

THE ISA JOURNAL

ISA

INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

SEND | NO 30 | FEBRUARY 2024



- BEYOND BUZZWORD – CREATING REAL RESILIENCE
- A DAY IN THE LIVES OF SENDCOS AT HOLME GRANGE
- SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
- LET US BE PROUD OF WHAT OUR SCHOOLS ARE ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND



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Welcome

FROM THE CEO

Rudi Elliott Lockhart



One of the great strengths of the independent sector is the flexibility that independence from the state system brings. Our schools are directly accountable to the parents who choose them for their children, meaning that they succeed by ensuring that each child's specific needs are met. This is the case for all of the pupils in our care, but it is particularly apparent in the case of pupils with special educational needs. In this edition of the Journal we offer a celebration of the SEND provision across the schools of the Association.

Katie Skinner has written a fantastic piece that sets out how Frewen College's restorative pathway approach gives their students the opportunity to develop the skills and strategies to overcome the challenges that they will face, and to build up resilience by working through difficult problems. As Claire Robinson puts it, "never has the role of SENDCo been more needed, appreciated, and valued." Claire's lovely article transports us into the role of the SENDCo and explains the level of collaboration and tailoring at Holme Grange provided to ensure their inclusive environment.

Alexandra Foster's piece beautifully stitches together SEND and mental health. She explains how The Unicorn School has used their SEND provision to empower the self-advocacy of pupils. She highlights how a young person's surrounding community impacts on their mental health, and how the culture of a school, along with the support of family and friends, can be transformative for their self-esteem and sense of identity.

It is a joy to read Barry Huggett's article on how we can be proud of what our schools are achieving for children with SEND. His passion for providing the very best that we can accommodate for our SEND pupils shines through. I am delighted that there is also a great article by Gemma Woodhouse where she lays bare the legal issues behind SEND pupils and disability discrimination and sets out the key legal issues for all Heads to consider.

I am delighted that we have a short piece outlining the work of the Deakin Trust. Deakin is a charity that provides small grants to cover the costs that bursary pupils at ISA schools might incur beyond

their school fees. It makes awards each term and is always happy to receive applications from ISA Members on behalf of their pupils. Richard Walden and Angela Culley, two of Deakin's trustees, have set out what the charity is and how it might be able to support some of your pupils.

While I hope the pages of this Journal shine a light on many of the aspects of SEND provision about which we can be really proud, I write these words knowing that we are less than a year away from a General Election and that the threat of VAT being imposed on school fees could jeopardise some of this outstanding provision. Julie Robinson, ISA's Chief Executive, has written an important article explaining what the threat of VAT really means and what we can do collectively to make clear what is at stake for SEND provision and for independent education more broadly.

Keir Starmer has said that he wants independent schools "to thrive and [for Labour] to work with them." I want to take him at his word on this. I hope that we can show him that Labour's VAT policy as currently proposed could do real damage to the vital work that many independent schools do for SEND provision nationally. I hope that Labour will want to work with us to redesign their policy and that we can work together to make sure that all SEND children can get the high quality education that they deserve and need. ISA will continue to do all it can on this issue, for all of our schools and for all of the pupils in their care.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Katie Skinner – Vice Principal of Frewen College

Claire Robinson – Headteacher of Holme Grange School

Alexandra Foster – Acting Headteacher and SENDCo of The Unicorn School

Barry Huggett OBE – ISA Honorary Member, Principal & CEO of The More House Foundation

Gemma Woodhouse – Partner, Penningtons Manches Cooper

Richard Walden – ISA Honorary Member & Independent Trustee, Trustee of the Deakin Scholarship Fund.

Angela Culley – ISA Honorary Member, Trustee of the Deakin Scholarship Fund.

Front cover photo: Frewen College (LS)



Merton Court Preparatory School (LS)



Brabyns Preparatory School (TN)

WRITE FOR THE JOURNAL

Our Members want to hear about best practice, so if you would like to contribute an article to the ISA Journal, please contact comms@isaschools.org.uk with an outline of your topic. See our website for guidelines.



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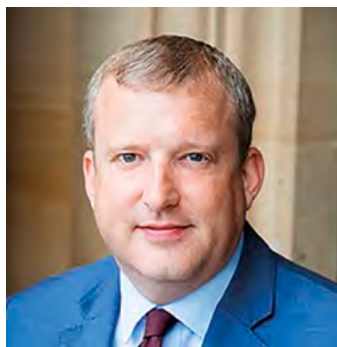
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Message From the ISA National Chair 2023/24

Jeff Shaw



It is my pleasure to welcome you into 2024 on behalf of our wonderful Association. I trust that the first term has gone well in all your schools, and you managed to have some time off before commencing the Spring term.

Rudi and the team at ISA have been busy supporting all our Member schools, providing excellent CPD opportunities and hosting what was a highly successful Autumn Study Conference. With the

new ISI inspection framework now well underway, they are also supporting all our Members as they prepare to experience this for the first time.

Our educational support has expanded with subject network meetings and forums now available to our schools. This provision has been welcomed by Members and is now expanding across secondary subjects and primary areas. Such networks are not only supporting Heads but providing excellent discussion and development for teaching staff.

I understand that the role of an independent school Head is wide ranging, challenging, incredibly rewarding and that no two schools are the same. In ISA we have a strong network and collegial family that is for the benefit of our Members. Regardless of the size of your school, faith or SEND (or indeed both), ISA is committed to making sure that your voices are heard and that you are personally

supported. Please remember that help and advice is only a short email or phone call away.

There is no doubt that there are, potentially, some challenging political issues ahead that could impact on the pupils in our care (not least the proposed tax on parents). We are all aware how much our hard-working parents have sacrificed to attend our schools (perhaps downsizing, taking additional jobs and making significant personal sacrifices). It is incredibly sad that this group of parents may be targeted by such a proposal.

It is equally tragic that the lives of vulnerable pupils, who have found themselves able to access education in perhaps a smaller more personalised setting, are potentially being uprooted and forced to, once again, disrupt their education (something that is not appearing in the headlines). I know that Rudi and all of ISA are doing everything possible to ensure that the voice of such parents and pupils is heard at a national level. I would like to particularly thank the diligent, determined work of our President Lord Lexden. His skilful debate, interjections and speeches are playing a critical role in representing our schools at the highest stage.

As we continue on in 2024, I hope that we do so together, with a sense of positivity, knowing that you are personally supported by the Association and your schools are being represented by our incredible team at ISA. Let us step through 2024 with hope, confidence and determination, knowing that we are stronger together.

Best Wishes
Jeff Shaw



Kriss Akabusi, Jeff Shaw and ISA CEO Rudolf Elliott Lockhart present Holme Grange School (LW) with the ISA Award for Excellence in Sustainability.

Benefits of ISA Membership for SEND schools

- National SEND Discussion Group
- Inclusive Festival with Power2Inspire (Annual) – 18 June 2024 (Y7&8)
- Inclusive Festival of Sport (Annual) – 25 June 2024 (Y6+)
- Para races at National ISA Sport Events, including Swimming, Triathlon and Athletics
- Professional Development with SEND specific courses
- As well as all of the usual benefits, including:
 - * Network of supportive, friendly members
 - * Expert advice from HQ
 - * Annual pastoral visit from Regional Ambassador
 - * Helpful compliance visit before each inspection

If you are not a member of ISA, and would like to discuss it, please contact our Deputy CEO Peter Woodroffe at peter.woodroffe@isaschools.org.uk

SEND Acronyms

SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SENDCo Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

ADD Attention Deficit Disorder

ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD Autism Spectrum Disorder

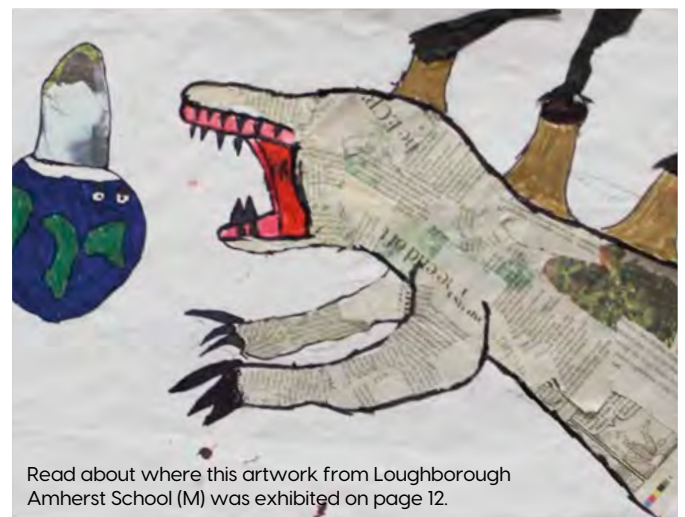
EHCP Education, Health and Care Plan

SALT Speech and Language Therapy

SEMH Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SLCN Speech, Language and Communication Needs

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Welcome to New Members

NEW MEMBERS

James Waite	Octavia House Schools, Essex	East
Rebecca Mainprice	Felixstowe International College	East
Bridget Young	The Holmewood School	London North
Daniel Gibbons	Our Lady's Abingdon School	London North
David Weston	Kingshott School	London North
Gavin Taylor	Lockers Park School	London North
Muhammad Miah	Baytul Ilm Secondary School	London North
Pete Last	Kingham Hill School	London North
Abbie Simmonds	Courtlands School	London South
James Waite	Octavia House Schools, London	London South
Jonathan Mansell	Abingdon House School, Purley	London South
Kas Lee-Douglas	Centre Academy London	London South
Liz Brown	Shoresh Nursery	London South
Susan Brooks	London Park School Clapham	London South
David Stewart	Heathermount School	London West
Lucy Meyer	Lloyd Williamson Schools	London West
Melissa McBride	Sophia High School	London West
Gemma Hodgson	St George's Preparatory School	Midlands
Jessica Lesniak	Sunfield Children's Home and School	Midlands
Matthew Davies	Demetae Academy	Midlands
Peter Sembiente	Act Fast	Midlands
Sarah Unwin	Hardwick House School	Midlands
Alan Harrison	Brantwood Specialist School	North
Elizabeth Perkins	Fairholme Preparatory School	North
Kevin Buchanan	EdStart	North
Sophie Riley	Lancashire Alternative Provision	North
Alastair Speers	Sandroyd School	South West
John Paget-Tomlinson	Leweston School	South West

TRANSFERS OF MEMBERSHIP

Donna Burkert	Woodlands School Hutton Manor	East
Mark Anderson	Red Balloon Centre Norwich	East
Matthew Oakman	Saint Felix School	East
Anne-Marie Kennedy	Sylvia Young Theatre School	London North
Ben Moore	Bales College	London North
Christine McLelland	Buxlow Preparatory School	London North
Charlotte Owen	St Mary's School Hampstead	London North
Emma Bell	St James Senior Girls' School	London North
Iwan Lloyd	Carfax College	London North
John Wilson	Brampton College	London North
Kirstie Hampshire	The Village Prep School	London North
Lynne Weber	The King's School, Witney	London North

Welcome to New Members

TRANSFERS OF MEMBERSHIP (CONTINUED)

Matthew Horvat	The American School in London	London North
Paul Bailey	Howe Green House School	London North
Rayno Cloete	Eastcourt Independent School	London North
Rhett Cameron	Esland School Bedford	London North
Simon Larter-Evans	Tring Park School for the Performing Arts	London North
Vanessa Conlan	Akeley Wood Junior & Senior Schools	London North
David Leggett	Windlesham School	London South
Graeme McCafferty	Rosemead Preparatory School & Nursery	London South
Helen Coombs	St Faith's Prep School	London South
Ian Gross	The Worthgate School	London South
Sarah Thorne	London Acorn School	London South
Ali Awan	Suffah Primary School	London West
Andrew Reeve	Alton School	London West
Cordelia Cripps	Sherborne House School	London West
Carmel O'Dolan	Guildhouse School	London West
David Laird	Long Close School	London West
Sarah Ebery	Meoncross School	London West
Sally Powel	MPW London	London West
Sean Doherty	Westminster Tutors	London West
Christina McCullough	LGS Stoneygate	Midlands
Nick Pietrek	Stafford Grammar School	Midlands
Thomas Banyard	RGS Dodderhill	Midlands
David King	Appleford School	South West
Laura Hare	Park School	South West
Tracy Harris	Talbot Heath School	South West
Tracey Wilson	Talbot House Preparatory School	South West
Robert Robinson	Trinity School	South West

HONORARY MEMBERS

Amanda Kirby

School News

SCHOOLS FROM ACROSS THE ISA SHARE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

This is a small selection of exciting news from across ISA's membership. Don't forget to share your school's news with us at comms@isaschools.org.uk and tag us on X (@isaschools) to potentially appear in future editions of the Journal, on the ISA website or on our X and LinkedIn profiles!

