



Insight

Updates, guidance and resources for your whole leadership team



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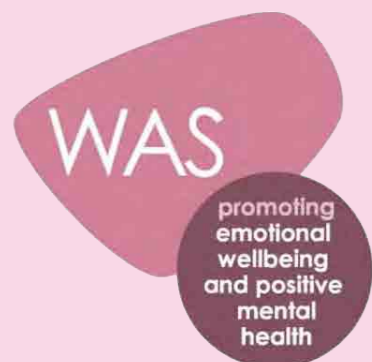


TEACHING AND LEARNING

Confidence in and outside the classroom

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Secure your wellbeing culture with...



The **Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)** offers a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing and focuses on changing the long-term culture of the whole school. Using an evidence-based framework to drive change, it will help you deliver staff and pupil wellbeing, review your staff training, and revive your policies to ensure mental health lies at the heart of your school ethos, now and in the future.

Find out more here: oego.co/insight-was

The **Mental Health & Wellbeing in School conference** offers you the chance to hear from leading experts and practitioners both in person or online.

The conference takes place in Manchester (23 November), London (25 November) and digitally (2 December - 9 December).

Attending gives you access to a programme filled with timely keynotes, practical workshops, and resources to offer meaningful mental health support to students and staff.



Find out more here: oego.co/insight-mentalhealth



Our CPD-Certificated Course **Understanding Stress and How to Manage It** will help you understand what stress is and learn how to implement effective strategies in your everyday life and limit the damaging effects of stress in your work and on your health. This comprehensive course is available as a whole, or just as individual units and each unit is certificated for you to evidence your training.

Find out more here: oego.co/insight-stress

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SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

Welcome to Optimus Education Insight

Dear Reader

When Let Toys Be Toys campaigners surveyed UK educators to find out what training they had received around recognising and challenging gender stereotypes, they found that 80% of teachers had not been offered any training in the previous five years around gender stereotypes and unconscious bias. Why does this matter? Well, the statutory RSE guidance tells us that 'schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated'. Surely there's a connection between sexism, and sexual harassment and violence? If we want to address harassment in schools, an issue highlighted by the recent Ofsted review, isn't challenging gender stereotypes a good place to start?

In this issue we spotlight some other areas for review and planning ahead. How confident are you in your data protection audit process? Do you have an estates strategy in place – and why would you want one?

This year is proving equally as challenging as the last two for staff in schools. Burnout and sickness are taking their toll, and the impact of the pandemic on pupils' wellbeing and learning is only just being revealed. Check out Thérèse Hoyle's suggestions for building pupil confidence, and find out how the PERMA model provides a framework for staff wellbeing.



Liz Worthen
Head of Content
Optimus Education

What kind of future do you want to create?

Apprenticeships for Schools

Apprenticeships are a great way for schools to improve the skills base of employees, from teaching staff to business and support staff – grow or upskill your team cost-effectively with work-based qualifications.

Up to £4,000 Government incentives for new apprentices!

“It has definitely given me a lot more information, knowledge and skills, and has made me better at my job. It's been an eye opener, learning all the skills needed to be able to provide the best support in my role.”

Jack, Level 3 Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship

“The things I shouldn't be doing as a line manager I was able to unlearn, and going through changes in my management style was really beneficial.”

Jonathan, Management Level 3 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships for Teaching Staff

- Assessor/Coach - Level 4 Apprenticeship
- Coaching Professional - Level 5 Apprenticeship
- Learning and Skills Teacher - Level 5 Apprenticeship
- Learning Mentor - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Teaching Assistant - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Property Maintenance Operative - Level 2 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships for Support and Business Staff

- Business Administrator - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Career Development Professional - Level 6 Apprenticeship
- Customer Service Practitioner - Level 2 Apprenticeship
- Customer Service Specialist - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Employability Practitioner - Level 4 Apprenticeship
- HR Support - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Schools Business Professional - Level 4 Apprenticeship
- Level 6 - Career Development Professional (SEND Pathway available)

Apprenticeships for IT Staff

- Cyber Security Technician - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Cyber Security Technologist - Level 4 Apprenticeship
- Data Analyst - Level 4 Apprenticeship
- Information Communications Technician - Level 3 Apprenticeship
- Network Engineer - Level 4 Apprenticeship

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Not yet a member?

If someone has shared this magazine with you but you don't currently have an Optimus membership, we'd love to hear from you. Call us on 020 8315 1506 and you can speak to one of our account managers about membership options and take a demo of the website.

Want to contribute?

We work with a wide range of practitioners to bring members the most relevant, useful and up-to-date content. If you would like to contribute by writing for us or presenting at a conference, please get in touch via customer.services@optimus-education.com

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We offer selected opportunities for relevant suppliers to share their services with our members, from conference sponsorship to magazine advertising. To find out more about these opportunities, contact Kate on 020 8514 9577.

1 Remember to visit the website at my.optimus-education.com

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Conference calendar

Optimus Education's conferences and training days are designed to provide practical strategies and ideas to take away and implement back at school. Here's what we have coming up in your focus area

NOVEMBER

Delivering Statutory RSE 2021

4, 9 & 16 NOVEMBER, DIGITAL
Develop your RSE culture and curriculum to equip pupils to recognise and build healthy relationships. A completely different programme of speakers to RSE London 2021!

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

MATs Summit 2021

11 & 12 NOVEMBER, LONDON
Now in its sixth year, the MATs Summit is the flagship summit for multi-academy trusts of all sizes. With five core themes – collaboration, leadership, finance, learning, and accountability & growth – it's a networking and senior leadership team-building opportunity not to be missed!

[Leadership and Governance](#)

Data Protection Officer Foundation Training

16, 18, 23 & 29 NOVEMBER, DIGITAL
Ensure you are equipped and able to evidence training for your GDPR compliance role. Dai Durbridge leads this interactive online course which provides seven hours of training across three content-led modules and a module focused on your questions and answers.

[School Business Management](#)

Data Protection Officer Training Update

17, 22, 24 & 30 NOVEMBER, DIGITAL
Ensure you are up to date, staying compliant and able to evidence training for your GDPR role. Dai Durbridge leads this interactive online course which provides seven hours of training across three content-led modules and a module focused on your questions and answers.

[School Business Management](#)



MISSED ONE OF THE CONFERENCES?
Advanced and Elite members can catch up via recordings of digital sessions. Ask your account manager for details.

Mental Health & Wellbeing in Schools 2021

23 NOVEMBER, MANCHESTER
25 NOVEMBER, LONDON
Secure a strong mental health and wellbeing culture for your staff and students.

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

DECEMBER

Mental Health & Wellbeing in Schools 2021

2 & 9 DECEMBER, DIGITAL
Secure a strong mental health and wellbeing culture for your staff and students. Take a fresh look and gain new strategies with this completely new programme of speakers.

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

JANUARY

Developing Character, Confidence and Skills for Life

25 JANUARY, 1 FEBRUARY (PRIMARY) & 2 FEBRUARY (SECONDARY), DIGITAL
Cultivate attitudes, skills and behaviours that support learning and personal development and equip children to thrive as global citizens.

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

Leading SEND Provision

27 JANUARY & 3 FEBRUARY, DIGITAL
Ensure quality inclusive provision and thrive as a collaborative leader.

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

FEBRUARY

Inclusion & Wellbeing MENA 2022

22 FEBRUARY (Inclusion) & 23 FEBRUARY (Wellbeing), DUBAI

Lead and develop your whole school culture of inclusion and wellbeing to equip both students and staff to grow and flourish.

[SEN and Safeguarding](#)

MARCH

Growing and Developing a Trust

15 MARCH, LONDON
Build your multi-academy trust with proven processes and creative approaches to growth.

[Leadership and Governance](#)

Realising Potential

17 MARCH, LONDON
Maximise the learning experience and ensure quality teaching and impactful interventions that drive excellence through stretch and challenge for every pupil.

[Teaching and Learning](#)



For a full list of our upcoming conferences and training days, please visit my.optimus-education.com/conferences

For further information or booking queries, please call the conference team on 0755 748 7910.

What's in this month's Leadership and Governance section?

Attending data protection training might not be top of everyone's wish list, but we've enjoyed taking part in some of the digital sessions for the *Intermediate Level DPO Continuous Development Programme*, led by Dai Durbridge. It's raised awareness of privacy issues, the ways that data protection regulations affect life in schools, and the potential for negative consequences if things go wrong. So, if you'd like a better understanding of your DPO's audit process, or you're a DPO wanting to refine your approach to compliance checks, turn overleaf!

Readers in MATs: has your trust conducted a SEND review? It's an opportunity to reflect on the quality of SEND practice across your schools; Natalie Packer explains more on page 10.

How successfully are you marketing your school? Turn to page 12 for suggestions from Justin Smith around promoting your brand and protecting your reputation. And last but by no means least, do you think you've been held back by imposter syndrome? Don't let it be a barrier to your leadership success – read Kelly Hannaghan's blog for inspiration!

Leadership and governance blogs

Checking in, self-direction and learning cycles: an alternative to school? oego.co/school_alternative

Developing an anti-racism strategy and preparing for a cultural shift oego.co/anti-racism_strategy

School uniform: the gender debate oego.co/uniform_gender

See more at blog.optimus-education.com

Contributors in this issue



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Digital

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CONFERENCE REPORT

Carrying out a data protection audit

Conducting a data compliance check or learning walk can seem a daunting prospect for data protection officers. **DAI DURBRIDGE** shares his top tips

‘Conducting a data protection audit’ may sound formal, but to put it simply, it’s about understanding what’s going on in your school or setting in terms of data protection compliance. Do you know where your risk areas are? Have you created some documentation that shows what’s going on, where the skills gaps are and what you’re going to do about it?

Getting started

Before you even start your audit or compliance check, take a step back: what are you trying to achieve? What’s your objective? Don’t feel you have to cover all areas at once: it’s fine to take bite-size chunks, especially if you’re in a situation where you have a number of schools to cover.

What did your last audit tell you? If the main issue you uncovered was the number of computers unlocked and passwords

‘What are the traps that people regularly fall into?’

on display, then that’s your starting point for the next audit. Or if you don’t have a previous audit to work from, what do you know to be the biggest data protection issues in education? What are the traps that people regularly fall into? What things have you seen in your own setting that worry you, or what are people asking you about?

What to include in your audit

Review policies and paperwork.

