AT NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY

A huge ISA Football Festival took place at Nottingham with 42 teams from all ISA regions participating, as well as having the chance to meet scholarship providers for football in the US (Soccer Assist). The event was at full capacity with a very high standard of teams. Playing 8-10 matches in a day over the course of six hours is a test of endurance. On top of this we were graced with two helicopter visits, side on rain, hail, frozen pitches which turned to pits of mud. With with all these factors in play the boys were not deterred and managed to have a great day out with plenty of tournament experience. The headline results can be found below, with a full set of results on the sport section of the ISA website.



PRINCETHORPE U18 NETBALL WINNERS



BREDON AND FINBOROUGH - U14 AND U16 FOOTBALL

Overall U14 Team Results

1st	2nd	3rd
Brooke House College	Tettenhall College	Priory School
St James Senior Boys' School	The Cedars School	Bishop Challoner School

Overall U16 Team Results

1st	2nd	3rd
Stafford Grammar School	Dixie Grammar	Brooke House College
Bridgewater School	Bishop Challoner School	Luckley House School



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Setting a standard, ISA members are now enhancing their schools with more permanent outside facilities. Be it a smaller sheltered outside area for students to work away from the restrictions of the classroom or an amphitheatre to allow for open air learning, students are benefitting.

One company championing outside learning is Fordingbridge, an Arundel based firm established over 50 years. The business specialises in the design, manufacture and installation of exceptional

structural timber & steel canopies, walkways and statement buildings for education, among other sectors. With both quality and sustainability at the company's heart, they have also worked closely with The Greenpower initiative, so much so that they designed and built their headquarters. The company's portfolio covers a vast array of products to enhance the outside environment, and they take pride in working closely with their clients to realise the potential of their outside space to create a purposeful addition.

If you are yet to consider enhancing your schools' outlook for outside learning, beautifully designed timber buildings and canopies provide a fitting addition; able to instantly add warmth to the façade of a historic stone building without drawing away from its grandeur. Akin visually to more historic carpentry methods, modern approaches utilised here do make these solid, structural designs a beautiful and solid investment for your school.



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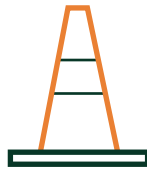
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