Power of Partnerships

Many ISA schools engage in partnerships with state schools to expand the opportunities and experiences available to pupils and teachers from all schools involved. Celebrating these projects is essential in showcasing the independent sector's value and inspiring more schools to play their part. ISA schools can share their partnerships on the ISC Schools Together website, find out more here. www.schoolstogether.org/about/adding-school-partnerships/.

Worksop College (M) team up with alum Joe Root to stage cricket festival for over 200 pupils

In a bid to cultivate a passion for cricket, Worksop College alum and England superstar Joe Root launched the Root Academy Partnership Programme. Collaborating with Worksop, the Root Cricket Festival came to life. Young people in the local community were offered the opportunity to experience cricket in a competitive tournament setting, guided by Worksop's professional coaches and scholars. The festival brought together over 200 pupils from six local state primary schools, many embracing the sport for the first time.

ACS International Schools spread West End magic to over 250 students

December marked 'A Night at the West End' for over 250 students from nine state schools and ACS' campuses in Cobham, Egham and Hillingdon. Partnering with the Royal

Philharmonic Orchestra and Performing Perfectly introduced pupils to stage superstars, who passed on their expertise in workshops that honed performance skills and crafted the choreography for a spectacular night.

Young people were given the unmissable opportunity to share the stage with these professionals, performing hits from 'Under the Sea' and 'Defying Gravity' to Oliver Twist's iconic 'Glorious Food'.

This was just the opening event of ACS' exciting new Arts Pathway with these partners too.

STEAM 2024 is another highlight on ACS' Partnerships calendar, taking place on Tuesday 15 October for 8-18 year olds. 2022's inaugural event brought together over 10,000 students. To get involved, either as visitors on what will be a magnificent day, or as partner schools with workshop opportunities, visit steam2024.org for all the details.



A Night at the West End by ACS International Schools

Around the Association



Avon House Prep's Rights Respecting School Council (RSS)

Avon House Prep (LN) pupils dazzle ISA Members with UNICEF presentation at area meeting

ISA Members in London North were treated to an inspiring talk from pupils of Avon House Prep at last term's meeting. Students from Years 2-6 jumped at the opportunity to encourage Heads to follow in their footsteps and become a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. Explaining the Convention's Articles, Avon House's Rights Respecting School Council (RSS) identified how this programme is invaluable within a school setting – proving how it can help children become more self-assured, find their voice, and develop into caring, well-rounded global citizens.

It's no surprise that Avon House enjoy Gold status from UNICEF as they reflected on some of their recent activities, including fundraising for local foodbanks and donating school resources to support children struggling to access education across the globe.

Pupils were delighted to see that ISA Members in attendance managed to answer all questions on their quiz! Avon House would love to help other schools embark on this project.

St Edward's School pupils (M) take electric car from bare bones to race day

Students at St Edward's School in Cheltenham jumped at the chance to take part in Greenpower's challenge to build an electric car. With the kit funded by a generous parent, Year 10 and A Level pupils started an after school club to construct

the car, later road testing it on the school path. Months of building bodywork and adding necessary safety measures made the vehicle race ready.

September marked 'Race Day'. Students sprang into action to overcome safety concerns on a wet day, bolstering bodywork and braking to match the slippery track. Several successful laps followed and now the car rests ahead of another season.

Hemdean House (LW) pupils inspire Reading Borough Council to pass safer roads plans

Noticing a growing number of vehicles speeding immediately around Hemdean House, the School Council called for speed calming actions by presenting a petition to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee of Reading Borough Council. Pupils from Years 4-6 highlighted the urgency of the matter, eloquently emphasising the need for heightened measures – such as more noticeable signs indicating the school's presence on the road. Students were applauded by the committee for championing road safety and their request was accepted in January, it now awaits funding. The petition they launched also reached over 120 signatures, with parents and neighbours involved too.

Arts Avenue

Windsor Castle welcomes Christmas magic from Alton School (LW) Choir

The Lower School Choir from Alton School in Hampshire landed a once in a lifetime opportunity when they performed at Windsor Castle last term, thanks to Mrs Cowan. The castle's beautiful halls, beaming with Christmas decor, provided a fitting backdrop for the pupils to spread the festive cheer to visitors with their marvellous performance. A truly historic venue for the young singers to experience.

Andrew Reeve, Headmaster at Alton School, was 'immensely proud' of the 'positive impression' that Alton students left during this 'memorable experience'.



Alton School (LW) Choir spread Christmas cheer at Windsor Castle

Loughborough Amherst (M) Pupils' Art makes an impact at the Houses of Parliament

During their annual Retreat Day, pupils at Loughborough Amherst School addressed the hot topic of climate change; creating artworks for the 'Get Creative for Climate Justice' competition. Some outstanding pieces of art were produced, and the school were honoured to have two of their pieces selected for display at the exhibition at the Houses of Parliament in December. The works hoped to inspire MPs and Ministers into taking action.



Gracie and Ava created one of the pieces featured at the Houses of Parliament

Supporting the community

Bridgewater School (N) surpass £30,000 mark in support for local hospice

The unwavering dedication to community continues to shine through at Bridgewater School as they passed the milestone of over £30,000 raised for St Ann's Hospice. Recent activities of a Music Showcase, Sponsored 5K run and a Murder Mystery Evening raised the school's ongoing support for St Ann's new hospice appeal to a total of £31,600 and counting. Bridgewater's community have supported the charity for many years now, allowing them to provide care for thousands of people across Greater Manchester who are living or affected by life-limiting illnesses. You can see staff and students presenting the cheque in the picture featured.



Bridgewater School (N) present cheque to St Ann's Hospice

Ashville Prep School (N) launch partnership with local poverty charity

Last term saw Ashville Prep School forge a new partnership with Zarach, a local charity who aid families in poverty. Pupils chose Zarach as their charity for the year and kicked off the alliance with an outpouring of generosity for Harvest Festival.

Overwhelming donations of food and essentials could barely fit in the school's reception. Fundraising continued with a pyjama day, resulting in 213 pairs of new pyjamas donated, and a pupil-run craft stall at the Christmas Fayre. These activities, and others planned for 2024, will help to fund 'bed bundles' – a package of essential items, and much more. As a school partner, Ashville Prep can support Zarach beyond donations and fundraising too, in using their community to raise awareness.

Over 1000 books land with charity from Ursuline Preparatory School (E)

Ursuline Preparatory School in Brentwood saw a summer cleanup of their library as the perfect opportunity to support The Children's Book Charity. Fortunate to have many copies of the same titles, the school decided to donate over 1000 books to the charity – who support hospitals, refugee centres, prisons and reading for so many more children. This overwhelming generosity is just the start too, Ursuline Prep will continue to give back through the charity.



Ursuline Prep (E) pupils load up book donations

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**Victoria Kennington, ISA Regional Ambassador- South West
St Christopher’s Prep School, Totnes**

Head to page 19 to read our article:

“Catering to every child: how apetito supports every pupil”



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FOODS



Julie Robinson holding a copy of the 2023 ISC Celebrating Partnerships booklet.

JULIE ROBINSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL

Let Us Not Miss the Chance to Use This Focus on Our Sector to Show All of the Good Your Schools Do

There are currently more children with SEND in ISC schools than there has ever been. The rise has been steep: an increase of 30% over the past five years alone. In 2018, around 1 in 7 pupils at an ISC school was receiving some form of SEND support. In 2023, this had risen to almost 1 in 5. Some of these will be at schools specialising in their specific SEND requirements, such as Moon Hall School in Reigate, which specialises in dyslexia. Others will attend mainstream schools that have brilliant SEND provision included, such as Kingswood House in Surrey.

Very few have an Educational Health and Care Plan: of the 103,337 pupils receiving support for SEND, only 7,171 pupils – or 6.9% – have an EHCP according to the 2023 ISC Census.

At this point, it's important to mention Labour's VAT policy. Labour's plans, which would legally require schools to place 20% VAT on fees, have a caveat for students with SEND. However, this caveat is going to affect only a very small number of those receiving support for SEND in ISC schools. Labour has said that where a student has an EHCP with a named independent school – i.e., where fees are paid for by the local authority – VAT would not be charged. Those of you quick at maths will have worked out that this still leaves around 95,000 students receiving specialist support at their independent school whose families will be expected to pay the extra fees caused by VAT.

There are several possible negative consequences of this. One is that families who cannot afford the rise apply for an EHCP to get the exemption: this would cause strain on an already creaking state SEND system. A Schools Week investigation in 2022 found that 21 councils were rejecting one in every three requests for EHCP assessments – meaning that thousands of families could find themselves unable to afford to continue their place at an independent school, but unable to access the support their child needs to thrive in the state system. (Schools Week, 2022). While applications are going through, while families wait and fight for support, it is the children who need the SEND support who will miss out.

It's just one of the reasons why the Independent Schools Council, along with its members – including ISA, continue to campaign against the Labour Party's policy on independent schools.

It's important that we take this policy seriously; it is more acute than any threat the sector has faced before, and different to any Labour policy that has been mooted for our sector previously. Here's why.

Labour can do this: this isn't the same party that threatened to abolish our schools. This is a political force that has thought through their ideals and matched them to what is legally and politically possible.



Julie Robinson with ISA CEO Rudi Elliott Lockhart.

Labour want to do this: it might not seem it sometimes, but people, by and large, don't hate our schools. They don't wish us ill, but nor do they particularly care. So this isn't a vote winner, this is part of Labour's vision for their next government – and that's a problem, because there's only so far statistics can challenge that.

Labour will be able to do this: short of an unprecedented series of events – which, given the past few years, we shouldn't rule out – Keir Starmer will be Prime Minister and Labour will form the next government. This isn't opposition politics. They are planning for what they will do once they have the keys to Number 10.

Put simply: we need to take this seriously. We must fight it and plan for the possibility that it could happen anyway. If we do not, teachers, parents, and whole communities will ask searching questions about what exactly we were doing while this was going on. And they'd be right to do so.

The ISC is working hard at a national level to talk to the press and politicians about the policy – and it's important to stress that we are fighting the policy Labour has presented, not opposing Labour as a political party – but while we can create noise, it's individual schools and communities who can make a difference by turning that national noise into a local focus.

“Externally, we need to demonstrate exactly what we provide to society.”

Internally, you need to be as honest and reassuring as you can be with parents and staff. Many of you will have already started messaging around this – you should have received ISC guidance on the current situation and how to talk to your stakeholders.

Outlining concerns to your community about the policy is important because your parents and your staff are our greatest assets when it comes to persuading others about the folly of Labour's policy. Encourage them to get on social media and share their thoughts and their experiences with independent schools. And definitely encourage them to speak to their local politicians about their concerns – not just their current MPs, but their candidates too: get them to shout about it loudly and often. (And please make sure you're also writing to your MPs, explaining the potential impact on their constituency – whether on SEND, state capacity, jobs or anything else – and inviting them in for a visit.)

Externally, we need to demonstrate exactly what we provide to society. The SEND support that many of you provide can be an excellent way to showcase what your school means to families, children and education overall.