While it’s important that policies, forms, standard letters and notices get reviewed, this may be something that is done annually, rather than every time you

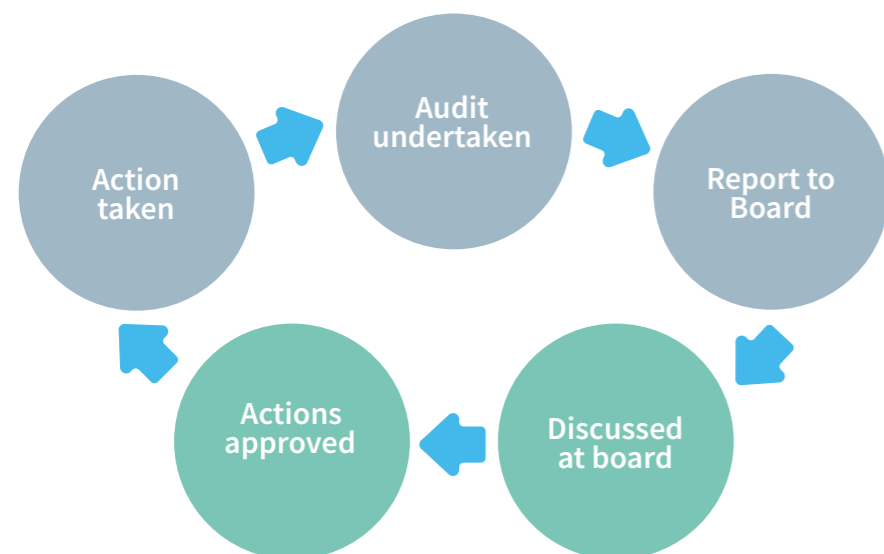
conduct an audit or learning walk. Your privacy notice is probably more of a ‘living document’, and will need to be amended regularly.

Consult with your IT manager.

Your IT manager is a key partner. What are they noticing? For example, how many emails are being sent or stored? (When it comes to data breaches, emails feature high on the list – most commonly emails being sent to the wrong address, or a failure to BCC). Where is information being saved – is it in the right place? Is material regularly being left uncollected on printers? What do they consider some of the key risk areas to be?

Talk to staff. Start with those who you might consider as being in the ‘higher risk’ group, due to the nature of their work. Reception staff for example – not only are they the ‘front face’ of your school or trust, but they are also handling and passing on more pupil information than most members of staff. DSLs are important too, because of the nature of the information they’re working with and sharing. How do they share information externally? What are your security protocols? When they send information to parents, is it password protected?

Talk to your senior leaders. Be aware of the ICO’s expectation that ‘Decision-makers lead by example and promote a proactive, positive culture of data protection compliance’ (see the



Data protection learning walk

Taking a walk around your school is one of the best ways to see how well data protection processes are understood and being implemented. Here are some suggestions for your checklist.

- What’s visible to the visitor signing in at the reception desk? Can they see computer screens in the office? Are privacy screens deployed where appropriate?
- Can computer screens be seen by someone walking past a window?
- What’s on the staff room wall? Is any safeguarding or medical information displayed?
- Is pupil information being displayed on classroom walls?
- If you have a clear desk policy, is it being implemented?
- Are any computers unlocked?
- Are computer or software passwords on display?
- Are computer passwords on autofill?
- Are filing cabinets locked? Where are the keys kept?



Is your confidential waste really confidential?

depend on what progress or problems were uncovered in your last audit. If last month’s learning walk revealed a number of issues to be resolved, you might want to conduct another one in a fortnight to follow up. However, if your last three audits all had positive results with no current issues to resolve, you could wait a while for the next one.

Reporting your findings

What do you do with the information you’ve found? Note that the data protection officer should be reporting to the highest level of management – that’s probably the headteacher or CEO. It’s a good idea to get buy in from your senior management team for any report and actions you plan to share with governors or trustees.

Give careful thought to the content and format of your report. How are you going to engage and retain the reader’s interest? What level of detail do you need to include? If you’re presenting your board with a 40 page report, is it going to get read? Do you need an executive summary or key bullet points at the top for a quick digest? Are the actions and issues clear and up front?

Don’t feel you have to reinvent the wheel. Is there an existing report format you can adapt? For example a safeguarding, or health and safety report? It’s probably easier for the governors to receive a report that’s in a format they’re familiar with.

Your report might include:

- number and type of data breaches, and what’s been done to reduce the likelihood of recurrence
- number of SARs (possibly including figures for previous year as a comparison)
- key findings and issues identified from your most recent audit
- actions you recommend or have put in place to address these issues
- improvements and progress
- staff training and support.

Where you need approval for recommended actions, be clear about what problem the action will solve. What is the extent of the problem, and what are the potential consequences? What’s the timeframe for action, what outcomes do you expect, and when will you report back?

It’s a good idea to have a link governor for data protection. People may not rush to volunteer, but keep pushing the message that data protection should be seen to have a similar importance to safeguarding. The risks and consequences if things go wrong are significant! ■

Adapted from training sessions delivered as part of the Intermediate Level DPO Continuous Development Programme.

Training for DPOs

Our intermediate and advanced level continuous development programmes for DPOs, delivered in partnership with Browne Jacobson LLP, give you the opportunity to reflect and improve on your practice over a period of months. Short on time? Join the DPO foundation and update training days.

All sessions are delivered digitally and recordings are available for catch-up. See my.optimus-education.com/conferences for details.

What is a MAT SEND review?

A SEND review across your trust is a valuable opportunity for self-evaluation. **NATALIE PACKER** outlines the purpose and process

Leadership of SEND starts at the very top of any organisation. Without clear direction and accountability for the outcomes of learners with SEND being rooted in the leadership structure of an organisation, there is a risk that these learners' requirements will not be considered thoroughly enough when evaluating the organisation's effectiveness and when setting strategic priorities. (Malcolm Reeve, MAT SEND Review Guide)

Improvement through self-evaluation

In the MAT development programme guide (available to download from www.academyambassadors.org/resources/mat-development-programme-guide), the DfE suggests a series of questions for multi-academy trust leaders to reflect on when considering how to further develop and improve their trust. In relation to school improvement, the guidance asks the following.

- How well does the MAT know its schools and have a sufficiently honest self-evaluation that reflects performance, progress and need?
- Does the MAT have a thorough understanding of the full spectrum of the needs and progress of pupils in its schools (including those with SEND) and how well is this linked to the MAT's priorities?

Authentic self-evaluation of the quality of provision for pupils with SEND, and a good understanding of the needs and progress of those with SEND, is essential to developing an effective trust. Self-evaluation of SEND will enable leaders to reflect on their practice, identify areas for development across the trust and make strategic decisions about how to plan for improvements in provision.

Supporting self-evaluation through a MAT SEND review

Although trust leaders can undertake self-evaluation of their SEND provision internally, it can be helpful to involve an external partner in the process, for example by commissioning a MAT SEND review from an experienced practitioner, consultant or system leader.

The process should be a collaborative one where the reviewer works alongside the trust leaders to consider the evidence and agree findings together. It should be a two-way process where

the trust benefits from working with an experienced practitioner who has knowledge and expertise in SEND and the reviewer gains further experience of trusts in different contexts. The process supports professional development and should result in the sharing of new ideas and practices. A MAT SEND review aims to:

- provide a developmental opportunity that promotes on-going discussion and reflection about the quality of SEND practice across the trust
- support accountability at all levels and ensure statutory requirements are being fulfilled
- give an opportunity to reflect upon national changes in SEND policy and practice
- compliment the individual school SEND review process.

The MAT SEND review focuses on three key questions.

- What are the strengths of SEND provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND across our trust and how can we build on these to further develop our practice?
- What are the SEND priorities and areas for development?
- What are our next steps to address the identified key priorities and how can we build these into our trust strategic development planning?

The process of a MAT SEND review

Once a MAT has commissioned a review of SEND with an external partner, the process is likely to include five stages.

1. Initial discussion between the MAT leaders and reviewer to agree aims and key areas of focus.
2. MAT leaders carry out a brief SEND self-evaluation using a recommended framework.
3. MAT leaders provide a range of documentation to give background and context (including the self-evaluation, MAT SEND policy, outline of schools and so on).
4. Review visit takes place with the reviewer and MAT leaders. The recommended framework is used to guide the

review focus. Verbal feedback is given at the end of the day and key strengths and areas for development are agreed.

5. The reviewer provides a written report summarising the outcomes and any recommendations for next steps.

Using a framework for self-evaluation

To support this process, Whole School SEND (WSS) have developed a MAT SEND Review Guide (which can be downloaded for free from www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/mat-send-review-guide). The framework outlines five key areas of effective SEND provision and practice for leaders to reflect upon. For each area there are a series of statements or questions to be considered, such as the following.

1. Leadership

- Do leaders have a clear vision and ambition for SEND?
- Does the MAT strategic plan include identified SEND strategic objectives?
- Is there a lead trustee with responsibility for SEND who challenges leaders about provision and outcomes?

2. Identification

- Do trust leaders have a clear picture of the pattern of SEND identification across the trust?
- How accurate and effective are SEN identification processes across the trust?
- How is SEN identification data used by trust leaders to strategically plan provision?

3. Tracking and monitoring progress and outcomes

- Do trust leaders have a clear understanding of the progress and attainment of pupils with SEND?
- How effectively do leaders use SEND achievement data to inform teaching and learning and interventions?
- What are wider outcomes like for pupils with SEND and what progress is made towards their personalised targets?

4. High Quality Teaching and intervention

- How do MAT leaders ensure schools promote High Quality Teaching as the first step in responding to learners' needs?
- Do all schools within the trust implement the graduated approach effectively?
- Do those responsible for the strategic leadership of SEND ensure interventions are evidence-informed and evaluated for impact?

5. Developing provision

- To what extent have MAT leaders created a culture and ethos that actively engages parents?
- Does the MAT commission outside agency support and what impact does this have?
- Are there opportunities for school leaders to share good SEND practice across the trust and make links with other relevant organisations?

Gathering evidence

In order to make judgements about the statements or questions within the MAT SEND review framework, the process will involve the reviewer and MAT leaders considering a range of both quantitative and qualitative evidence. For example:

- documentation scrutiny e.g. MAT SEND policy, MAT strategic plan, examples of school provision plans, individual school review summaries
- data analysis e.g. analysis of patterns of SEN need across the trust, progress and attainment data, pupil case studies
- review of monitoring carried out by school or trust leaders e.g. summary of key points arising from learning walks
- discussions with a range of stakeholders e.g. CEO, director of education or SEND, other MAT executive team members, SEND trustee, headteachers, SENCOs, sample of pupils and parents.

Making use of the review information

Following discussion around the evidence, the review should result in MAT leaders and the reviewer jointly agreeing strengths, areas for development and key priorities.

However, the review itself is just the start; the process will only be truly beneficial if the findings from the review are used to support strategic development planning at trust level. The review should help to ensure that all pupils with SEND, in all schools within the trust, receive the highest quality provision and achieve the very best outcomes. ■

Building quality provision

Natalie Packer is presenting a session on evaluating the quality of SEND provision across your trust at the *MATs Summit 2021*.

Not had time to book your place? Check out the programme for the upcoming *Growing and Developing a Trust* conference at my.optimus-education.com/conferences

CONFERENCE REPORT

Marketing your school: vision, brand and messages

Content Lead **JULIA SANDFORD-COOKE** reports back from **JUSTIN SMITH'S** marketing masterclass, part of the *Develop Your Communications Strategy and Manage Your Brand* online training day earlier this year

When we talk about branding your school, we're really looking at building an identity – an experience that parents, pupils and staff can relate to. This session looked at what this means in practice and how you can develop values and messages as the foundation to your marketing strategy, to develop core values and fine tune those key messages. Justin emphasised the most crucial aspect of building a brand – to set you apart from others.