You can also highlight the valuable partnership work you do that puts you at the heart of your communities. Show that it's a collaborative effort between state and independent schools to share best practice to drive up educational standards for all. And talk to your state partners about the possibility of their joining with you to highlight the importance of your partnership work: we need people outside the sector pointing to the damage that could be done if work is slowed or lost.

I know that a lot of you will also be doing generous and innovative work with bursaries, so don't be afraid to talk about that. The absolute best part of there being more of a focus on our sector is that we can get people talking about all the great things our schools are doing to improve education for every young person.

And please contact the team ISC if you need advice, have ideas or simply want to chat about what's ahead for independent schools. We are here for you – please use us!

Though we disagree with the Labour Party on their VAT policy, we share their goal: we have the same destination, we just have different journeys in mind. We want to work together to improve education for more young people, to ensure a well-funded state system and to make sure that every child with SEND gets the support they need to thrive and succeed.



Julie Robinson is CEO of the Independent Schools Council. She began her career as a teacher, then was Head of two prep schools. Julie led on education and training for the prep schools' association, IAPS, and joined the Independent Schools Council in 2015.

ISC represents independent education at national level in the media and across government departments. ISC provides research and data analysis and promotes sector-wide messaging. Julie regularly appears in the national media including Newsnight, The Today Programme, Sky, BBC, LBC, Times Radio and Channel 4 News on subjects concerning independent education. ISC's small team of staff has been described as "sleepless champions of the sector".

Julie is a Governor for an Academy and an independent school. She is a Trustee for the Record Scholarship Trust, a bursary foundation, and School Partnerships Alliance, a charity advocating partnerships between all kinds of schools.

Bibliography:

Schools Week and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. "INVESTIGATION: THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM". April 2022. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/SW284-Broken-special-needs.pdf>



Frewen College (LS)

KATIE SKINNER

Beyond Buzzwords – Creating Real Resilience

Education is full of buzzwords. Some baffling, some meaningful. But buzzwords don't translate into good practice in settings without strategy and innovation.

In the post-pandemic educational landscape talk of resilience was everywhere, and naturally so. The need for our pupils to be able to recover from adversity and bounce back from difficult life events was critical. Yet this challenge wasn't new for staff teaching in specialist settings, where a key question facing us for many years has been: How do we support pupils whose experience of education has been difficult, negative, exhausting or anxiety-provoking to engage in education, and rebuild their resilience?

Frewen College is a Residential Special School meeting the needs of pupils aged 7 to 19 with Specific Learning Difficulties, primarily Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Developmental Co-ordination Disorder. Many of our pupils also have co-occurring conditions including ADHD, Autism and SEMH needs (Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs).

“We look at positives first, utilise adaptive tools and make reasonable adjustments.”

Many of our learners join us disaffected, having had negative learning experiences or having “failed” in previous settings that were unable to meet their complex Special Educational Needs. These difficulties have often created barriers to engagement, and had a detrimental impact on wellbeing and self-esteem. Consequently, developing pupil resilience is an essential focus of

our wellbeing strategy. And, like many schools, we have been strategically reflecting on the changing educational landscape in the context of Covid, social media and societal pressures on learning and development.

The national trends are clear. Figures highlighted by the charity Mind reported that 1 in 6 young people in England (aged 5 to 16) experienced a mental health problem in 2020 (NHS Digital, 2020), with nearly one-third of 16 to 24 year-olds in the UK reporting some evidence of depression or anxiety in their most recent survey (ONS, 2020).

For us the solution was to develop our existing resources to sit within a restorative pathway that reflects the realities of our pupils' lived experience. One that directly teaches the communication and conflict resolution skills needed for self-representation and emotional resilience.

We cannot be successful working in isolation. We looked at positive practice in other schools through our ISA network and combined national research and evidence-based practice within our planning. We reflected that effective interventions need to take into consideration the developmental stage of pupils – not just their chronological age. Consequently, our restorative pathway is not a one-size-fits-all policy, but looks holistically at pupil need.

It starts with our curriculum. The foundation of our approach is a robust, adaptive and accessible curriculum that builds confidence, enables accelerated progress and is centred around engagement. We ensure that all of our pupils receive the same social and academic opportunities as their peers within mainstream settings, whilst accessing specialist intervention. We provide learning opportunities that ensure progress and potential are never limited. Learning should match the style and pace of each individual

learner. A key factor in our success is that all pupils are taught in small groups of no more than eight, allowing us the flexibility and freedom to individualise support.

We weave in specialist support. Pupils at Frewen College have access to in-house occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and wellbeing support as part of our core educational offer. Our small cohort size means all staff, from classroom teachers to the administrative and catering team, have an understanding of the unique needs and strengths of every pupil. Frewen is unique in that all classroom staff receive Level 3 training in dyslexia within their first year as a minimum requirement, and many of our staff hold additional higher qualifications. As a result, we can respond to individual needs rapidly and effectively and build a school community where pupils feel seen, understood and respected.

As the saying goes, culture eats strategy for breakfast. That's why we focus on ensuring that our school sets and maintains a culture where no one is afraid to ask for support. We know our pupils and their needs. We meet and greet at the door. We value reciprocal respect and set high expectations. We look at positives first, utilise adaptive tools and make reasonable adjustments.

Resilience comes from being given the chance to work through difficult problems.

We introduced a system of targeted friendship skills interventions which are designed to boost pupils' self-esteem whilst developing the skills required for successful friendships. Our Establishing Friendships programme provides the opportunity to practise and develop the initial skills of listening, looking, waiting, turn-taking and use of memory. Our Maintaining Friendships programme grants opportunities to problem-solve commonly occurring friendship issues, develop an understanding of the impact of stress on friendships and to develop emotional regulation strategies.

We directly teach the skills needed to negotiate social interaction and the emotional needs of others as we are conscious that for our pupils the social and societal pressures inherent in social media and adolescence have a lasting impact on wellbeing and attainment.

The restorative approach to learning and development, championed by the education reformer Paul Dix, is designed to encourage both staff and pupils to pursue respect for self, respect

for others and respect for the environment. At Frewen College the shared core values of 'Respect, Equality and Determination' sit at the heart of the school's ethos. Every person in the school community has a voice.

“How do we support pupils whose experience of education has been difficult, negative, exhausting or anxiety-provoking to engage in education, and rebuild their resilience?”

At Frewen rewards are tangible. For every positive values-based behaviour that we see a pupil demonstrate, they get two rewards.

- **The first is a digital point.** These points are collected and can be exchanged for a variety of prizes including tangible objects and experiences like skipping the lunch queue and wearing non-uniform.
- **The second is a physical gold token.** Tokens are used to vote for a prize which will be received at the end of the term or school year by the entire community. Currently pupils are voting between three end-of-term activities chosen by the student council. Sadly, my personal hope for an end-of-term Mr. Whippy is currently being trounced by the appeal of the cinema.

The point of this system is that it reinforces that success for one member of the community benefits the entire community. Pupils are motivated to recognise the achievements and successes of others.

In a system that recognises that developmental stage and chronological age are not always synchronous, it becomes essential to make reasonable adjustments and look individually at pupil need. This system challenges the age-old concern that pupils will feel it is unfair if different expectations are set for different



Frewen College (LS)

pupils. Our system incentivises pupils to support their peers at whatever stage they are, and champion their progress.

So, what happens when it goes wrong? A restorative system is not a permissive system. Where issues arise that require intervention, teachers undertake scaffolded conversations, underpinned by a set of key questions, that allow pupils to explore the issue, consider differing perspectives and develop strategies to avoid further conflict.

The focus of these conversations is to build resilience and understanding by exploring consequence and impact and by supportively identifying and practising solutions. We have used Paul Dix's mantra "restore, redraw, repair" as the foundation for the design of our restorative practice resources. Visual scaffolds are utilised as part of this process to ensure pupils have a tangible record of their learning which can be referred to in the future, improving recall and generalisation.

Staff plan conversations carefully ensuring that they reserve enough time for them, rushed conversations don't lead to meaningful learning. Putting the pupil at the heart of the conversation puts them at the heart of the learning. You cannot develop a culture of mutual trust and respect without valuing pupil voice and recognising where the adult, too, can improve or develop their practice.

Improved resilience is a natural consequence of a holistic system that is purposefully designed to repair relationships; support the skills to understand and respect the views of others; and help pupils move beyond their initial personal responses. Restorative systems empower pupils to speak out and report issues as they know their voice will be heard and that issues will be dealt with fairly. By building conflict resolution skills, we empower our pupils to resolve conflict for themselves, leading to healthier relationships and improved resilience.

As Winston Churchill said "success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts". Our success lies in moving beyond the stereotypes of diagnosis and supporting each child as an individual, with a unique learning profile, and offering an approach that directly teaches the skills and strategies needed to overcome challenges.



Katie has taught in a range of specialist schools, including provisions for pupils with PSCN (Profound, Severe or Complex Needs) and C&I (Communication & Interaction) needs. Prior to joining Frewen College she was a Specialist Teacher for SEMH Needs in the Kent district of Swale, supporting settings to meet the needs of learners with SEND by providing advice and support, delivering training and leading provision development projects. Katie is a Sleep Scotland sleep counsellor and has been involved in creating a range of free support resources and interventions with particular relation to friendship skills, executive function, diagnosis support and Tourette's.

The 8 key restorative questions at Frewen College

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought since?
4. How did this make people feel?
5. Who has been affected?
6. How have they been affected?
7. What should we do to put things right?
8. How can we do things differently in the future?

Effective restorative conversations for us utilise 2-5 of these questions to explore barriers to resilience and improve outcomes.

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Office for National Statistics (ONS). Young people's well-being in the UK: 2020. October 2020. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/youngpeopleswellbeingintheuk/2020>

To read more about Frewen College's approach, Members and their staff can read a case study from the school on our website. This followed their 2021 ISA Award for Outstanding Provision of Learning Support. This, and all other case studies are available here: <https://www.isaschools.org.uk/about/news-and-resources/isa-case-studies-and-guidance.html>



RUPERT WEBER, HEAD OF EDUCATION, APETITO

Catering To Every Child: How Apetito Supports Every Pupil

Rupert Weber, Head of Education at apetito explores how it's premium pre-prepared meals service can deliver an intensely personalised service to suit every child's need.

Providing nutritionally balanced meals that support pupils' development and wellbeing is of the utmost importance. It enables pupils to have more energy, focus on lessons and get more out of being at school.

We're here to help schools do just that! Our premium pre-prepared catering model helps schools achieve full control of their menus, whilst delivering exceptional meals and a flexible service. We're already feeding thousands of children a day at independent and SEND schools and like to think of ourselves as 'in-house, made easy'.

We know how important it is to provide every child with nutritious meals that suit their individual dietary requirements. One of our defining values is 'great food to be proud of' and we have an exceptional team of Chefs, Dietitians and Nutritionists, who develop our meals to deliver on this promise.

Partnering with apetito means it couldn't be easier for schools to create bespoke menus. Our range of over 200 meals and desserts means it's easy and straightforward to cater for food selectiveness. We also have a range of award-winning texture modified meals and offer dishes free-from all 14 EU recognised allergens, which are thoroughly tested in our on-site laboratories.

Our Education Team even has its own dedicated Nutritionist to support schools with menu planning for children with complex dietary needs, taking into consideration selective diets and fear of unfamiliar foods.

We know that consistency of meals is extremely important to pupils, teachers and parents alike. Our meals are cooked using

the same recipe, every time, meaning pupils can be assured that our dishes will look and taste identical every time they are served, which in turn helps them feel comfortable at mealtimes.

Dr Jonty Clarke OBE, CEO of the Beckmead Trust explains about the benefits that they've found since partnering with apetito:

"We've found that the benefits of having apetito for us are twofold. Across a number of our schools, we are responsible for children with social, emotional and mental health issues. We've found that having apetito's excellent quality hot food in the middle of the school day is critical to our ability to nurture the children properly and really does help to support their emotional wellbeing, as well as their physical needs.

"The other side of our work at the Beckmead Trust is with children with autism and sensory needs. For many of these children, the colour and texture of the food is extremely important and the way you separate and dish up food is a really big deal for some pupils. With apetito we're easily able to cater for all these different requirements. The quality and presentation have to be excellent and we're really happy because now we're partnering with apetito, our catering is so much better than anything we've ever had before. The quality and value are exceptional, and we are big really fans."

Interested in finding out more about how apetito can help you? Get in touch today: <https://apetito.link/ISAJan24 Education@apetito.co.uk>



Professional Development

ISA offers professional development, at reduced rates for Members, designed exclusively for educators and leaders in independent schools. With ISA courses, you can acquire skills and insights to propel your career and make a lasting impact on your pupils and school.

We are pleased to be delivering a variety of online and in-person development opportunities, on a vast range of topics. Each offering a combination of expert advice and networking.

Cost

The rate for most online courses is £130 / £160 (Member / non-Member rate) per delegate.

How to book

For more information on our programme and to book, visit the website at www.isaschools.org.uk/events

SEND

SENCO Training - Language as the basis for everything

5 March | Zoom | 9.30am - 12pm

Executive Function

8 March | Zoom | 10am - 12.45pm

Tapping the Talent

20 March | Zoom | 9:30am - 3:00pm

Processing styles and memory

17 April | Zoom | 9.30am - 3pm

The SEND Labyrinth – advice for all Headteachers and Senior Managers

9 May | Zoom | 1.30 - 4

In the Classroom

9 May | Zoom | 10am - 12.45pm

Mental Health

[MHP] Mental Health First Aid (2 Day)

27-28 March | ISA House,
near Cambridge | 9.00am - 5.00pm

Course Aims:

The course aims to increase knowledge, understanding and personal confidence of how best to support young people with their mental health fitness.

[EDIP]

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – knowledge, application and the legal framework.

13 June 2024 | Zoom | 9.30am - 3pm

This course will cover the fundamentals of and best practice for equity, diversity and inclusion, including the exploration of stereotypes, understanding different types of discrimination and employer & employee duties in relation to EDI.

[SLP]

Deputy & Assistant Heads Conference

14 – 15 March 2024

Join us at the ISA Deputy and Assistant Heads Conference for valuable insights and knowledge from a variety of speakers, providing you with the necessary tools and strategies to excel in your role. Gain practical guidance from distinguished speakers, engage in thought-provoking discussions, and network with like-minded professionals.

Annual Conference

16 - 17 May 2024, Birmingham

Annual Conference's programme is packed with a variety of engaging and informative speakers, and will also include the Association's Annual Dinner and AGM. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some networking, to be inspired, and to share in the unique fellowship of ISA.



ISA Accreditations

Our Professional Development Programme provides high quality training opportunities for a wide range of school staff, promoting excellence in independent education across the board. ISA accreditations help support our Members and their staff in a range of different areas, providing professional development opportunities that keep schools up to date and add value to staff's credentials.

Providing high quality continuous professional development (CPD) for staff is an essential tool for schools to maintain best practice, foster excellence in education and keep a competitive edge.

The ISA Certificate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead recognises the need for current, detailed and supportive professional development to ensure those that take a leading role in this area develop their skills and knowledge

effectively. It is designed to enable all those that have an interest in equity, diversity and inclusion within their setting to maintain best practice.

The ISA Certificate for Senior Mental Health Lead ensures School Leaders remain current and have opportunities to develop a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The scheme aligns to the full DfE specifications for the role and is designed for senior staff with the role of Mental Health Lead within their setting.

The ISA Certificate in Advanced School Leadership recognises excellence in Senior Leadership and celebrates a continuing commitment to drive personal improvement. It is open to those leaders (both members and non-members) who wish to develop their skills and knowledge in school leadership.

How they're achieved

The ISA Certificate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead recognises the need for current, detailed and supportive professional development to ensure those that take a leading role in this area develop their skills and knowledge effectively. It is designed to enable settings to maintain best practice in equity, diversity and inclusion.

To be awarded the ISA Certificate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, the following five courses must be completed along with a case study on your setting:

- Embracing Difference: A practical approach to disability awareness for education professionals
- The School Admission Process - what you can and can't do, and how to do it right.
- Gender and Sexuality Matters
- Racism, Bias and Providing Culturally Sensitive Services
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) – knowledge, application and the legal framework

The ISA Certificate for Senior Mental Health Lead ensures School Leaders remain current and have opportunities to develop a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. The scheme aligns to the full DfE specifications for the role and is designed for senior staff with the role of Mental Health Lead within their setting.

To be awarded the ISA Certificate for Senior Mental Health Lead, you will need to complete the four Mental Health Pathway training sessions below along with a Mental Health Development Plan.

- Mental Health First Aid (1 or 2 Day)
- How to create an effective wellbeing plan to support your colleagues and school - Creating and Maintaining a Positive School Culture
- Mental Wellness and Building Resilience in staff and pupils
- Looking after the Mental Health and Wellbeing of staff

The ISA Certificate in Advanced School Leadership is bespoke and can be achieved by collecting credits in different ways. You must collect 25 credits in total to receive the award, through the activities below:

- Attendance at ISA Senior Leadership Pathway [SLP] courses (4 credits per course)
- Attendance at selected ISA conferences (4-6 credits per conference)

Practical work outside of your normal role, such as relevant experience in governance, over two years in a state or private school (6 credits)

Visit our website for more information:
www.isaschools.org.uk/professional-development/isa-accreditations.html



(Holme Grange) (LW)

CLAIRE ROBINSON

A Day In The Lives Of SENDCos At Holme Grange: Nurturing Inclusive Education and Academic Excellence

In today's educational landscape, the role of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinators (SENDCos) in schools like Holme Grange, an independent co-educational mainstream school for pupils from age 2 to 16, is increasingly vital and multifaceted. Our dedicated SENDCos ensure every student, including those with dual exceptionality on the SEND register and the More Able, Gifted, and Talented Register, receives comprehensive support for academic, emotional, and social success. Holme Grange, an authentic and inclusive learning community, values individualised learning and doesn't let diagnoses define or limit a student's potential.

Our two SENDCos, overseeing different school phases, are committed to an enriched support system that transcends quality first teaching. Working collaboratively with teachers, parents, and external agencies, they anchor our commitment to inclusive education as a fundamental pillar of academic excellence.

SENDCos co-manage our highly respected ALC (Accelerated Learning Centre) department, staffed with specialist teachers qualified in specific learning difficulties, ensuring that each student's unique needs are addressed comprehensively, drawing on the varied expertise held by each team member. The ultimate goal is to create an all-encompassing environment that not only supports but also enhances academic achievement and personal development for every student.

Promoting inclusive education is a core aspect of the SENDCos' roles, advocating for environments where all students can participate fully in every aspect of school life. Supporting Heads of

School and class teachers to monitor the progress of students with SEND to evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school's special educational needs provision, the SENDCos actively contribute to maintaining high academic proficiency and progress across all levels. Advising on strategies, targets, resources and next steps as required. Promoting the notion that a rising tide lifts all ships, challenge is a key component of the pedagogy at Holme Grange.

The success of inclusive education relies on collaborative efforts. Regular termly SEND and AEN (Additional Educational Needs) register review meetings, weekly pastoral briefings, round-robin discussions, and meetings as required facilitate open communication and collaboration among staff. These practices ensure that the needs of students are consistently addressed and adapted to, contributing to their success and the pupils' belief in their own ability to succeed.

This partnership extends beyond the school walls, involving a multi-professional team that includes speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologists, physiotherapists, play therapists, counsellors, behavioural optometrists, and more. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive a comprehensive support network tailored to their individual needs, fostering educational progress and attainment.

Including students in the process of developing their target plans fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment. Our SENDCos ensure pupils have a voice. Parental involvement is also encouraged through ALC parent evenings and coffee mornings, providing critical opportunities for parents to stay informed and

actively contribute to their child's educational journey while promoting a positive, supportive, and effective learning community.

Holme Grange places a strong emphasis on providing professional development opportunities for its staff, enhancing their ability to support students with diverse needs. Differentiation in the classroom, specialised training on neurodiversity, including Autism, ASD, ADHD/ADD, and opportunities for staff to pursue specialist teacher qualifications are key components of the school's commitment to continuous learning, enhancing the overall educational quality throughout the school.

Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, and staff working with specific children, receive tailored support and training in line with the needs of those pupils. Additionally, the school benefits from training provided by visiting professionals, such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and others, contributing to a well-rounded understanding and application of the latest research and best practices in special education, positively impacting academic and personal development outcomes across different phases.

Holme Grange recognises the potential of technology in supporting students with special educational needs. The school employs tools like Read&Write for voice-to-text and text-to-voice technology. Various online platforms, including touch-typing programs, Doodle, Literacy Gold, and Nessy, are used to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences, contributing to a technologically inclusive academic environment across the phases.

Maintaining an inclusive learning environment involves providing a variety of resources and accommodations tailored to the unique needs of each student. Holme Grange is equipped with a sensory room and separate sensory spaces for students who require these; visual timetables, stand-up desks, fidget stools, and movement breaks – among other modifications – ensure pupils feel safe and secure, which in turn will help them learn.

Recognising that the needs of students can evolve over time, the school prioritises flexibility in its approach. Individualised adaptations, such as coloured overlays, coloured paper, different fonts/font sizes, and ear defenders, are tailored to the specific needs of each student, contributing to a truly inclusive learning environment. We want our pupils to feel **valued, respected, engaged and empowered** as this is conducive to ensuring excellence and success for all.

The emotional and social wellbeing of students is of the highest priority at Holme Grange, a commitment that has gained increased significance. Recent findings from NHS England indicate that over 20% of young people under 16 are now struggling with mental health problems (NHS Digital, 2023), highlighting the urgency of addressing emotional and social wellbeing. We believe this is different for every child, as each is recognised as a unique individual.

To address these matters, we have implemented a multifaceted approach. The school's comprehensive PSHCE program is designed to equip students with essential life skills, promoting their emotional and social development alongside academic growth. A dedicated pastoral team, led by a Deputy Head working with the SENDCos and ALC department, provides invaluable support, counselling, and play therapy, acknowledging the interconnectedness of social and emotional wellbeing and academic success.

In addition to traditional therapeutic interventions, the SENDCos work with art therapists to support pupils, recognising the unique benefits that creative expression can offer in promoting emotional wellbeing. Holme Grange is also proud to have Pepper and Meg, the beloved school dogs, as well as the comforting presence of farm animals, creating a source of solace for many pupils.

Recognising the importance of creating safe spaces for students, 'time-out' cards have been introduced, allowing individuals to access 'the snug' – the school's sensory room. This provides a calming environment for students to regroup and centre themselves, emphasising the school's commitment to nurturing the emotional and social wellbeing of every student.

Holme Grange utilises a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods to gauge the efficacy of its inclusive education programs. Quantitative methods involve monitoring students' educational progress and future prospects in higher education or career paths. This evidence-based approach helps the school assess and refine its educational strategies to uphold and boost the standard of learning at every stage.

On the qualitative side, the focus is on the holistic wellbeing and satisfaction of students, parents, and staff. Through regular feedback sessions, surveys, and open lines of communication, the school actively engages in an ongoing process of enhancement. This approach not only addresses academic hurdles but also fortifies the effectiveness of our inclusive education strategy. By recognising and creatively resolving challenges, and by placing a high priority on the unique needs of each student, the SENDCos deliver a comprehensive and successful educational experience.

In the ever-evolving world of inclusive education, the diverse and crucial roles played by the two committed SENDCos at Holme Grange stand out. Their approach, characterised by nurturing collaboration, staying updated with advancements, leveraging technology, and focusing on student welfare, underscores Holme Grange's commitment to an extraordinary inclusive educational experience. The school's dedication to ongoing enhancement, innovative solutions, and a comprehensive strategy, steered by the SENDCos, establishes Holme Grange as a trailblazer in inclusive education. This ensures that each student is given the opportunity to thrive in all aspects – academically, emotionally, and socially, ultimately leading to exceptional academic achievements.