Justin began by using Brent Davies' definition of marketing in a school context. It's about 'learning: about people's perceptions and needs and then acting on that learning to communicate the school's core purpose and values, both to the school community and to those outside.' (*Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management*, 2003).

Why market your school?

Marketing is all about taking control. Being proactive and positive, and telling people who you are and what you do, in turn makes you resilient.

There are lots of reasons set time aside to develop a vision, brand and message.

To define your brand and values

Consistency and appearance are important. When you have everyone from staff to design agencies to the PTA putting materials together, your communications will look muddled and confusing. Presenting a consistent impression to the outside world is important.

To manage reputation

Whether you're reinforcing or modifying your reputation, marketing is the way you can control your message through your communications, PR, media coverage and even crisis management. Most schools need to react to negative press or social media comments at some point. Consider how agile you were during Covid-19 – did you communicate news in the format your parents and stakeholders preferred? Where you able to update your website content quickly and clearly? Was your continuity planning effective?

To find and keep the best staff

Talented staff help drive standards. Around £1.3bn is spent on supply staff by schools in England as they struggle to recruit teaching staff, so you need to communicate the benefits of working in your school to attract the best people.

To sustain or increase pupil numbers

Why should pupils choose your school? They won't know unless you outline your key messages and unique selling points (USPs) that explain what makes you stand apart from the all the other schools they could go to.

To attract funding and support

If you're looking for sponsors, funders and commercial engagement, they will be looking for clarity and alignment of values. The better you are at broadcasting who you are, what you're doing and why

you need their support, the more likely you are to get people on board.

To engage with alumni

This is an often-overlooked resource – apparently, 30% of state school alumni are willing to donate if asked but only 1% have been asked! Engaging with former students, for example via social media, could reap rewards.

To promote your key messages

In addition to academic achievement, parents value softer outcomes such as wellbeing, culture and ethos, enrichment programmes and happiness. Balance between results/data v softer outcomes (YouGov national survey on behalf of Youth Sport Trust 2019). Think about how pupils might reply when their parents ask: 'How was your day today?'

How would you define your school brand?

What is a brand? One definition is 'a combination of attributes that give a distinctive identity and value, both tangible and intangible.' (C Doyle, 2003) Successful branding also helps build loyalty (aiding recruitment), reputation (engagement with supporters), awareness and understanding (empathy and trust) so people are more forgiving when things go wrong.

This means your school's brand needs to reflect:

- the whole experience you offer



Your best ambassadors are your pupils and staff

- the emotional responses you elicit
- the way others feel about your school, its staff and pupils.

Imagine you're at a dinner party and guests ask about your school. How would you answer? What would you say to succinctly define your school? You would probably want to mention the things you're most proud of and excel at, and the uniqueness of your school – the aspects you think differentiate it from others.

In marketing terms, your product benefits must be clear and compelling. That is, you must be clear about what your school offers in terms of things like pastoral care, curriculum, extracurricular activities and after-school care. It must have a distinct identity, communicated by building an emotional connection with your customer – in this case, parents, staff, pupils, future staff, governors and anyone else you'd like to engage with.

Ensure your core values shine through

Your best ambassadors are your students and staff. Ask them what they think are the core values of your school. Common terms are caring, supportive, creative, resourceful, ambitious... but you also need to prove that these are at the heart of everything you do by building up a picture of the activities that demonstrate them. This requires you to engage, inspire

and motivate your staff and pupils to work with you on the brand and values. Here are some approaches.

- Map out your values – what makes your school special?
- Work with students and staff, for example by holding focus groups.
- Tease out some key messages and articulate these into words and images.
- Recruit student marketing ambassadors to promote these. This works especially well in secondary schools but primary pupils could, for example, write stories for newsletter to give insight into life in school. Parents loves to see what the children are saying!
- Broadcast your values, for example by using wall displays, and your website, prospectus and social media.

Filling the Reputation Bank

A strong brand reputation offers protection in a time of crisis. Stakeholders are more likely to overlook problems if you have a surplus in your 'reputation bank'.

Brand is the promise you make as a school. Reputation is how well your parents and stakeholders think you are living up to that promise. That perception

In summary

- Define your 'why': state a tangible purpose and vision.
- Invest time in a content plan.
- Go digital – use video clips and social media to articulate branding via images.
- Tell the story, for example the impact on staff and students.
- Be different – funky, creative and thought-provoking.
- Reflect and assess what you've done and learn from it.

will only ever be based on reality so there's no point in having a strategic plan in place if the culture isn't there in the first place. And this means not trying to do it all by yourself. To build brand and reputation and live it, you must involve other people to ensure it is centred on reality, so that it can evolve and develop over time.

Using your brand for income generation

Broadcasting your successes attracts interest from sponsors and supporters. But you need to generate the narrative – in simple terms, tell the story. Marketing is about communication, by reaching beyond the school gates to your community and asking them to get involved in supporting you, in whatever format that may take.

Data has its place but emotional engagement underpins everything when you're fundraising. Grant funders prefer applications where teamwork and relationships are evident. For example, uploading a video to an application is your opportunity to sell who you are, what you do and why you need their support.

You can also demonstrate benefit and impact by using pictures, statements of support, testimonials and case studies, such as describing the impact of a pilot project.

Short videos showing members of your school community – staff talking about life in school or children giving a virtual tour – also differentiates you. ■

BLOG POST

Challenging the imposter within

Imposter syndrome can get in the way of fulfilling our potential and purpose. **KELLY HANNAGHAN** looks for ways to silence the bully and be ready for challenge and opportunity

Have you ever felt misplaced? 'I got lucky'; 'I don't belong here'; 'I'm a fraud, and it's just a matter of time before everyone finds out'. Sounds familiar? That's the crippling feeling of imposter syndrome – that sense that you're punching above your skillset and knowledge. In essence, this is the internal fear that drives the message of not being 'good enough'.

For over 20 years I have worked within education, navigating the paths of various roles. My purpose is to champion people to ensure their voices and needs are seen, heard and validated. My overall goal is to help children and young people thrive from adversities. My work has generated outstanding results but still I often find myself questioning my achievements and abilities. Noticing this trait led me to explore the root cause of my problem.

The reality of imposter syndrome

Imposter syndrome is a psychological phenomenon in which people are unable to internalise their accomplishments. The term was coined by clinical psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978, when they found that, despite having adequate external evidence of accomplishments, people with imposter syndrome remained convinced that they didn't deserve the success they had.

This explains why I was always feeling like a fraud, no matter how great my successes were. When given compliments on my work, I would often downplay them or project the appreciation outside of myself and dismiss it as the achievements of others.

Squash self-doubt

It's normal to feel nervous, but when self-

'Life can be unpredictable, and you don't always feel ready for every challenge'

doubt holds you back and stops you from doing things, it becomes a problem. Often we have a tendency towards perfectionism; fear of failure or continually undermining your achievements are all indicators that you might be prone. The effects of this can be debilitating, causing stress, anxiety, low self-confidence, shame and, in some cases, even depression. This also links into behaviours of overworking and leaving tasks till the last minute, setting oneself up for failure.

Beat the imposter

Overcoming my imposter within has been greatly helped by quietening my inner critical voice, whom now doesn't limit my courage in putting myself out there and celebrating my achievements. If I see a new opportunity, I go for it and appreciate myself in a meaningful way.

Coaching and clinical supervision have created a safe space me to identify and normalise my feelings. I regularly practice gratitude towards myself and know that my successes have concrete value to share with the world.

How to tackle the imposter

- Talk it out. The simple act of talking through your ruminating thoughts can shift negative energies.
- Stay positive. Reframe your thoughts by separating feelings from fact.
- Listen to others. Remind yourself of the positive comments you have received from others – creating a 'feel good'

box is a great way to capitalise on the affirmations of others. Remember to include any notes, cards and achievements in this special place.

- Don't beat yourself up. Remember we are all learning and, if you make a mistake, our greatest growth comes from the hurdles we overcome.
- Replace your inner critic with an 'inner fan club' – be as kind to yourself as you would be to others.
- Let go of your inner perfectionist. This is a major roadblock for overcoming impostor syndrome.
- Track your successes. Keep a file on your computer of wins and positive reinforcement both in your personal and professional life.
- Say yes to new opportunities. Distinguish between the voice in your head saying you can't and exploring if you have the capacity to commit.
- Social media sites make it very easy to compare ourselves to others. Try to resist that urge and recognise that no one is perfect. Trust your performance and celebrate your wins.

Most importantly, get comfortable with feeling uncomfortable. Life can be unpredictable, and you don't always feel ready for every challenge. The key to success is to keep moving forwards to overcome your fears, knowing that you are enough. ■

What's in this month's School Business Management section?

School business leaders are tackling both the challenges raised by the pandemic, and those that continue to face schools in general. How can strained resources be best used to support pupils? Elizabeth Holmes explores some of the debates around catching up, funding, and the potential for education recovery on page 22.

Longer term planning remains as important as ever, and that includes planning your estates strategy for the next few years. As Drew Hird explains, it's not just about maintaining buildings but also about 'making the link between assets and aspirations'. Find out how on page 18.

Finding the right staff is another vital part of keeping your school running smoothly. Nicky Thompson swapped the boardroom for the classroom – read her tips for attracting career changers on page 20, along with an update on how schools can manage the new early career teacher (ECT) framework.

Wellbeing remains a concern for both new and existing staff. Overleaf, Nicola Harvey explains how the PERMA approach can help ensure the whole school community is a supportive and nurturing environment.

School business management blogs

Disadvantage: looking beyond the pupil premium
oego.co/disadvantage-PP

Where do new teachers come from?
oego.co/teacher-routes

Flexible working in action
oego.co/job_share_planning

See more at blog.optimus-education.com

Contributors in this issue



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Nicky Thompson, a communications specialist, now teaches food technology in a secondary school. She is a champion for a national campaign promoting the food-teaching profession.



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The PERMA approach to staff wellbeing

Education professionals are reporting high levels of work-related stress. **NICOLA HARVEY** explains how the PERMA approach can nurture a sense of wellbeing, fulfilment and purpose

After a well-deserved summer break, education professionals in England have returned to the classroom. While everyone adapts to a 'new normal' and transitions into school routines, the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic still has an impact on student and teacher wellbeing.

According to a study from Education Support and YouGov in 2020, 84% of teachers and 89% of senior leaders reported high levels of work-related stress during the pandemic. Respondents also mentioned higher levels of depression, resulting in a lack of sleep, difficulties when concentrating, overwhelm and tearfulness.

In a further study conducted by NASUWT-The Teachers' Union, 27% teachers shared that they needed to see a doctor or medical professional to help with their mental and physical health as a result of the pandemic.

Considering the statistics, 27% is a relatively small number of educators openly sharing that they asked for professional support, which may also highlight the associated stigmas connected to teachers asking for help, as reported in the Teacher Wellbeing Index 2020. Early intervention and greater understanding of staff mental health in supportive environments needs to be in place to reduce teacher burnout and support wellbeing.