Never has the role of the SENDCo been more needed, appreciated and valued – our schools need to nurture our SENDCo and not underestimate the importance they play in our schools' success.



Claire Robinson was appointed Headteacher of Holme Grange in 2009. She started teaching in 2001 following a successful career in Financial Services. Claire graduated with a BA in Science and Education from the Open University and completed her PGCE at Oxford Brookes. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Teaching and also a Fellow of the RSA (Royal Society of Arts). Claire is also an Associate Challenge Award Assessor and Trainer for NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education), as well as an ISI Inspector. Since joining Holme Grange, Claire has led the expansion of the School (from 210 pupils to 684), extending the age range from 3-13 to 3-16.

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NHS Digital. "Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey". November 2023. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up>



The Unicorn School (LN)

ALEXANDRA FOSTER

Supporting The Mental Health Of The Whole School Community

The YoungMinds Trust charity recently reported that, as of May 2023, there were 466,250 young people waiting to start care in CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health services) (YoungMinds, August 2023). This is enough to fill Wembley Stadium five times over. This statistic, shocking as it is, will sadly not be a surprise to anyone who works in education. We can be in no doubt that there is a mental health crisis occurring amongst youth in the UK and there is increasing pressure on schools to provide mental health support. In order for schools to meet this need, it is essential to consider the wellbeing of the school community as a whole i.e. that of the pupils, the staff, and the parents.

Positive mental health must be rooted within the culture of the school; school leaders, including governors and proprietors, have a key role to play in highlighting and modelling this. Additionally, consideration must be given to pupils with special educational needs, as statistically they are more likely to experience negative mental health. Our Unicorn School community is focused on a holistic approach to meeting the emotional needs of our pupils whilst also empowering them to recognise and communicate what they require to thrive, on both a personal and academic level.

We were delighted to be awarded the Gold School Mental Health Award from the Carnegie Centre of Excellence at Leeds Beckett University last year; this is a huge achievement for our school and a reflection of our passion for supporting mental health. To achieve this accolade, it was necessary to complete a portfolio which evidenced how mental health is prioritised in all aspects of school life including the Governing Body, parents and external agencies. We currently have 118 pupils on roll supported by 62 members

of staff. Our pupils have a range of specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and autism. The high staff to pupil ratio not only reflects our commitment to academic progress but also recognition of the need for immersive pastoral care. Given the nature of the difficulties our pupils face, we often find that when they join our school they are suffering from low self-esteem; pupils on the autism spectrum may also struggle with social interaction skills and heightened levels of anxiety.

“There is no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to mental health but, with clear communication and a willingness to review and adjust practice where necessary, school leaders can make fundamental changes to pupils’ view of themselves which will last a lifetime.”

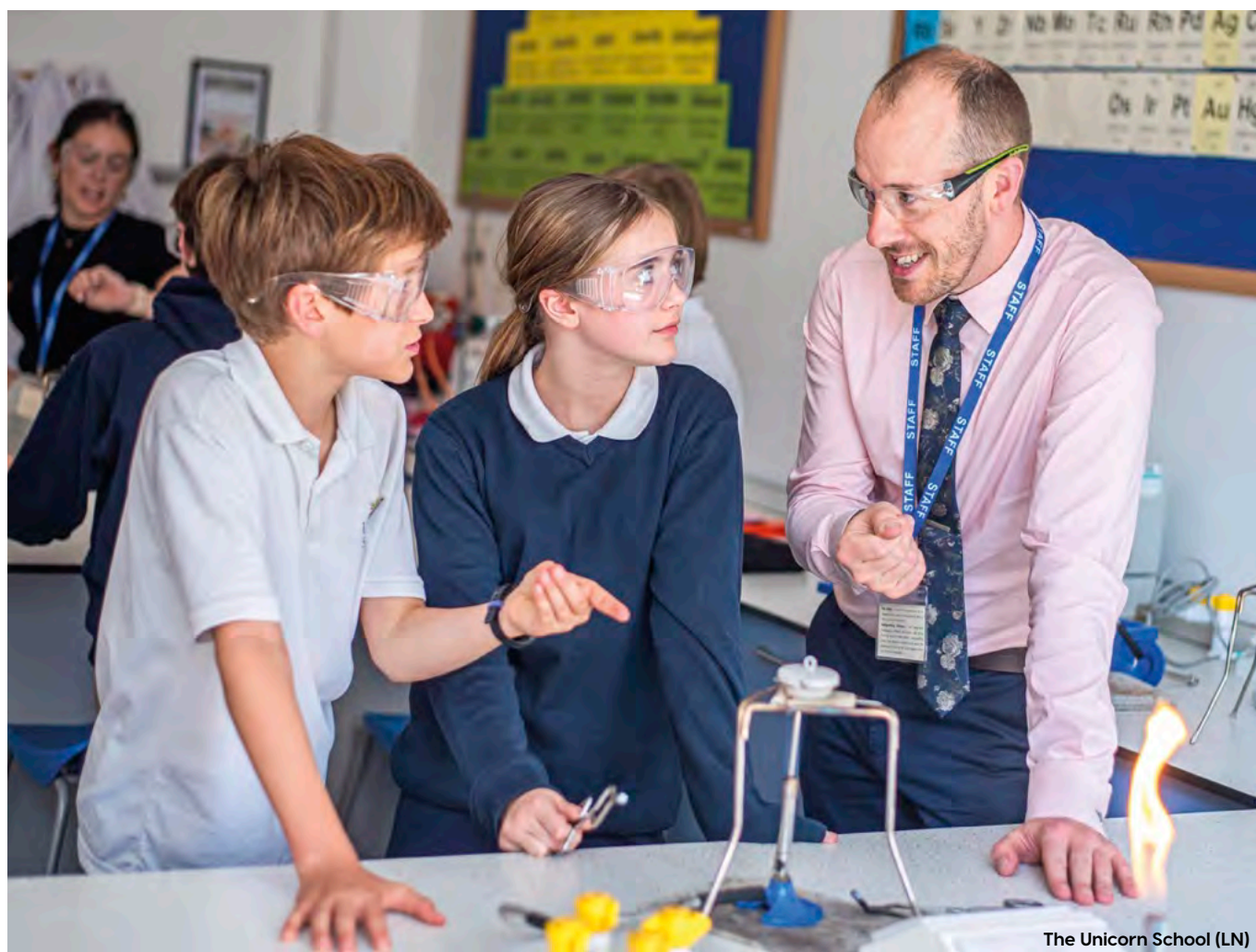
The Unicorn School approach has always been to equip pupils with the skills they need to thrive and reach their potential, regardless of any learning challenges. A core element of this is self-advocacy, to encourage the pupils to understand how they learn best and to be able to confidently communicate this. Our daily 1-to-1 sessions with specialist dyslexia teachers in KS2 and KS3 explore a range of learning styles, often multi-sensory, which allow pupils to really understand their individual strengths and preferred approach. This helps hugely when they reach KS4 and attend twice-weekly Study Skills lessons which harness this metacognitive understanding into revision practice for GCSEs. This approach undoubtedly supports the pupils' academic progress but, perhaps more importantly, facilitates an increased awareness of their own identity as a person.

The link between mental health and self-identity is one that is becoming increasingly prevalent amongst academics, particularly in respect of SEND. Research has shown that the impact of a young persons' immediate community on their mental health can have long lasting effects and is key in nurturing a positive sense of self; the behaviour and language deployed by parents, wider family, friendship groups and schools can impact on the child's sense of self and thus engender more positive self-esteem and identity. For pupils who are neurodiverse, the concept of self-identity can be complex. Individuals on the autism spectrum may struggle to make social connections in the same way as their neurotypical peers and are therefore at a disadvantage in respect of forming and comprehending a rounded social experience and sense of self. Studies have also evidenced the link between anxiety and autism which can stem from a range of reasons and triggers that are personal to the individual but are nonetheless a consistent thread. Times of change or transition are frequently reported to be a challenge for young people on the autism spectrum and this in turn can have a detrimental impact on their mental health and ability to engage with peers, staff and the curriculum. Clear communication and reassurance is essential in this situation and this ties in with

supporting the pupils' sense of identity; if the pupil feels heard and understood, they are more likely to feel safe in their environment.

Helping pupils to foster a sense of themselves as learners and individuals is therefore essential and schools have a key role to play in this. There are, of course, a number of ways that this can be achieved: from small everyday gestures, to talking to pupils about their interests, to broader strategic shifts in school culture. Pupil voice is rightly being recognised as a key aspect of school development plans and at the heart of the new ISI inspection framework, but school leadership teams need to take a step back and review how it happens in practice. Most independent schools benefit from smaller class sizes so this should be seen as an opportunity to lead the way in terms of self-advocacy and identity. As part of our whole school approach at The Unicorn School, all staff are trained in the Zones of Regulation and carry the four-colour card on their lanyards; this approach invites pupils to identify emotions and to speak to any adult about help they may need. We also hold regular assemblies on Mental Health and Wellbeing and encourage pupils in KS4 to lead some of these.

Technology also has an important role in supporting mental health. The Unicorn School has been awarded Microsoft Showcase School status for the past two years, which is not only a testament to the commitment of our staff to embracing innovation in learning, but also to how we include it in all facets of school life. Technology and mental health may not appear to be natural bedfellows, particularly in respect of the reports of the damaging impact of social media and excessive screen time, but at The Unicorn School, we are seeking to explore the potential for positive outcomes. Assistive technology is developing at a brisk pace and is allowing users to not only explore the variety of applications available but also to become increasingly independent. Every pupil at The Unicorn School has a Microsoft laptop and it is a common sight to walk into a classroom and see them being used in a range of ways and functions from 'Immersive Reader' to 'Dictate'.



The Unicorn School (LN)



Some pupils may be wearing headphones, some may be working from standing desks, but the common thread is that they are all engaged in the lesson in a way that suits their learning style. This also works for homework as staff are able to use the software available to further promote independence. For example, rather than written feedback on homework, pupils can click a voice note from their teacher and actively edit or review their work rather than spending the time decoding the written word. This may seem like a small adjustment but for young people who have previously relied on adult support, this sense of ownership and advocacy is an incredible boost to their self-esteem.

“Some pupils may be wearing headphones, some may be working from standing desks, but the common thread is that they are all engaged in the lesson in a way that suits their learning style.”

It is always worth remembering that the pupils' learning environment is the teachers' work environment. For schools to thrive it is essential that school leaders prioritise staff wellbeing. The 2017 Green Paper 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision' proposed that every school should have a Designated Mental Health Lead with a remit to "oversee the help the school gives to pupils with mental health problems; help staff to spot pupils who show signs of mental health problems; offer advice to staff about mental health; refer children to specialist services if they need to." (DfE, July 2018). This is a recommendation that has recently been echoed by the Labour Party and one that school leaders would be wise to consider. At The Unicorn School we took the decision to employ a full time Mental Health Lead in 2021, this has been nothing short of transformative for our school community. This role not only provides much needed ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and ad-hoc sessions for our pupils but is also a valued support for our school staff and parents.

As part of my NASENCO qualification in 2021, I undertook a research project exploring the impact on teachers' wellbeing of supporting young people who self-harmed or expressed suicidal ideation. As expected, the responses conveyed a palpable sense of the impact this has on an individual; teaching is fundamentally a caring profession, with relationships at its absolute core. It is understandable that a member of staff who has been in the position of supporting a pupil experiencing a mental health crisis is likely to feel the emotional weight that they will most likely carry beyond the end of the school day. The appointment of a

Designated Mental Health Lead also goes some way to alleviating concern amongst school staff who may feel that the level of pastoral support they are required to provide goes way beyond anything they come across in their teacher training. As ever, communication is key and school leaders have a responsibility to ensure that staff feel supported in this regard.

School leaders are facing a difficult climate with a seemingly myriad range of challenges. Mental health and wellbeing is rightly being given increased attention in the press as it is a thread that runs through so many of these areas from pupil engagement, to attendance, and everything in between. A useful exercise for school leadership teams is to look at their School Development Plan and consider how mental health impacts each area and how robust the provision is both in terms of resources and future planning. At The Unicorn School we have worked closely with all stakeholders in our community to ensure that our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy reflects our provision and offers clear guidance for how to most effectively support our pupils and staff as we move forward together. For any strategy to be effective, school leaders must ensure that individual needs are considered and accommodated, this is particularly true of pupils, and staff, who have neurodiverse profiles and are statistically more likely to face challenges. There is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to mental health but, with clear communication and a willingness to review and adjust practice where necessary, school leaders can make fundamental changes to pupils' view of themselves which will last a lifetime.



Alexandra Foster is currently Acting Headteacher at The Unicorn School in Abingdon. She has worked in special education since 2011 and is passionate about employing research to further understand how to achieve best practice in schools. Alexandra gained a Masters degree from Oxford Brookes University in 2019 with a final thesis entitled 'Autism and Gender Incongruence; How can schools and school leaders support a positive sense of identity in learners?'. This relationship with Oxford Brookes has continued as she now delivers seminars to PGCE and B.Ed students on the topic of Mental Health and SEND, as well as talking to schools and at conferences on the same topic.

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CARLY TOOGOOD, MODULEK

Staff Friendly Schools – Modulek

I was fortunate enough at the end of last year to attend a presentation by David Baker who was speaking at the Westminster Education forum. I'm sure some of you will be familiar with his work as he also speaks at many educational conferences.

The topic of this presentation was 'Staff Friendly Schools, A Next Step for School Building'.

He talked with passion and empathy for all staff within an educational setting and how a school is not just a place for pupils to thrive and learn but also how it is a work environment for its staff to thrive.

When we consider designing a new school building or a new teaching block, equal consideration should be given to the spaces needed for our staff as well as the needs of the pupils.

With recruitment and retention an ongoing issue within the education sector, it was interesting to hear his research on what staff need from their working environment and what will enable them to flourish and perform to the best of their abilities as guardians of our pupils' education. The correlation between staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention and pupil attainment was a key focal point.

The physical environment in which your staff work has a direct impact on their wellbeing which aids retention and assists with the recruitment of staff, in order that the best levels of pupil attainment can be achieved.

Areas that were discussed in this presentation were: Personal Workspace, Staff Sanctuaries, Dining Facilities and Toilet/Shower Facilities. Investing into a work environment provides added value and shows commitment to not only professional personal development but the overall health and wellbeing of staff. This leads to increased morale and higher job satisfaction.

At Modulek, we believe that when a building is designed, every aspect of its purpose is carefully considered and discussed. It is one of the reasons why we take the time to listen, understand and implement latest research, incorporating this into our design methodologies.

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"The design of a building is very important, it showcases identity, heritage, and aspirations. In my role, I focus on crafting buildings that not only reflect these values but also excel in functionality, sustainability, and overall performance. I'm committed to creating spaces that blend with their surroundings, meet user needs, and have a positive impact for staff within their work environment."
Sepideh Shahlazadeh, Architectural Designer, Modulek



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The Unicorn School (LN)

BARRY HUGGETT OBE

Let Us Be Proud Of What Our Schools Are Achieving For Children With SEND

In our November Newsletter, I raised the question “What makes the outcomes in our schools for children and young people with SEND so successful?” and made the challenge “Let us be proud of what our schools are achieving”.

In the October Journal, there was a focus on independence in our schools, exemplified by Nick Pietrek, Sally Alexander and also by Jonathan Hetherington who wrote about SEND children at More House School, and our President, Lord Lexden, who gave the political case for our schools and rightly exposed the myth that they are the bastion of privilege, bursting with money and resources.

For this term’s Journal, I want to answer the question which is posed above and continue to expand upon those earlier articles in exploring SEND education in our schools.

Firstly, what do we mean by children with SEND? I dislike the acronym, preferring “children with learning differences” but it is a convenience. All children are unique, they are not clones, they all have their strengths and weaknesses to which schools have to respond. Most Children and Young People (CYPs) fit a group who may be comfortably taught together, but the skilled teacher will still make subtle distinctions in their interactions with each CYP. Some children fall outside this larger group, they learn differently and usually have a described need or, more likely, an assemblage of different needs which will move from lesson to lesson or within different social situations.

The CYP with SEND has two jobs to do at school: to achieve the same amount of learning as their peers who have no SEND and to cope with the “needs”. The latter may make the first task harder to achieve. So far, all is true whether the CYP is in a maintained or independent school.

In our Association, a few schools will have 100% SEND children, many or most or all on Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs). In my visits to schools around the country, of which I visit around 30 each year to deliver training or other SEND support – I frequently find around 35% who are having some support for their learning or social differences. Across schools of the associations which make up the ISA, there are nearly 104,000 CYPs receiving such support. There are over 7000 who have an EHCP, mostly in ISA. (ISA, 2023). The numbers of children with SEND has been growing every year since 2016, with currently - in England alone - over 1.5 million with recognised SEND, up 5.8% since 2022. (DfE, 2023). The most common descriptor held by a CYP with an EHCP is ASD and for those receiving support without an EHCP, it is SLCN.

So, what are we doing which enables me to make the statement which is the title of this note?

“In an increasing number of schools, as much time, energy and resources are put in to support each SEND child’s strengths as their difficulties, for it is from these strengths that their career path will flow.”

In ISA schools, all our children are thought of as “special” in the good sense of the word. Most of our schools are relatively small and some, very small. This, of course, ensures that all staff know all children really well and that there is good communication about each child’s progress and the meeting of needs. Training of all staff ensures that needs are met, not just in support lessons, but in all lessons on the timetable. This can also properly recognise that “needs” are fluid and not carved in stone, sometimes changing, or appearing to change, from lesson to lesson. But it is each school’s independence which enables it to make unique decisions to try to benefit all its children which, as was emphasised in the October Journal, allows decisions to be taken quickly and differently and changed if necessary. And in an increasing number of schools, as much time, energy and resources are put in to support each SEND child’s strengths as their difficulties, for it is from these strengths that their career path will flow. So, anecdotally, there are numerous examples of how this combination of small supports coupled with solid professional and expert help, delivered individually or in small groups, enables me to make this claim on behalf of all our schools and their children with SEND.

But we are living in a time of change. Is there anything developing which might disturb or, perhaps, even enhance our ability to support CYPs with SEND in this way?

Last March, the SEND and AP Improvement Plan (the Plan) was set out by the current government. Much of it will not come into effect before 2025, but preparatory work has begun by the DfE in earnest, for the Treasury wants the High Needs Funding budget reduced and it is that budget which pays the fees of the CYPs with an EHCP who are placed in our schools. That budget is currently showing a deficit of around £1.7bn. The DfE has been placing contracts with a number of “experts” working on aspects of the Plan. So this might mean fewer CYPs on EHCPs in our schools, or will it, if the current Tribunal system is not changed? The Plan, also talks about “tailored lists” of schools, from which parents may suggest where their child might attend a particular school. How will schools get on the tailored list and what might that do for their independence? There is more than a suggestion that each CYP on an EHCP will be graded according to the complexity of their special needs and that a tariff will be attached to each grade. This may be a national fee scale without variation. How would that match the fees which our schools charge?

These and other questions we have put to DfE officials in a number of meetings but very little that is a firm response has so far been given. In the meetings, I emphasised the value to the country of our independence. This was not appreciated to begin with, but was recognised eventually as being something which would benefit individual children rather than a pre-determined programme like that which might be delivered through something akin to the Code of Practice 2014/15.

Some of the uncertainty, of course, comes from the current political situation. We already know about VAT on our school fees if Labour form the next government and I refer again to Lord Lexden’s excellent response to this in his recent speech (HL Deb, 9 November 2023). We also know that Bridget Phillipson, Shadow Education Secretary, has stated in answer to a question, that VAT will not be charged if the fee is for a pupil who has an EHCP. But we do not know whether there would be any variation of VAT for CYPs with SEND who do not have an EHCP, as this is a special class of student appearing in government statistics and our schools are required to keep a register of such students.

To try to find some answers to these questions which could affect our schools, I wrote to Helen Hayes, Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years, who also holds the SEND brief. She did not specifically answer my questions, but did recognise the work which we do and the extra capacity for SEND children which is available in our schools. She assured me that any VAT changes would be carefully applied.

Gillian Keegan, the current Education Secretary, said the other day, that the current state of SEND Education here was “Lose, lose, lose.” So we know, regardless of which party forms the next government, there will be changes which may affect our schools, especially if they have children on EHCPs.

So what should we do?

We know that the numbers of SEND children is going to continue to grow. We know that our schools in particular are doing a great job and improving life chances for so many students. We know that parents of children with SEND will do all they can to give the best possible education for their children in schools which they trust and which have a proven record of best outcomes for children with SEND.

I believe that we have a duty to offer this, probably the best education for so many SEND students, to all we can accommodate. In short, we should be very proud of what we are doing and what we hope to develop in the future.

We really will change lives.



Born in Romford, Essex, Barry Huggett worked in pharmaceuticals, started to train as an actuary, but office life did not suit him, so he entered the teaching profession and found that was the niche he wanted to occupy. Barry began teaching at primary level, specialising in STEM subjects. Barry was Headmaster of More House School in Frensham from 1993 until 2015 when he became Principal and CEO of **The More House Foundation**.

The More House Foundation aims to open other schools similar to the one in Farnham, to offer expert SEND help to independent and maintained schools and to also specialise in training and research into SpLD, language and social communication issues.

Barry makes pre-compliance inspections of schools. He also chairs the ISC Advisory Group for SEND and has represented the ISC in discussions with DfE and other official bodies. Barry has spoken at educational conferences and gives advice to fellow Heads who encounter problems with SEND legislation.

In 2014, Barry was awarded an OBE by the late Queen for Services to Education.

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SEND Pupils and Disability Discrimination?

The obligations that are placed on independent schools in relation to supporting and accommodating SEND requirements of pupils differ greatly to those maintained/state schools are required to meet.

Contractual Obligations

The contract between an independent school and the parents of any pupil will set out the obligations and commitments of the parties. It is rare for a contract to explicitly set out the school's obligations in relation to additional support for pupils. It is, however, common (and recommended) for this type of contract to include a provision requiring parents to bear the cost of additional support that the school identifies a pupil may need. An example of this could be specific 1-1 learning support. The provision of this type of clause has been held to allow independent schools to request parents pay the cost of additional support that may be required. In addition to any express terms, there will also be implied duties between the parties, for example there will be an implied term that a school will supply services with appropriate care and skill and will have regard to the duty of care to the pupil. This implied term will require schools to comply with their own published policies in relation to any sanctions that may be issued to pupils and to apply these policies fairly and reasonably. There will also be an implied term that the school will exercise its powers and provide any services in accordance with appropriate legislation and in a non-discriminatory way. This is critical as where a pupil has a SEND requirement they may have protection under the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Act 2010 – Disability Discrimination

Under the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010), an organisation cannot subject an individual to less favourable treatment as a result of a disability. For the purposes of the legislation, a disability is an impairment that has a substantial adverse effect on an individual's day to day activities and has lasted or is likely to last for more than 12 months. This definition is likely to catch a number of medical impairments such as dyslexia, ADHD and also physical impairments such as diabetes (where the symptoms meet the threshold). If a pupil is considered disabled under the act, they have the benefit of a number of additional protections in respect of how a school treats them and the support that they may be entitled to.