PERMA for school staff wellbeing

The PERMA model of wellbeing was created by psychologist Martin Seligman to help people thrive and flourish, instilling a sense of fulfilment, meaning and purpose in their lives. The five core

elements of PERMA are: **positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments.**

Research shows that, when all elements of the model are used consistently, improvements are made to physical health, vitality, job satisfaction, life satisfaction and commitment within organisations (Alder et al., 2014).

Positive emotion

While teachers cannot be happy 100% of the time, particularly in busy school environments, it's important to connect with people, places and things that ignite a sense of hope, compassion, interest, joy, amusement, love, pride, ease, and gratitude.

Positive emotion is about observing what makes a teacher feel uplifted and at ease from within. This might involve accepting past events, such as during the pandemic, which may not have gone to plan and having an open mind about what the future may hold.

Ways to build positive emotion

- Document the things you are grateful for by creating a daily gratitude list in a notebook, gratitude jar or an app.
- Build a life/work balance of activities into your weekly schedule.
- Spend time with people you care about.
- Listen to uplifting music and move your body.
- Practise Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to reduce stress

and tap into positive emotions.

- Participate in activities outside of work e.g., join a choir, dance class or book club.

Engagement

Seligman describes engagement in PERMA as 'being one with the music'. It's about becoming so engrossed in an activity that you lose sense of time. Building upon the positive emotion described above, engagement encourages teachers to find activities related to their passions, values and interests, and then wholeheartedly pursue them.

Ways to increase engagement

- Do a strengths audit and find ways to use these strengths doing what you enjoy.
- Practise creative mindfulness e.g., mindful art, dancing, breathwork.
- Spend time in nature and notice what you hear, feel and smell.
- Download the app Headspace for Educators to engage in practical wellbeing activities.
- Keep track of the things you enjoy doing and how this makes you feel.

Relationships

Seligman describes relationships in PERMA as the notion of feeling supported, loved, and valued. As social beings, we are hardwired for love, affection, attention and interaction. Often unknowingly, teachers form networks

within the school community to support their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing in schools.

Ways to build relationships

- Participate in peer-to-peer mentoring to find mutual support.
- Attend teach meets, education festivals and similar events to connect with the education community.
- Contact people you may not have connected with in a while.
- Make an effort to be involved in your family and friends lives.
- Be open to connecting with new people and making new friends.
- Learn more about how you connect with others by taking the Five Love Languages quiz.
- Ask for help if you are struggling with your relationships and need support with your mental health; try contacting Education Support, Samaritans or your GP.

Meaning

Seligman notes having a sense of meaning is about aligning with personal values to serve something greater than ourselves. People who report having meaning, or a purpose in life, tend to live longer, and have greater life satisfaction and fewer health problems (Breen et al., 2009).

Simply put, having a sense of purpose helps us focus on what is really important, particularly on tough days at school when teachers need a glimmer of hope that everything is going to work out okay.

Ways to build meaning

- Spend quality time with people you care about.
- Write the responses to the following questions in a journal:
 1. Why did I become a teacher?
 2. What's the most important thing

in my life right now and why?

3. Am I making a difference to others?
 4. Where do I feel the happiest, connected and fulfilled?
 5. Who am I with when I am most fulfilled?
- Read Simon Sinek's book *Find Your Why* to help bring more meaning in your life
 - Think about fond childhood memories and find ways to bring this sense of happiness into your adult life.

Accomplishments

The last element of PERMA is accomplishment, also known as achievement, mastery or competence. Seeing the outcome of a completed goal or project into which you've invested your

Useful resources

Education Support: compiles the Teacher Wellbeing Index and supports the mental health and wellbeing of education staff. www.educationsupport.org.uk

NASUWT-The Teacher's Union: read the report 'Covid impacts on teacher mental health exposed' at www.nasuwat.org.uk

Emotional Freedom Therapy: can reduce stress and emotional trauma. www.ptsduk.org/emotional-freedom-therapy

High 5 Test: a strengths audit to help you discover what you are naturally good at high5test.com

Headspace for Educators: a free app for teachers to help bring mindfulness to yourself and the classroom. www.headspace.com/educators

Five Love Languages: take the quiz to find out how you prefer to connect to others. www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes

Samaritans: provides someone to talk to for those who are having a difficult time. www.samaritans.org

Find Your Why by Simon Sinek: advice and exercises to put you on the path to find fulfilment at work.

time, energy and motivation can bring about a sense of happiness and fulfilment. All too often teachers celebrate their students' achievements but forget to do this for themselves. Seligman notes that when we achieve intrinsic goals, it can increase self-esteem, boost confidence and a sense of pride.

Ways to build accomplishment

- Reflect on your recent efforts as a teacher and how far you have come.
- Set goals using the EXACT model (explicit, exciting, assessable, challenging, and time-bound).
- Celebrate your achievements (big and small) with people you care about.
- Encourage your students, colleagues, family members and friends to also reflect upon their proud moments (be sure to celebrate with them).
- Practise positive self-talk e.g., 'well done, I am a great teacher!'
- Keep a journal and note down three things you are proud of every day.

Living meaningfully

The PERMA wellbeing model encourages teaching staff to focus on living more meaningfully, connect with a supportive community, take part in activities to feel good, accomplish intrinsic goals and allow themselves to be fully engaged with life.

Schools also have the opportunity embed elements of PERMA into their wellbeing policy, to create a supportive and nurturing environment for the whole school community. ■

Book your place

Secure a strong mental health and wellbeing culture for your staff and students by attending the *Mental Health & Wellbeing in Schools* conferences in London, Manchester and online: www.healthinschoolsuk.com

Estates strategy planning

You can't deliver on your educational vision if you don't have the buildings to do it in. **DREW HIRD** explains why every trust needs an estates strategy, and how to go about putting it together

An estates strategy is a three-to-five year plan which will help you:

- identify what you need from your estate and its facilities
- consider how you can achieve your estates needs to meet the required educational outcomes
- identify any potential challenges and barriers
- coordinate estates activities to meet the estates vision.

It also allows the development of the short-to-medium term asset management plan and will help you:

- provide a safe environment for school community
- stay compliant with building rules, regulations and legal matters
- plan your spending and anticipate demands
- meet future capacity and educational needs
- identify funding needs and opportunities
- satisfy community expectations.

Conversely, as the DfE's 'Good estate management for schools' guide points out, poor estate management can lead to:

- inefficient use of resources and poor investment decisions
- risks to the safety of building users
- teaching areas being taken out of service
- disruption to the day-to-day running of your school
- whole or part school closure.

Understanding the estate's demands and needs directly impacts finance. Having a well-developed estates strategy will also put you in an ideal position to maximise the various funding streams available to support the estate when the opportunity arises. In other words, when bids are announced and there's only a two-week window to apply, you will have all your key information to hand!

Where do you start?

Your estates strategy starts with your vision and aspirations for your trust or school. What do you want to achieve? What do you need from your buildings to be able to deliver that?

For example, if the purpose of your multi-academy trust is to deliver exceptional teaching and learning, what kind of buildings and classrooms are needed? What does it mean for the school environment?

It's about making the link between assets and aspirations. If one of your trust's aspirations is to act as a hub for community services in your area and be a focal point for multi-agency working, what implications does that have for your buildings? What spaces will be required?

So, you start with data gathering – and a vital part of that is seeking views from stakeholders, so you can build a picture of the demands and considerations you need to incorporate in planning. Forward planning and engagement across the whole school community must be achieved.

The table below gives just a few examples of the stakeholders you need to consult. Other local stakeholders might include:

- diocese and church leads
- NHS, social services, police

Seeking stakeholder views

Potential Stakeholders	Questions to consider
Local authority	What's happening with pupil numbers in the next five years? What might be the implication for our school/s? What are our local demographics? E.g. What are our pupil premium numbers like? Or number of pupils with high needs, SEN and so on? What implications does that have for the kinds of spaces we need?
CEO and board	What is your vision for the trust? What are your future aspirations for the trust in terms of growth? Are we taking on new schools? If the trust is seeking to expand, where's the head office going to be? Are there any specific aims and targets? What options need consideration?
Teaching and learning lead	How many learners do we have? What kind of classroom environment do you need in order to deliver outstanding teaching and learning for our pupils? Are classrooms fit for purpose?
Site managers and teams	What's the current condition of our buildings?

What do you need to consider in developing an estates strategy?

Many factors will influence how you manage the estate, including:

- the size, location, age and condition of buildings and land in the estate
- land ownership, tenure and constraints
- how effectively the current facilities meet the specific educational needs of the school
- the type, size and nature of the body responsible for the school
- available funding and the future aspirations for the estate
- area based considerations of the need for places or spare capacity in the system
- the terms of your funding arrangements.

Source: www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools/strategic-estate-management

- community leaders
- third sector organisations.

You will also want to gather information from the finance director, the school business managers, the senior leadership teams, governors and trustees, parents, pupils, surveyors, building consultants, decarbonisation experts... there's a lot to consider!

What does an estates strategy include?

Your estates strategy doesn't have to be a lengthy document. It could include:

- information about the schools in the trust, their geographic distribution and pupil numbers
- a summary of the condition of the buildings – are they fit for purpose?
- factors influencing the strategy, such as population demographics and social context
- aims for the estate, and how these can be achieved
- your educational and estates vision
- organisational context
- signposts to policies and procedures.

Get expert input

An assessment of the school buildings can't be limited to simply considering their current condition. An in-depth review is needed to consider demands on reactive maintenance and technical compliance, as well as the wider issues of space, capacity planning and anticipated demands on the estate in future years. Having a clear understanding of key data, including carbon management, is vital.



An in-depth review of your school buildings is vital

You don't have to do all this alone! Getting professional technical support will help ensure that your estates strategy is robust and fit for purpose. Building surveyors, building services engineers, energy efficiency experts and architects can all be of use. Building consultants, such as the Eric Wright Building Consultancy, can be valuable partners in the process.

Other useful organisations include:

- RICS: Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- CIBSE: Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
- RIBA: Royal Institute of British Architects. ■

Grow and develop trust

The *Growing and Developing a Trust* conference takes place in spring 2022. The aim is to equip you with tips and techniques from trusts who have thrived through tough times, as well as providing a roadmap for your future growth.

Take the opportunity to network with contemporaries and learn from each other through discussion and conversation, glean ways to evidence your progress and stand out in your community.

For details of this free, in-person event, visit my.optimus-education.com/conferences

Attracting and retaining career changers

Career changers can bring a wealth of skills and experience to the teaching profession. **NICKY THOMPSON** explains how schools can support and encourage new teachers from another sector

Seven years ago, I swapped the boardroom for the classroom when I retrained to be a technology teacher in a secondary school. For people who know me well, this was not a big surprise – I live to learn and now I'm developing a love of learning in my students.

With teacher recruitment shortages in some subjects (such as physics and design technology), how can school leaders attract and retain more career-changers like me and what are the benefits of doing so? Here are some factors to consider.

Case studies and role models

I was in my 40s when I applied for teaching training and I was worried that I was too old. This was reinforced by the recruitment adverts, which almost exclusively featured recent university graduates. But when I turned up at an event, I was relieved to see other more mature candidates – only to find out they were the parents of recruits. I almost ran for the hills!

Case studies featuring a diverse range of existing career-changers can be very powerful. When used on professional networking sites like LinkedIn, these different journeys into teaching can inspire others to find out more.

Holding specific recruitment events aimed at career changers, and led by teachers who have successfully made the transition to the classroom, can also reassure potential recruits that retraining is achievable, regardless of age or background.

The return to academia

For some career-changers it might have been more than 20 years since they last

applied for a formal qualification or tackled any tests or essay writing.

I understood the UCAS process as I'd supported my children through their own applications for university. However, I was very anxious about the online literacy and numeracy tests. They turned out to be very straightforward in the end but the notion of online tests against the clock was terrifying!

Other mature trainees struggled to remember the conventions of academic writing or found it difficult to juggle family commitments with lesson planning, gathering evidence against the teacher standards and meeting deadlines for researching and writing essays on pedagogical issues.

If you have a potential career-changing recruit who's a natural in the classroom but is finding the PGCE/QTS demands daunting, refer them to the government-funded Transition to Teach service (www.transitiontoteach.co.uk) for professional guidance and buddy them up with a recently qualified teacher in school who can give them moral support.

Acknowledge the shift

Many career-changers will be adjusting to big changes in their professional and personal lives when they choose the

'Many career-changers will be adjusting to big changes in their professional and personal lives when they choose the teaching profession'

teaching profession. I was considered an 'expert' in my director role and became a 'novice' QTS trainee overnight. My earnings also dropped to a quarter of what they once were and I left behind a great deal of autonomy and flexibility to organise my working day.

I undoubtedly gained a huge amount by becoming a teacher but there was definitely a period of adjustment and doubts about whether I was doing the right thing. I've also witnessed some trainees and recently qualified teachers leaving the profession before they really got going because they were struggling to adjust.

Provide opportunities for career-changers to network with others who can help them see the light at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes sharing these struggles is all it takes to get some perspective on the issue.

Identify and use their transferable skills

Every career-changer will bring with them a wealth of workplace skills and experiences. My school was a little slow to recognise that I had networks, skills and expertise that they could harness and it was frankly a bit demoralising.

It's mutually beneficial to acknowledge and use the knowledge, skills and expertise of career-changers – it makes the recruit



Career-changers bring a wealth of experience

feel valued and the school and students gain added value in the classroom and for extra-curricular activities. Consider the following.

- Experience of running or attending meetings could make the recruit ideal for the governing body.
- Expertise in communications could add value to the school's media relations or social media presence.
- Networks in the local business community could be utilised to enhance careers events or unlock work experience or apprenticeships for students.
- Managerial and leadership experience could mean that recruits are able to lead CPD sessions on a wide range of subjects such as coaching, time management or teamwork.
- Sharing up-to-date knowledge and real-world experiences can be more engaging and meaningful for students. As such, recruits could, on occasion, be 'guest speakers' to support learning in subjects other than their own.
- Expertise could also be used to support extra-curricular activities, such as STEM or debating clubs.

There's no doubt that career-changing into teaching was the right decision for me. I love working with young people and it's very satisfying to be making a

Implementing the new early career framework

Statutory arrangements for teacher induction in England have changed. What do schools need to know and do?

What's changing?

An early career teacher (ECT) is in their first two years after their initial teacher training. This term replaces newly qualified teacher (NQT).

The biggest change is the move from a one-year induction period to two years. During this time all ECTs will be entitled to a programme of training and support based on the early career framework (ECF), which sets out what early career teachers are entitled to learn about when they start their careers.

Previously, schools have devised their own induction training, and provision and support have varied from setting to setting. Now there is one framework and a standardised process that all schools will follow. All ECTs are entitled to a timetable reduction of 10% in their first year of teaching, and a 5% reduction in their second year.

The mentor and the induction tutor role should now be held by different staff members, who each need to be given time to carry out these duties. The induction tutor's role is to assess the ECT's progress in relation to the teachers' standards, whereas the mentor's role is to provide regular mentoring and training.

How will induction be assessed?

The ECF is NOT an assessment tool, and there will be no evidence-collecting against the ECF. ECTs will be assessed against the teachers' standards. There will be two formal assessment points during the induction period.

What training or support routes are available?

There are three options available for the delivery of the ECF-based induction. Schools can choose:

- a provider-led programme (fully funded for state-funded schools)
- to deliver their own core induction programme, using freely available, DfE-accredited materials and resources in school
- to design and deliver their own school led induction programme (which needs to be approved by an appropriate body).

What do schools need to do to prepare?

1. Decide which of the three training routes your school will opt for.
2. Check out the providers available in your area – you can contact your local teaching school hub for help with this.
3. Sign up for the DfE online service (manage-training-for-early-career-teachers.education.gov.uk) and nominate your induction tutor. When known, register your ECTs.
4. Make sure your ECTs have timetable reduction.
5. Assign induction tutor and mentor roles; ensure they have appropriate time to fulfil their roles.
6. If you're delivering your induction programme in school, rather than using a training provider, contact your appropriate body to ask what evidence will be required to demonstrate your induction programme meets statutory requirements.

difference to their lives.

I also believe that career-changers have a lot to offer the school community as a whole. Some may require additional support from time to time, but school leaders could gain a huge return on their investment if they set their sights on a recruit that already has a wealth of transferable knowledge, skills and expertise at their fingertips. ■

Realising potential

Learn more about quality teaching at the *Realising Potential* conference. For more information, visit my.optimus-education.com/conferences/realising-potential-london

 BLOG POST

After Covid-19 – is there a catch in catching up?

ELIZABETH HOLMES explores debates around catching up, funding, and the potential for education recovery

One thing that we can (probably) all agree on is that the picture of teaching and learning throughout the pandemic has been mixed at best. While some schools were able to switch between school and home learning with limited disruption, a raft of issues such as inadequate resources prevented other schools from doing this so effectively. And it obviously was not for want of trying.

There has been an inevitable blip in learning (at best) for most children. But the narratives around children being “behind” have, of course, not been helpful. Comparing these children with others who have not experienced the impact of a global pandemic in this country is without value. We are where we are and can only move forward from this point rather than the point we think we should be at.

Catching up or falling short?

Catch-up funding has been controversial. A government spokesperson told me: ‘We have committed to an ambitious, and long-term education recovery plan, including an investment to date of over £3bn and a significant expansion of our tutoring programme, to support children and young people to make up for learning lost during the pandemic.’

But the appointment of a catch-up tsar in England to develop a plan to help children recover learning lost as a result of the pandemic did not end well. A few months after his appointment Sir Kevan Collins resigned, citing the funding investment as falling ‘far short of what is needed.’ Calculations for catch-up funding by the

Education Policy Institute put the recovery at £13.5bn and it was reported that Sir Kevan had put plans forward costed at £15bn.

The response from headteachers was almost universally negative. Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary of the NEU, said that: ‘The government’s funding of education recovery falls massively short of what is needed... The recent National Audit Office report on school funding in England demonstrates beyond a shadow of doubt that leaders had already been struggling with considerable financial strain before the pandemic, and the resources needed to make schools and colleges Covid-secure has only worsened the situation.’

The risk of deepening inequalities

While many have criticised the inadequacy of the funding on offer, Dan Morrow, trust and civic leader, and member of Headteachers Roundtable, points to inbuilt inequities too. ‘From the perspective of a mixed MAT all funding is gratefully received.

The calculation of this funding however leaves the primary phase as the poor relation in terms of both the scope and scale and should be addressed in order to ensure that we can take a long term and sustainable approach to recovering lost learning, but also the wider piece on missed experiences, rituals and routines that add to the richness of schooling.

It should not be underestimated how this issue has disproportionately affected the economically and socially disadvantaged.

International comparisons

Exploring how England’s catch-up proposals compare with other countries offers some insights. The £1.4bn announced for the catch up programme equates to £50 per pupil in England, whereas in the United States this figure is £1,600 and in the Netherlands, £2,500. Wales has promised £239 per pupil – reportedly the highest per pupil figure in the UK. (Based on total DfE funding England’s figure can be calculated at £310 per pupil – still considerably behind the Netherlands and the US.)

Covid catch-up funding remains a highly controversial issue. Whether £50 per pupil in England proves to be sufficient to move learning on remains to be seen but international comparisons are not looking favourable. As Courtney says, ‘Schools cannot thrive without proper financial support, and the totally inadequate fund for education recovery will not go far enough in ensuring young people are on the right footing as we emerge from Covid. There are no quick or cheap fixes if we are to build an education system that supports high standards and strong mental health for everyone. We must also look beyond the short-term in order to guarantee a strong recovery for young people.’

While catch-up funding around the world is beyond the influence of the vast majority of people, what many know is that extra lessons, in whatever format they may be, can never fully address the myriad issues that the pandemic has highlighted in England. ■

What’s in this month’s Teaching and Learning section?

Being out of the physical classroom for months has led to a loss of learning confidence for some pupils. Thérèse Hoyle shares her crucial ingredients for building that confidence back up again: encouraging play, both in and outside the classroom, and promoting praise that ‘acknowledges us as individuals and for our strengths and personal qualities’.

School leaders may well be considering what adjustments to the curriculum might be needed this academic year. Josephine Smith provides a question framework to provoke discussion and reflection around the most pressing issues in your context. Meanwhile, readers working in the early years phase will no doubt be getting more familiar with the updated early years foundation stage framework. On page 30 Sam Attwater shares the steps being taken in her setting to embed the framework, with staff training firmly at the centre.

Professional development has also been a focal point for embedding anti-racism at Dwight School. Turn to page 28 to find out how a staff book and film club have been used to develop knowledge and inspire different ways of thinking.

Teaching and learning blogs

Navigating digital media: an essential part of the school curriculum? oego.co/digital_media

What is innocent socialisation and how can I challenge it? oego.co/innocent_socialisation

What you don’t know, you don’t know! oego.co/hinterland_design

See more at blog.optimus-education.com

Contributors in this issue



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Building confidence in and outside the classroom

How can we best help children grow in confidence and self-esteem, creating a healthy learning environment? **THÉRÈSE HOYLE** shares three key steps and activities to try

There is no doubt that the recent period of home-schooling, uncertainty and change has impacted our children's lives. With public playgrounds closed over lockdown and one in three children rarely leaving the house, many children have found their play opportunities reduced. In fact, a Save the Children poll found that more than nine out of ten children felt the way they play had changed since the Covid-19 pandemic.

We need to support children in developing strategies to grow in confidence and self-esteem, both inside and outside the classroom, creating a healthy school and learning culture. So, what can we do?

Let children play

When children and young people are asked about what they think is important in their lives, playing and friends are consistently at the top of the list. Play England's Charter for Play states that: 'Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.'