The EA 2010 prohibits direct and/or indirect discrimination on the basis of an individual's disability. An example of direct discrimination could be a comment made with direct reference to an individual's medical condition. This is not likely to be a commonplace example of discrimination but is something that schools and in particular their management teams should be aware of. A wider concern is in relation to indirect discrimination. In broad terms, this prohibits an organisation implementing a provision, criterion or practice that could have an adverse effect on individuals that suffer from a disability. An example of this, may be where a school applies an academic threshold for entrance, or, where it applies a standard in respect of behaviour that indirectly affects an individual that suffers from a medical impairment more than somebody that does not suffer from that impairment. It is important to note that indirect disability discrimination can be justified.

The EA 2010 also protects individuals from discrimination arising from a disability and places a duty on organisations to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate any detriment an individual may suffer as a result of their disability. These can also be justified as set out below.

Proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

As mentioned, indirect discrimination and discrimination arising from a disability can be justified where a school can demonstrate that the less favourable treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This requires an assessment at the point of any alleged discrimination rather than retrospectively justifying its actions. In a school setting a legitimate aim can cover many things including safeguarding, ability to meet the school's contractual commitments to other pupils and staff, staff health and welfare and/or meeting a specific academic threshold. Whilst cost itself is not likely to be a legitimate aim, if the increased cost in supporting a pupil with a disability affects the school's ability to support other children or meet its budgeted spend in other areas, this can be a legitimate aim. Once the legitimate aim has been identified it is then a question of proportionality. A classic example of proportionality is where a school operates an academic threshold to allow pupils to join. Whilst the school can justify this on the basis that its curriculum and teaching will be based at a minimum level, it is likely to be disproportionate to allow a pupil to join where they are unable to meet the academic threshold e.g. they do not meet a pass mark (and it is also not likely to be in that pupil's best interests). However, allowing a pupil with a SEND requirement extra time to complete the entrance exam, which may then allow them to achieve a grade that meets the level required would be proportionate and this is a commonplace adaptation (this is also likely to be a reasonable adjustment).



Gemma Woodhouse is a Partner for Penningtons Manches Cooper, specialising in Education, Employment, Data protection and privacy, Technology and Charities. The firm is a Gold Preferred Supplier of ISA, offering initial free advice to Members and much reduced rates if you require additional support for protracted issues. Contact details are available on our website.





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The Deakin Trust: Supporting Pupils For 100 Years

“That is wonderful news. Thank you so much! The family were very appreciative to hear they had been accepted for the grant and the timing of this news just before Christmas was brilliant.”

Many parents of pupils in ISA schools do not conform to the image, often portrayed in the popular press, of stereotypical wealthy “toffs”. As ISA Heads, we know that most of our parents choose our schools because we offer high quality education at the best possible cost. We also know and respect that many parents make considerable personal and financial sacrifices to send their children to our schools, not to “gain an advantage” but to secure the best provision for the needs of their child and family.

They make do with less because they value good education and make it their priority. Sometimes this aspiration is met with outright hostility from the media and some politicians, rather than the applause they deserve. We know too that we have pupils whose parents could not afford to send them to independent schools unless they make even greater sacrifices or receive significant financial help; often both.

During the last twenty years, ISA schools have risen magnificently to this challenge, by offering many bursaries and awards, often up to 100% of fees, making our schools a real cross-section of society and meeting very specific educational or social needs. Our schools are very good at supporting all the pupils entrusted into their care.

Despite generous help with fees, there is sometimes still a problem for parents. It is inevitable that schools with limited budgets have to charge extra for certain activities, for example school trips and residential visits, peripatetic music or drama lessons, exam fees, extra-curricular provision and so on, all of which contribute greatly to a fully rounded education. Participating in these provisions actively enhances the core academic learning of each child. Pupils on bursaries should not be excluded from these invaluable extras, simply because their parents cannot afford them. There needs to be mechanisms in place to provide the necessary funds to ensure these children are not disadvantaged.

This is where the Deakin Scholarship Fund can help. It is a registered charity, with its own trustees, linked to the Independent Schools Association, which of course is itself a charity.

The core purpose of the Deakin Fund is to make one-off grants to pupils already on bursaries, to help with specific additional costs, to support equality of provision for a pupil. These include those vital extra-curricular activities and requirements. (The Trust does not cover the core curriculum, school fees or school meals.) The pupil must already be in receipt of a substantial means-tested bursary from the school or another fund, to at least 50% of the full school fees.

The Deakin Trust has only a limited budget – indeed it would welcome donations from philanthropists wishing to support its work – so it has to be prudent in the level of grants it can make. It does not consider applications over £2000. The average award in the last year has been £670. All the trustees are either current or former Heads of ISA schools. They have expertise and a real understanding of independent schools, so every application is considered with sympathy and in detail before a decision is reached.

The application process is explained on the ISA website. Simply use the drop-down menu under “About” on the homepage. It is the ISA Member, usually the Head, who submits an application, in liaison with the family, supported by all the necessary evidence. The

trustees meet two or three times a year to consider applications, with deadline dates published on the website.

The Deakin Fund was founded in 1923 by Rupert Deakin of Brighton to help students of the Association’s Member schools. (Maybee, 2010). In a century of providing support for educational needs, it has been repurposed several times. It first gave grants to young ladies from what were then called private schools to go to certain universities. Later it tried to contribute towards school fees, but was never wealthy enough to do this on a suitable scale. The current trustees are delighted with the remit we now have of providing for the sort of extras that go beyond the things traditionally covered by fees but are so vital to the education and welfare of our pupils.

The trustees have been thrilled to receive appreciative comments from Heads or parents, which make our work and commitment so worthwhile.

“Please pass on a huge thank you to the trustees – I have told my pupil and she is over the moon she can go. There are difficulties at home, so this is a wonderful boost for a remarkable young lady.”

“Thank you to all involved in awarding the grant – this makes a real difference.”

“Mrs X is so very thankful to have received the Deakin Trust’s grant for her son.”

“Thank you very much for letting me know. That is very good news.”

The Deakin Trust Fund is surely a jewel in the crown of ISA’s history.



Richard Walden and Angela Culley are Honorary Members of ISA. Richard also currently acts as an Independent Trustee of the Association. Both Richard and Angela serve as Trustees for the Deakin Scholarship Fund, registered charity no. 278562.

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The deadline for applications for the next round of Deakin funding is 11 June. Grants from this meeting will be for the 2024-25 academic year. Find all the details on the ISA website.

ISA | Awards

The ISA Awards categories are unveiled in February, followed by entries opening in March. Finalists will be announced in September. The ISA Awards Ceremony is held annually alongside our Autumn Study Conference, which will be on Thursday 14 November in 2024.

Recent years have welcomed a record number of entries, as our growing Association continues to be a celebration of brilliant independent schools who ignite minds and inspire futures. Categories reflect the breadth of provision in ISA Members' schools. Find out more about getting involved at isaschools.org.uk/awards.html.

ISA Awards winners embody excellence and innovation. These schools are recognised for their commitment to nurturing young minds, fostering creativity and inspiring the changemakers of tomorrow.

ISA Awards 2023 Winners

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Early Years

Gosfield School

ISA Junior School of the Year Award

Finborough School

ISA Senior School of the Year Award

Sponsored by School Teeth

Leighton Park School



ISA SEND School of the Year Award

LVS Hassocks



Sponsored by Orcam

ISA Boarding School of the Year Award (New for 2023)

TASIS England

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport (Small School)

Brooke House College

ISA Award for Outstanding Sport (Large School)

Alleyn Court Preparatory School

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Performing Arts

Claremont Senior School

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Art and Design

Eaton Square Prep School

ISA Award for Outstanding Engagement in the Community

Claires Court Schools

ISA Award for Future Readiness (New for 2023)

King's High School, Warwick

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Chelsea Hall School

ISA Award for Excellence and Innovation in Mental Health and Wellbeing

Colchester Prep and High School

ISA Award for Excellence in Sustainability

Holme Grange School

ISA Award for Innovation in Independent Education

Maple Hayes Hall School

Jammy Kasongo (Kristoff) and Laura Dawkes (Anna). Johan Persson ©

Frozen: Unleashing the Magic of Kindness – Disneys

Since opening in 2021, Disney's *Frozen The Musical* has been thrilling audiences at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Adapted from the hit 2013 movie, which in turn was inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, it tells a story of sibling princesses in the mythical kingdom of Arendelle.

One reason the show has captured so many imaginations is that the themes it explores – notably self-acceptance, even in challenging times – are so resonant in the current climate. So it's no surprise that the accompanying education resources which have been built around the show have proven to be so popular in the classroom.

"The thing about *Frozen* is that it's a story all of the pupils know, but it's told in such a grown up way, live on stage, with such amazing production values," says Nancy Shakerley, Education Manager for Disney Theatrical Productions (DTP). "We spoke to our Teachers Advisory Board about the themes that would appeal to young people in an education setting, and the things that kept coming up were friendship, trust, family, loss and wellbeing. They all felt like very applicable themes to the PSHE curriculum."

So Shakerley and the rest of the education team created a raft of resources to reflect this, including creative classroom activities that explore themes of trust, emotions, friendship and uniqueness. Supporting presentations are also offered, as well as resources such as the Secret Kindness Mission Log, an Olaf thought jar, scenario cards and cut-out character puppets.

The musical premiered in the West End in the summer of 2021, when pupils were still adjusting back to classrooms following a protracted period of homeschooling. Perhaps as a result of this, the learning resources "immediately struck a chord", says Shakerley, with over 1,300 primary schools downloading them during the Autumn term.

She adds that the resumption of school visits has also provided a boost. "Students get a huge amount of cultural capital from a school trip. Often they're coming to London for the first time, and we get feedback from young people that the outing itself really positively impacts their wellbeing. It's not just the themes of the show, it's also that idea of doing something new, having an interesting experience, that's going to positively impact you away from the classroom."

Tickets for school groups are priced from £19.50 per student, with accompanying workshops also on offer to augment the experience. Students have the chance to learn songs and scenes

Jammy Kasongo (Kristoff) and Mikayla Jade/Ashley Birchell (alternating the role of Sven). Johan Persson ©



from the show, and practice music and choreography with trained professionals. One of them is Dominique Reid, who works as a Disney teaching artist. "We try to make sure our work is accessible to everyone," he says. "The workshops really help with soft communication skills and confidence, not just in students but teachers as well. I wish I'd had the opportunity to do something like this when I was young."

Coupled with *Frozen Kids*, a 30-minute adaptation of the show designed for primary school aged pupils to perform, there are multiple ways for young minds to engage with the iconic story of Anna and Elsa. Reid describes that Disney's education work acts like a "gift that keeps giving", which seems an apt summary of a programme of work designed to instil both memories and skills that will last a lifetime. Let it go? More like let it grow.

If you are interested in staging a Disney Kids or Junior production at your school, visit disneyonstage.co.uk/stage-a-disney-musical

If you would like to access the free teaching resources that support *Frozen*, please visit frozeneducation.co.uk/

If you would like to book tickets for *Frozen the Musical* please visit groupbooking.disneytickets.co.uk/contact/frozen-group-sales/ or call 020 7845 0949 between 9.30am - 6pm Monday-Friday.



THE GUARDIAN, DAILY MAIL, THE SUN, THE TELEGRAPH



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Theatre Royal Drury Lane, London

Tickets at the education rate are only available for guests who are in full-time education up to (and including) Year 11. One accompanying adult per every 10 full-time pupils can attend within the education rate, using the free teacher ticket issued with every 10 paid tickets. Valid for Wed - Thu matinees & Thu - Fri evenings. Subject to availability. Excludes all school holidays. Minimum group size is 10. Education rate valid for groups up to Year 13.

*Early booker rates are valid when paid for 12-weeks in advance of the performance date. ©Disney

ISA ARTS

UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

HANDWRITING COMPETITION

Open Now
Deadline: 14 March

EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Open 4 March
Deadline: 20 March

YOUNG STORYTELLERS COMPETITION

Open Now
Deadline: 21 March

DIGITAL ART COMPETITION

Open Now
Deadline: 27 March

ESSAY COMPETITION

Opens 28 February
Deadline: 23 April

BAND COMPETITION

Open Now
Deadline: 25 April

FILM & ANIMATION COMPETITION

Open Now
Deadline: 2 May

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
www.isaschools.org.uk/arts

We're interested to know whether Members would like us to expand the Debating Competition for the future. Particularly, the addition of a category for KS2 students. If this would be valued by your school, please let us know at isaarts@isaschools.org.uk.