Through play children develop and build relationships, learn social skills, de-stress, let off steam, exercise, and most of all, they have fun. With this being the case, it seems even more imperative that we make play and outdoor learning a priority as children return to school.

Play games inside and outside the classroom

Games have been found to be of major importance for children's physical and

'Praise that acknowledges us as individuals and for our strengths and personal qualities is the most powerful'

mental development and wellbeing. Through playing games children develop their social and teamwork skills, they run around and exercise, but most of all they have fun, which is particularly important at the start of the school year.

Encouraging outdoor play

Some simple playground solutions to encourage outdoor play and learning include:

- creating an imaginative play area
- having a dressing up box
- tea sets
- small world play equipment
- sandpit and water play
- loose parts play
- making dens in the woods
- mud kitchens
- drawing with chalk on the playground
- outdoor collages
- bear hunt in the nature garden
- scavenger hunts.

How about creating a variety of zones in your playground to help meet different needs and interests? Here are some ideas!

- Playground games zone
- Imaginative and creative play zone
- Performance zone
- Ball games zone
- Construction zone
- Craze of the week
- Free play zone
- Quiet zone

With primary school children spending up to 20% of their school day in the playground, playing games supports those children that may feel lacking in confidence and socially isolated. Games have the capacity to be hugely inclusive of all children, no matter what age, culture, race, creed or ability. They offer opportunities for everyone in the school playground or classroom to get involved.

Create a playground games zone and encourage lunchtime supervisors and school staff to teach and play games with the children. Traditional playground games such as 'In and out the Dusty Bluebells', 'What's the Time, Mr Wolf?', 'Grandmother's Footsteps' and 'Mother May I?' are a great place to start.

Why not try introducing a 'game of the week'? Each week, introduce one of the games in assembly, and laminate and display it in the playground, so that the children can learn and practise it at playtime. Include it in the weekly newsletter too – many parents will remember the games and be keen to play them at home.

As time goes on, I suggest creating a 'games menu,' which has a selection of pupils' favourite games and can be played over the term. By the end of the school year, the children will have a bank of 39 games to play!

Let's appreciate and celebrate

This exercise can be used at the end of a circle time, to encourage children to genuinely praise and appreciate one another and develop a vocabulary of encouragement and acknowledgement. It's also far more powerful for a child to receive praise from their peers than it is from us!

How: The circle time leader says: 'Is there anyone in this class you are pleased with today?'

Be specific. For instance: for being a good friend, for being honest, for listening and concentrating and so on, e.g. 'Is there anyone in your class who your pleased with because they were a good friend at playtime today?'

Children then raise their hands. If they are chosen, they cross the circle and stand in front of a peer and use one of the stem statements, following through with the appreciation.

- Thank you...
- You are someone who...
- I'm pleased with you because...

e.g. 'I'm pleased with you because you let me join in your game at playtime when I had no one to play with.'

The child receiving the praise then says, 'thank you'. The delight on the receiver's and the givers face is always heart-warming.

The power of praise

Over the last 20 years, I have studied the benefits of creating cultures of appreciation and celebration, although of course there are various schools of thought on this subject! There are a few praise methods to boost children's confidence that I recommend.

- a) Use 'you' not 'I' and engage in discussion. When you praise, remember that the encouragement you are giving is for the child. When you say 'I love your work, the focus is on you and what you think, as opposed to the child. Try to use 'you' statements such as: 'You have worked so hard, tell me what you have done... You must be very proud of yourself'. This statement engages



Children develop social and teamwork skills through playing games

the child in discussion and, rather than using evaluative praise and having a brief interaction, you can spend some quality time listening to that child.

- b) YOU – Your Own Uniqueness. Praise them for who they are being, not just for their accomplishments. We all need to know that who we are is ok and that we are good enough, liked and loved enough for just being ourselves. Praise that acknowledges us as individuals and for our strengths and personal qualities is the most powerful. For example: 'You are so kind, Amira, I saw you letting others in to play your game at playtime.'

- c) Use rewards and encouragers for specific pieces of work, positive behaviours and achievements. Use stickers and certificates that tell the child and anyone reading them exactly what they have done to earn them. Avoid generalised stickers and certificates that just say well done.. Instead, you could have:

- I am a great speller
- I was a good friend in the playground
- I was kind today
- I can recognise numbers to 20

When a child wears a sticker which is specific, everywhere they go

people comment upon their sticker and what they did to earn it. For instance, a teacher gives Jadon a sticker for being a kind friend in the playground. When his dad picks him up he might say: 'Well done, Jadon, who were you kind to today?' They stop off at the corner shop and the person serving behind the counter also comments on his sticker; then they go to see Grandma and she asks about it and so on. By the end of the day Jadon could have had 10 people appreciate him for being kind.

- d) Circle times – let's appreciate and celebrate. In many schools circle time is used as an ongoing programme for building social skills and embedding values. It's also a time where children can play games, have fun, discuss challenging issues, support one another and work together as a team. I am a huge advocate of circle time after having a very challenging class early in my teaching career – it was the one system that really made the difference, and I believe in this post-lockdown world weekly timetabled circle times can really support our children by giving them a voice, helping them come up with solutions to problems, and develop empathy.

Over to you!

I hope I've given you with some simple steps to support the social, emotional, mental health and wellbeing of your students in the upcoming year. Which step will you start with? ■

Developing global citizens

Find out how to help children to thrive as global citizens at the digital *Developing Character, Confidence and Skills for Life* conference. Find out more at my.optimus-education.com/conferences/developing-character-confidence-and-skills-life-digital

Planning curriculum adjustments

Are you planning adjustments to the delivery of your academic curriculum? **JOSEPHINE SMITH** suggests considerations for senior and subject leaders in a secondary school

An online search for advice on curriculum adjustment in the light of disruption to schooling returns many excellent resources. Experts rightly focus on fostering wellbeing and nurturing pupils as they return to their school communities after lockdowns or periods of self-isolation. Support is available for what is termed a 'recovery curriculum' and we are reminded that no student will learn successfully if they are anxious or remain disconnected.

Less advice is available for school leaders and subject leaders on adjustments that may need to be made at whole school or subject level to the delivery of the academic curriculum. This article is written to help secondary school leaders and subject leaders navigate the demands of modifying what they are teaching, when and to who, after months of disruption to face-to-face learning time.

Where we all left off

When the revised Ofsted inspection framework was published in May 2019, curriculum planning was made the clear focus of school effectiveness: school and subject leaders were left in no doubt that the route to helping a young person learn most effectively was by leaders scrutinising and articulating their curriculum intent, strategically planning its implementation and carefully monitoring its impact. Back then (a professional lifetime ago!) school leaders and teachers were anxious that meeting Ofsted expectations in readiness for an inspection under the new framework would take time. Ofsted concurred.

In February 2020, Sean Harford acknowledged in an Ofsted blog that 'a great curriculum does not just appear perfectly formed overnight. It takes a great deal of thought, preparation and work to plan it'. An extension to the transition period was announced, taking us through to July 2021.

And then the pandemic struck...

Colleagues who were working hard since May 2019 to craft a purposefully sequenced curriculum now have an added context: they can't presume that all pupils have had similar learning experiences or exposure to the same learning opportunities over the past two years. Indeed, a Year 8 student in any secondary school this academic year will not have seen a 'normal' school year since they were in Year 5. Those starting their sixth form

'A Year 8 student in any secondary school this academic year will not have seen a "normal" school year since they were in Year 5'

studies in September hadn't even started their GCSE courses when they last had an uninterrupted year of learning. Even if staff have been able to deliver high quality remote learning, the simple fact is that the gaps in understanding that can normally exist between students, even those in the same class, will have been exacerbated.

So what do school and subject leaders now need to consider? Use or adapt the questions below to form an agenda for an SLT, subject leaders or department meeting in your school.

School leaders

- Do senior leaders understand the impact disrupted learning has had on students at individual and cohort level?
- What data is available to check this understanding?
- Has data collected to ascertain student engagement been used to make strategic curriculum planning decisions?
- Has data to ascertain student progress been collected and used to make strategic curriculum planning decisions?
- Should students in Years 7, 10 and 11 continue with the same subjects as were previously planned for them?
- Could any other data or intelligence be collected to make sure that curriculum planning at whole-school level is evidence based?
- Have senior staff read the conclusions of the government's proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS



Time spent ascertaining what the gaps in learning are is time well spent

and A levels in 2022? Does this require changes to any curriculum planning at whole school level?

- Do we need to review what 'catch up' is required now?
- How can the catch-up funding help with all the above?

I anticipate that, in spite of Ofqual's decisions regarding proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022, some Year 11 students and their parents will be requesting they give up certain subjects in favour of 'concentrating on others'. If you can foresee such subject swings, or indeed are planning to orchestrate them (I anticipate it will hit modern foreign languages and perhaps other GCSE courses that form part of the core offer in your school, such as religious studies), you will need to make timetabled provision for those students no longer sitting in their current timetabled class. Consider how you might redeploy under scheduled teachers whilst providing staffing which caters for those keen to work on, say, extra maths and English.

Subject leaders

Use these questions to focus your planning.

- Does the order of delivery of units need changing?
- Do lessons need sequencing differently?
- Are there different priorities now which mean removing certain planned lessons?
- Does Ofqual's decisions about assessments mean that

there are sections of the curriculum you will no longer deliver to Year 11 and Year 13 students?

- Does learning need revisiting and therefore weaving into the curriculum plan again?
- What strategies can and should be used each lesson to assess prior learning, determine gaps in learning and revisit learning regularly to consolidate knowledge?
- How can the catch-up funding help with all the above?
- Are there gaps, not just from last year but also the year before, that need filling or consolidating? This may mean considering the gaps in knowledge or understanding from a previous key stage and almost certainly from a different teacher's planning.

Top tips for senior and subject leaders

- Ensure that as much joint planning time as possible is available to subject teams.
- Divide up the work. We already know that time spent discussing curriculum implementation and sharing responsibility for planning schemes of work is the most effective use of time for departments.
- Subject leaders must tell senior teams what you need to help students catch up. If senior leaders have learned anything following the pandemic, it's how to be flexible and adjust plans in the light of updated information.
- Don't feel you need to start from scratch with catch-up programmes. Instead, review and build on the successes of last year's interventions. What worked? What didn't?
- Time spent ascertaining what the gaps in learning are is time well spent.
- Remember that any curriculum planning needs to appreciate that Covid-positive students will still be away from school for 10 days, and they could be engaging in remote learning during some of that time.

As ever, your best is absolutely good enough. No senior or middle leader should expect to reverse the effects of the pandemic! ■

Realise your pupils' potential

If you're looking for ways to boost learning and ensure impactful interventions and quality teaching, come to our *Realising Potential* conference in London in March 2022. Find out more and book your place at my.optimus-education.com/conferences/realising-potential-london

 BLOG POST

Setting up an anti-racist book and film club

ALDAINE WYNTER explains how book and film clubs form an essential strand of staff professional development around anti-racism in his school

I want to put a spotlight on the anti-racist book club and film club, two of the many successful anti-racist CPDs that took place at my school. Out of the range of books and films staff were offered, I will share the top three in terms of impact for staff.