Follow us on X and Instagram
@ISAartsUK for more updates.



Included alongside this edition of the Journal is the ISA National Art Brochure, featuring the work of all finalists in the 2023 competition. Congratulations to all the participants, entries showcased an exceptional standard of creativity. If your school didn't take part this year, please **check our website** for details on how to get involved in 2024.

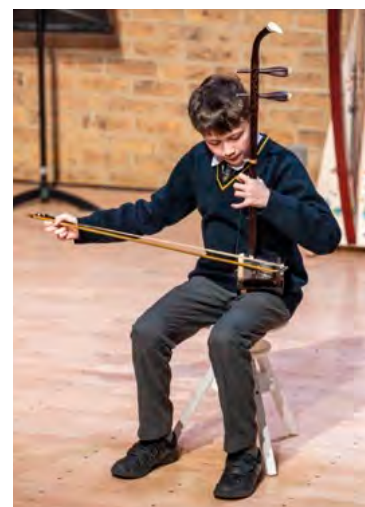


Stafford Grammar School (M), ISA Young Musician Final 2024, Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College, University of Oxford.

This term started with the Debating Competition, congratulations to the winners St Catherine's School (LW) for KS3 and Huddersfield Grammar School (N) for KS4/5. Topics included: 'the impact of AI on children's education', 'the value of qualifications versus experience' and 'the question of hosting international sports events in countries with a poor human rights record'.

Next was the Young Musician Competition Final in Oxford, where 39 finalists performed, each selected after over 200 entries in the first round. Congratulations to the winners and to all the musicians. Full results are on our website.

Dolphin School (LW) ISA Young Musician Final 2024, at Jacqueline du Pré Music Building, St Hilda's College.



Best of luck to students involved in our upcoming events:

- The A Cappella Competition on 6 March at Leighton Park School (LW). As well as performing, the day will end with pupils enjoying a singing workshop led by the award-winning judges.
- The Public Speaking Final will be a live event for the first time this year, taking place at the University of Cambridge's Gonville and Caius College on 19 March and kindly supported by The English-Speaking Union.
- Following a brilliant first day at King's High School (M) in February, the Drama Competition's second event will take place on 21 March at Luckley House School (LW).

For more information about all our events, including the ISA Arts calendar for the year, please visit our website. If you have any questions, please contact isaarts@isaschools.org.uk

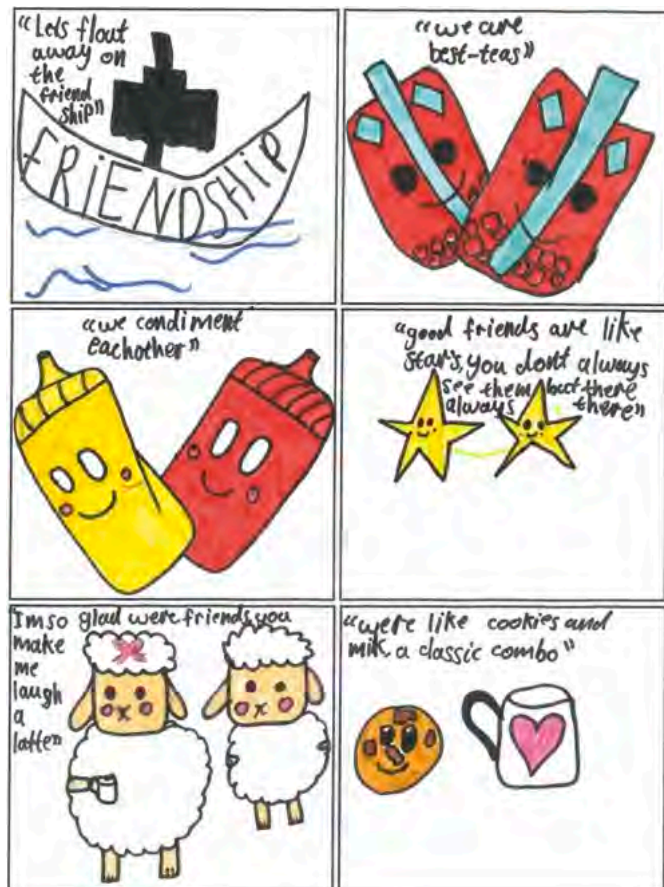
ISA ARTS

ISA Comic Strip Competition 2023/24

We recently announced the winners of this year's Comic Strip Competition. With more than 200 entries, participants showcased remarkable creativity, artistic talent and captivating stories.

In the KS2 category, participants were invited to create a comic strip based around the theme of 'Friendship', while KS3-5 students explored 'Heroes From History'.

'Friendship' by Eloise, KS2, Gosfield School (E).



The diversity of entries made the judging process both challenging and inspiring. As we celebrate the winners and their exceptional achievements, we also congratulate each participant for their brilliant artwork.

Take a look at some of the entries!

'Heroes of History' by Chloe S, KS4-5, DLD College (LW).



ISA Coding Competition

This competition encourages pupils to explore their creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking through their coding skills.

Open to Key Stages 2-5 from 1 February. **Deadline 26 March.**

ISA Puppet Show Competition

Creating a puppet show is a brilliant way for children to engage with both visual art and performance.

Making puppets develops creative expression and fine motor skills, whilst giving a performance as a group can also encourage children's social development, speech and language skills. ISA invite EYFS and Primary pupils to create their own puppets and use them to perform a short play.

Competition open to EYFS and Primary Schools pupils in March. **Deadline 8 May.**

EVENTS COMING UP IN 2024

NETBALL

U16 – University of Nottingham – 7 March
 U14 – University of Nottingham – 12 March
 U11 – King’s High, Warwick – 13 March
 U18 – University of Nottingham – 14 March
 U13 – King’s High, Warwick – 20 March

FOOTBALL

U11 Boys – St George’s Park – 8 March
 U11/U13/U15 Boys Festival –
 LVS Ascot – 19 March
 U11 Girls – Queen Ethelburga’s – 30 April
 U11 Girls – Saint Nicholas School – 1 May
 U13 Girls – Lingfield College – 7 May

RUGBY

U18 – St James Boys’, Ashford – 6 March
 U13/U14 – St James Boys’,
 Ashford – 7 March
 U16 Girls – King’s High, Warwick – 21 March

TENNIS

U15 – New Hall School – 2 May
 U13 – New Hall School – 3 May

TRIATHLON

U9-U18 – Ipswich High School – 8 May

GYMNASTICS

U9/U11 – Adcote School – 12 May

ULTIMATE FRISBEE

U12 – Twycross House – 15 May

EQUESTRIAN

U9-U18 – Princethorpe College – 25, 26 May
 & 23 June

CRICKET

U13 Girls – Gosfield School – 4 June
 U13 Boys – St James Boys’,
 Ashford – 5 June
 U15 Boys – St James Boys’,
 Ashford – 6 June
 U15 Girls – Gosfield School – 18 June

ATHLETICS FINALS

U9-U18 – Alexander Stadium – 17 June

Follow us on X @ISAsportUK and
 Instagram @isaschoolssport for
 more updates.

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SEND Opportunities in 2024



ISA Sport is committed to providing equal sporting opportunity for all pupils at Members’ schools, and 2023/2024 builds on the launch of inclusive events last year. Inclusivity is at the heart of our Association, and we are working closely with valuable partners such as Power2Inspire and the University of Nottingham to grow the inclusive offer for students in your schools.

ISA hope that positive experiences in such events provide the platform to build confidence and social interaction. Find out about some of this year’s opportunities below.

Power2Inspire Sports Festival

Year 7 and 8 students receiving SEND support can join us and Power2Inspire for an inclusive sports event at Leighton Park School. In its second year, the event will include sports such as Boccia, Goalball, Kwik Cricket and sitting volleyball. All pupils will come away with t-shirts, medals and certificates for taking part.

Tuesday 18 June 2024, Leighton Park School.

Find out more details and register here:

<https://www.isaschools.org.uk/sport/inclusive-sport/inclusive-festival-with-power2inspire.html>

Inclusive Festival of Sport (Residential)

The ISA Inclusive Festival of Sport returns for 2024. Once again, this will take place at the University of Nottingham, with the support of their inclusive delivery team. For Year 6+ students, this a residential two-day festival that offers adapted sports in a non-competitive environment, including all meals and accommodation. Last year students enjoyed a variety of sporting activities including karate, climbing, wheelchair basketball, and new activities are in store for 2024.

This year the ISA Inclusive Festival of Sport will take place on June 24 & 25.

Find out more information here:

<https://www.isaschools.org.uk/sport/inclusive-sport/inclusive-festival-of-sport.html>

Para Events:

Para opportunities are available for some of our larger events, such as athletics, swimming, and triathlon. You can always discuss the options available for your students with the ISA Sport team.

ISA | SPORT Roundup

ISA National Swimming Finals 2023

The iconic London Aquatics Centre once again played host to the ISA National Swimming Finals in December, bringing the best young swimmers from ISA Members' schools together for a day of races. These finals were the culmination of months of hard work and dedication from young people all over the country. It was a joy to celebrate their achievements and their love for the sport of swimming. Former Olympic swimmer and Commonwealth Games

medallist Amy Smith joined us on the podium to inspire the next generation of athletes and to present winners with their medals.

Special thank you to Manola Restivo and students from Bishop Challoner School (LS), who volunteer every year to help the event run as smoothly as possible.

All in all, 506 students from 138 ISA schools battled it out across 83 events, including para races for boys and girls. London West finished top amongst the seven ISA areas. It was another year for record breakers, with 17 new national marks set in the following events:

INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY 200M YEAR 11-13 BOYS:

Volodymyr G., Trinity School (SW) – 2:07.78

BREASTSTROKE 50M YEAR 6 BOYS:

Henry E., The King's School, Chester (N) – 0:41.05

BACKSTROKE 50M YEAR 8 GIRLS:

Lily S., Ipswich High School (E) – 0:33.03

BACKSTROKE 50M YEAR 8 BOYS:

Archie T., New Hall School (E) – 0:29.31

BACKSTROKE 100M YEAR 9-10 GIRLS:

Kate R., Scarisbrick Hall (N) – 1:08.22

BACKSTROKE 100M YEAR 9-10 BOYS:

Danya K., New Hall School (E) – 1:04.20

PARA FREESTYLE 50M YEAR 7-13 BOYS:

Max D., Worksop College (M) – 0:30.22

FREESTYLE 50M YEAR 5 GIRLS:

Brooke W., Falkner House (LW) – 0:32.04

FREESTYLE 50M YEAR 8 BOYS:

Raymond D., Worksop College (M) – 0:27.06

FREESTYLE 100M YEAR 11-13 BOYS:

Volodymyr G., Trinity School (SW) – 0:51.23

BUTTERFLY 50M YEAR 8 BOYS:

Archie T., New Hall School (M) – 0:28.24

BUTTERFLY 50M YEAR 9-10 BOYS:

Danya K., New Hall School (E) – 0:27.29

MEDLEY RELAY 4X50M YEAR 8 BOYS:

ISA East Anglia – 2:09.84

MEDLEY RELAY 4X50M YEAR 11-13 GIRLS:

ISA Midlands – 2:08.95

FREESTYLE RELAY 4X50M YEAR 8 GIRLS:

ISA Midlands – 2:01.50

FREESTYLE RELAY 4X50M YEAR 8 BOYS:

ISA East Anglia – 1:55.41

FREESTYLE RELAY 4X50M YEAR 11-13 BOYS:

ISA London West – 1:44.06



Volunteers from Bishop Challoner School (LS) at the ISA National Swimming Finals 2023.



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