Reaching staff

Like any club, the book club and film club were about building relationships amongst staff. They allowed us to build a safe space to bring staff members from the whole school to discuss a sensitive issue during the height of the pandemic. We did not know it at the time, but the pandemic forcing schools to explore the use of a hybrid model to deliver CPD would be instrumental in connecting the school's different sites. Approaching CPD using the hybrid model allowed us to use our school's digital platform to connect staff members from our campuses across the primary and the secondary school with ease.

Life-long learners

At Dwight School, we believe in life-long learners, and the book and film club gave staff members an opportunity to discuss themes of racial injustice and their ties to education. More specifically, we could reflect on our practice and policies as an international school in London.

The book and film club were compulsory for all staff members, not only as a means to deepen the relationships between staff members, but also to engage them in a holistic discussion about race with a broad range of colleagues. Staff

seemed to respond positively to this. This could have been due to the recent George Floyd incident, or, it could have been due to the fact the CPD was long term and staff were receiving something tangible in the form of the book.

It is imperative that all staff members are given the chance to engage with the topic of race, build confidence with racial literacy and arm themselves with the tools to help any child in the school corridor that may need their guidance, wisdom or simply their ear.

A mixed-media approach

If you are thinking about hosting a book club, I strongly suggest you consider hosting both a book and film club. Not all staff members will gravitate to the book selections, whether the session is compulsory or not. So, it is important that the selections are varied and that the film club is used as a means of offering a more accessible medium for members who don't feel confident discussing book themes.

Reading is fundamental

The book club was arranged for when staff broke up for the summer holiday. The break allowed for books to be delivered to staff and gave ample time for everyone to read through their selection ready for discussion in the autumn. At whatever point you decide to do your book club, it is important to consider the amount of time staff will have to read. Inadequate time will lead to discussions being disingenuous and limits participants'

ability to contribute. Staff were given a choice of six books from which they picked one to read. The three that had the most impact based on staff feedback were the following:

- *They Can't Kill Us All* – Wesley Lowery
- *When They Call You a Terrorist* – Patrisse Khan-Cullors & asha bandele
- *Women, Race & Class* – Angela Davis.

Book discussion prompts

In the autumn, once staff had the opportunity to read through their books, they were split into groups and were given questions to prompt discussions. We didn't see a need to record answers to the prompts; instead, the prompts were used as a springboard and if a new question emerged then that was great, providing it was on topic.

Staff members who read Wesley Lowery's *They Can't Kill Us All* were given these questions as prompts:

- Is it really about race?
- Is police brutality really about race?
- What is cultural appropriation?
- What is the model minority myth?

These questions may not seem linked to education; they were focused on the theme of the book, which explored police brutality in the US and in historic cases. The second prompt was really important as, while in the UK we do not have many



The club gave staff an opportunity to discuss themes of racial injustice and their ties to education

cases where a victim is shot by police, we do have the controversial Stop & Search initiative which directly impacts Black people more than any other race.

For those who read Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele's *When They Call You a Terrorist*, they received the following prompts for consideration and discussion.

- The entrenched connections between history and lived experience.
- The importance of chosen family and biological family, intentional community, intimacy, and networks of care.
- Spirituality.
- Gender and sexuality.
- Personal responsibility vs. collective responsibility.

The last prompt on personal responsibility versus collective responsibility struck a chord with staff, as we have been doing a lot of sessions around bystander behaviour and being an upstander.

And finally, those who read Angela Davis's *Women, Race & Other* were given the following prompts:

- What is the difference between being a non-racist and being an anti-racist?
- What is white privilege?
- What is the difference between racism and racial bias?
- What is the importance of intersectionality?

The question on intersectionality is important. Some of us belong to more than one marginalised group, be that Black, ethnic minority, women, LGBT, class to name a few. But it is important to look at how racial injustice may impact the students in their school using an intersectional approach. For example, Black boys are typically targeted and seen as 'aggressive' and have sanctions applied to them more harshly than their white peers. Black girls are more likely to be treated as adults when in school and like boys more likely to be seen as being 'difficult'.

Films for everyone

The film club was announced just before the winter break, helping to spread the anti-racism CPD over the academic year. To ensure that all staff had the opportunity to get involved, I chose films

and TV series that were available on a variety of streaming platforms, some free and some paid. When selecting films for your club, bear in mind that some films may only be available for a limited time.

Staff were asked to select one film or TV series to watch from a list of 11. Unlike with the book club, I found that many staff watched more than one film. Of the choices, the following three stood out in discussion.

- *The School That Tried to End Racism*
- *Black Is the New Black*
- *Black Panther*

Film and TV discussion prompts

Once we got back from the winter break, we broke into groups and used the following prompts to guide discussions.

- Have your perceptions on race changed from the staff Inset at the beginning of the year?
- How has the theme of race been discussed in the films you have watched?
- Did the films discuss race differently than the books?
- Are you more confident talking about race?
- Does defensiveness keep us from truly listening to Black people?

At the time the film club took place, staff had gone through a series of anti-racist CPD from September. With racial literacy constantly being emphasised with staff, the discussion points were an opportunity for reflection.

It is important that staff engage with anti-racism initiatives. But equally, it is important to use the discussions as an opportunity to reflect on how individuals are progressing on their journey toward being anti-racist. ■

 For more posts about anti-racism at Dwight School, visit blog.optimus-education.com

Embedding the early years framework

Changes to the EYFS framework became statutory in September 2021. **SAM ATTWATER** shares key areas for consideration for embedding changes in your setting

Every school or setting will have their own thoughts on implementing the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, and alongside this there are many early years professionals who have written articles, blogs and so on, sharing their thoughts and ideas.

It's important for provisions to have their own approach to these changes to suit their cohort and community. With that said, I wanted to share what I think are the key areas for consideration, to support you in planning for the year.

Professional development

Identifying the key changes and any CPD implications for your staff team is vital. I believe the most important thing for everyone to do is to refresh themselves on child development. We are in a position to enhance the early years of children's lives, and we know that having a clear understanding of what is typical for children at certain ages is the best way to start planning for their learning.

You will be in a better position to set more achievable goals for children and you will then quickly recognise any red flags to children's learning. Expanding your knowledge of child development will give you more confidence when making decisions, speaking to parents and other colleagues and enhance your own practice.

There is a greater focus on communication and language, therefore any training that you can access on language development would be advisable.

Do staff have an understanding of phrases such as self-regulation, which is now an early learning goal, and executive function, which is mentioned in the revised 'Development Matters' guidance?

As previously, make sure you are up-to-date with any statutory training, including safeguarding training (ensure you have read KCSIE 2021) and paediatric first aid.

Curriculum design

You will be embarking on designing your curriculum and this needs to be unique to your setting. Therefore, within your team, discuss what you want your children to learn, the activities you will provide and experiences you want them to have, and why these are important.

Think about to implement this whilst ensuring that you are improving language development for all children (particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds), linking learning to the educational programmes, working towards the Early Learning Goals and as a result improving the outcomes for all children.

Within your curriculum, look at how you will meet the needs of those with SEND, especially in terms of providing any additional support.

Remember to add any vocabulary, texts, rhymes etc. you are thinking of using throughout the year. It is advisable also to note how you will promote oral health.

Documents and policies

Check and change any documents and

policies in line with the statutory changes to the early years foundation stage and reference these accordingly.

Assessment

Change any assessment format to correspond with the changes, remove the 'exceeding' judgement from any paperwork. Consider in particular any changes needed to the statutory assessments:

- progress check at age two
- reception baseline assessment (RBA)
- early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP).

Additional thoughts and considerations

- Are pupils backgrounds reflected in book corners and the wider provision?
- Is diversity celebrated through texts, toys and resources in the setting/classroom?
- Do you support children to develop their skills on asking and answering questions?
- Do you give children the time and encourage them to contribute in conversations?

See the early childhood resource bank (earlyyearsreviews.co.uk/early-childhood-resource-bank) for a useful collection of free resources, covering child development, curriculum planning and health. ■

What's in this month's SEN and Safeguarding section?

Are you up to date with the latest version of the DfE's 'Keeping children safe in education'? This statutory guidance underlines the importance of schools providing a safe space. Luke Ramsden provides a useful summary of what all staff and governors need to know on page 38.

Meanwhile, the Everyone's Invited movement and Ofsted review have highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools. This is a difficult topic for pupils and staff alike. On page 40, Rebecca Jennings offers guidance and conversation starters to generate healthy discussion and nurture a confident approach. For a useful starting point, share the quiz on page 42.

Challenging gender stereotypes from an early age will support gender equality across the whole school, with an explicit culture of 'anti-sexism', as Olivia Dickinson explains on page 36. Schools should also provide a safe space for SEMH needs. Adele Bates offers practical tips for maintaining positive relationships and behaviour throughout the school day – see page 34. Finally, on page 32, Natalie Packer identifies a consistent approach to SEN identification and support.

SEN and safeguarding blogs

Supervision for mental health leads: why and how?
oego.co/why_supervision

What do DSLs need to be prepared for?
oego.co/DSL_reflections

Developing an effective SEND register
oego.co/effective-send-register

See more at blog.optimus-education.com

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Working through your SEN identification process

Early and accurate identification of need is an essential first step towards putting in the right support for a child or young person with SEND. **NATALIE PACKER** outlines what leaders can do to support a consistent approach

The sooner a pupil's needs are identified, the sooner the right provision can be put in place to support them. However, in practice, making decisions about what constitutes SEN (or otherwise) is not always so straightforward.

The DfE's most recent annual special educational needs statistics report raises questions about how schools are 'categorising' the type of need. For example, around 18% of pupils are identified as having moderate learning difficulties (MLD), yet there is no national definition of what actually constitutes MLD.

What influences SEN identification?

So are schools using the same criteria to make decisions about SEN identification? Recent research by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) suggests not. Its report 'Identifying pupils with special educational needs and disabilities' (see www.epi.org.uk) concludes that the primary school a child attends makes most difference to their chances of being identified with SEND.

The EPI refers to this as a 'postcode lottery' and notes that more than half of the differences in identification are a result of the school the child attends. According to the report, factors at school level that impacted on identification include:

- Prior rates of SEND: where schools had high levels of identification, this tended to persist over time.
- Ofsted inspection judgements: there was a higher rate of identification in schools judged as 'requires improvement'.

- School type: Academies had lower rates of SEN than local authority schools.
- Class size: Smaller classes were more likely to have higher levels of SEN identification.

The report also considers the range of child factors that impacted on identification.

- Children's birth month: summer-born children were overrepresented, suggesting a failure to take into account normal development differences over 12 months.
- Gender: Boys were twice as likely to be identified with SEND as girls.
- Ethnicity: Gypsy/Roma and Traveller, Black Caribbean, and mixed white and Black Caribbean children were overrepresented among children identified with SEND.
- Disadvantage: An estimated 25% to 35% of disadvantaged children were identified with SEND.

The impact of the pandemic

SENCOs and headteachers have reported an increase in the challenges associated with SEN identification since the start of the pandemic. When leaders make decisions regarding whether a pupil requires 'catch-up' support or longer-term provision, they need to be asking the following:

- Where gaps in learning have increased, is this as a result of missed

learning due to lockdown or is there an additional need?

- Where pupils are increasingly displaying mental health issues, are these due to a short-term need as a result of the pandemic, or is it a longer-term need that requires special educational provision?
- Where parents have raised concerns about their child's progress, behaviour or mental health as a result of experiences while home schooling, are these concerns replicated at school and what can be done to ensure parents and teachers are working together to address them?
- Where concerns had been raised about a pupil prior to lockdown, has the disruption in school attendance /lack of access to specialist assessments stalled potential identification for individuals?

The EPI report suggests that greater quality and consistency around identification is needed and recommends that, at a national level, this needs to include provision of specialist SEND training for school leaders, increased access to educational psychologists and the development of a framework of national expectations around SEND.

The outcomes of the pending DfE SEND review *may* address some of these recommendations, but in the meantime what can leaders do to support a more consistent approach to SEN identification within their school?

1. Clarify the definition of SEND

The process of identifying SEND should be built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils. It is important to have clear and robust criteria about what constitutes SEN in the school and to ensure everyone knows and understands it. The criteria should be based on the definition of SEN in the code of practice:

'A child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.'

In this case, a learning difficulty is defined as being when a pupil has 'a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age'. This is, however, open to interpretation. The code does provide guidance, indicating that a pupil may have SEN if their progress:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the gap.

It can include progress in areas other than attainment – for instance, communication, social skills, behaviour, emotional health or physical development.

2. Embed a whole-school graduated approach

Deciding whether a pupil's needs align with these criteria should be built into the school's graduated approach to SEND. Initially, this involves teachers using the information they gather from their ongoing, day-to-day assessment to make judgements about the progress a pupil is making and to alert them to any barriers. The information can then be used to evidence where pupils may be struggling to make progress.

3. Establish a process for initial concern

Many schools have an 'initial concerns' form for teachers to complete to record the relevant information and to share during a discussion with the SENCO and / or parents. This is likely to include the following:

- the pupil's strengths and interests
- areas of concern / needs, including evidence
- outcomes of any conversations with the pupil, their parents or staff
- evidence of high-quality teaching strategies already tried and impact
- next steps agreed.

Evidence of concerns may come through a variety of sources, such as teacher assessment, standardised assessments, observation, behaviour logs or discussions with pupils, parents or staff. When evidencing areas of concern, it is often useful for teachers to provide detail where this is known, for example to identify if a pupil has difficulties with their memory, following instructions or decoding words.

4. Establish ways of providing further assessment

If a pupil requires additional assessment, perhaps for a formal diagnosis, these might include:

- standardised tests, e.g. for reading, spelling or maths
- other diagnostic assessments, such as verbal and non-verbal reasoning tests or cognitive abilities tests (CATs)
- profiling tools to identify detailed needs, e.g. for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
- observation schedules, e.g. to identify patterns in participation, behaviour, social interaction
- screening assessments, e.g. for dyslexia or dyspraxia

- advice from a specialist professional, such as an educational psychologist, speech therapist, social worker or health professional.

Further discussions with the pupil and their parents will enable the school to gather more detailed information on the pupil's home life, what the pupil is like outside school, their views on school and learning or strategies the parents use at home to support their child.

5. Share information and plan next steps

Relevant information about the needs of the pupil needs to be shared with parents and staff who will be working with the pupil. This should be done through the Assess, Plan, Do, Review process and include the development of a 'pupil passport' or 'one-page profile'. The information should then be used to agree relevant strategies and additional provision or interventions to address the identified needs.

Communicating the process

In order to share the process for identification, it can be useful for SENCOs to develop a flowchart or diagram for staff to provide clarity about the steps to take if they have concerns about a pupil. The approach to identification should be set out clearly in the SEND policy and also be detailed in the school's SEN information report. Effective communication of the process underpins the high-quality, consistent approach that is required to support accurate identification of SEN need. ■

Ensure quality provision

Register for *Leading SEND Provision*: two digital half-day modules on 27 January and 3 February: my.optimus-education.com/conferences/leading-send-provision-digital

Supporting pupils with SEMH needs

Understanding and supporting pupils with SEMH needs can be a real challenge. **ADELE BATES** shares strategies to support pupils throughout the school day

Our pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues have unmet needs that they communicate through behaviour. The challenging aspect for staff who work with them is that the behaviour can often be aggressive, violent, extreme, isolating, volatile and unexpected. However, what this behaviour is attempting to communicate is often a deep upset and vulnerability – commonly with safeguarding and child protection ramifications.

Understanding SEMH

A simple way to understand this: you may know someone (or possibly it's you!) who gets grumpy when they're hungry. The behaviour = I'm angry, leave me alone. In contrast, the message = please feed me. The outward behaviour can be perceived as negative; however, it is a communication of an unmet need. With pupils with SEMH the unmet needs, and therefore the behaviours, are much more extreme.

If we do not understand our pupils fully, there is a danger in schools that we react to the behaviour – e.g. the pupil threw a desk, therefore the punishment is X – rather than addressing the underlying issues in the long term – e.g. a pupil threw a desk because they are scared, they have experienced extreme trauma, abuse or neglect, or are suffering with a form of mental illness, therefore the support is X.

So how can we support pupils with SEMH?

Safety and positive relationships are the foundations that will positively support pupils with SEMH. Of course, we are attempting to do this for all our students but, for ones with SEMH, if they do not feel that these are in place then little else is likely to happen.

Do not take it for granted that all your students have experienced a positive home life or positive relationships in their lives so far.

What does this look like day-to-day?

Start of the day

Have regular members of staff ready to greet the pupils on their entrance, preferably at the gate (whether this is at the start of the school day, at a later scheduled time or when the pupils manage to

rock up). Depending on the school size, choose two to three people.

Do not rely on one adult only – the day they are ill will be very difficult for the pupil when it's not someone they know. They are likely to experience this as personal rejection. Have a couple of staff available and rotate.

If parents/carers drop pupils off, it is also an opportunity to catch up with any significant issues. Often, when a pupil with SEMH has a particularly difficult day, something has triggered it – a sibling has become ill and is in hospital, their care placement has changed, they fell out with a parent etc. The sooner school staff know this, the easier it is to accommodate their emotional needs.

In the classroom

Ask what feels safe for the pupil. Listen, believe, adapt.

For some pupils, the hoodie on their shoulders or sitting next to the door may be what makes them feel safe. Whilst you may also have school rules to adhere to, you can be flexible, for example the hoodie can stay on for the register, as long as it is off for the rest of the lesson. Make the SLT aware of this if needs be and evidence the pupil's SEMH needs.

I work in educational settings with students who have experienced the kind of trauma, sometimes at a very early age, that's difficult to talk about. The fear they have of being in a room alone with an adult, being in a room with a closed door, being part of a large crowd, being requested to do something by an adult they don't know – these situations can trigger devastating memories that they don't have the capacity to understand (neither might we) and your attempt to just 'get them to learn one quote' will fall on deaf ears.

Learning

A tricky aspect of SEMH is that the child or young person's actual ability to learn is intertwined with their mental health and emotional wellbeing. This means that one pupil with SEMH may have high capabilities in learning; however, because they experience triggers, lack of safety or mental health issues, the work they 'produce' for you will be far below their capabilities.

With one pupil I worked with, I knew there was a history of sexual abuse by family members. The week that they were to



Have regular members of staff ready to greet the pupils on their entrance

meet some of that family was not the week to push them on their work and tell them off for laziness. In fact, that week I read them stories – the safe nurture during that time outweighed the need to practise capital letters.

I could only differentiate in this way because I knew the student well and had formed a positive relationship with them. Pushing them to work would be detrimental in the moment – the work wouldn't get done and would be detrimental to our longer-term working relationship.

Many SEMH pupils miss a lot of education (due to care issues, exclusions, suspensions, school refusal etc.) so, again, it may not be a learning difficulty as such, but if you missed the lessons where you should have learnt subtraction, then you will appear to have difficulties in maths. Gaps in learning for SEMH pupils are common, and the strategies they develop to hide the most basic holes (for example, being able to read) can be quite ingenious. As a teacher, ask yourself, how can you build on these self-taught strategic strengths to help them with other work?

Another SEMH pupil may well have learning difficulties in addition to their SEMH. As such, you will need to apply appropriate learning support for these needs as well as the SEMH needs.

Which subjects should you concentrate on?

Many SEMH pupils are playing catch up in relation to their peers. To differentiate successfully for this, strike a balance.

Check the fundamental basics – reading, writing, arithmetic. But do mix this with engaging, practical, creative subjects – pupils with SEMH often have short attention spans, and will become unhappy and wound up easily if they are not offered alternatives. The ideal is to teach all subjects in creative and engaging ways so that the pupils can access the learning.

Resources

Adele Bates Education: Blog, resources and a free video series on how to manage challenging behaviour in the classroom. adele Bates Education.co.uk

SEMH: blog forum, tips and resources to help staff improve provision for SEMH needs. semh.co.uk

Unlocking Potential: SEMH resources at up.org.uk/social-emotional-mental-health

The Attachment Lead Network: Find your local lead and information on courses at www.attachmentleadnetwork.net

SecEd: Attachment disorders: practical advice for the classroom. www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/attachment-disorders-practical-advice-for-the-classroom

NICE: Attachment difficulties in children and young people – interactive flowchart at pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/attachment-difficulties-in-children-and-young-people

Remember, you may be battling years of them feeling like (or, worse, being told) they are a 'failure' in your subject.

Pupils with SEMH tend to be vulnerable to gangs and exploitation. Do not take them out of PSHE and RSE, or at least make sure they catch up on missed lessons. They may be the pupils who need it the most.

Breaktimes

Find out what the pupil needs to feel safe. As in the classroom, some may need quiet, indoor spaces, whilst others need to run and expend their energy. Offer a range for all your pupils with different needs, with adults present.

End of the day

Have the same adults as at the start take the pupils to the gate or meet the parents/carers. Highlight verbally successes of the day – 'You made it all the way through physics!' – whilst giving a small idea of what they could be working on next – 'Next physics lesson, let's see you complete the first task.'

Relay any significant incidents to home, whether in person or with a phone call.

Any other strategies?

- Relationships, relationships, relationships – once you know your pupils well it's easier to tailor for the individual.
- Short bursts, sensory breaks – it's easier to accommodate agreed time out than punish for pupils running off halfway through your lesson.
- Key workers – a specific member of staff who meets regularly and advocates for an SEMH pupil.
- pupils need constant reassurance that they are valued and worthy. You can give them this. ■

How to challenge gender stereotypes

The new RSE curriculum requires primary schools to teach children what gender stereotypes are but how and why should they be challenged? **OLIVIA DICKINSON** recommends some practical approaches and resources

When, in 2017, the BBC showed a fascinating two part documentary called 'No More Boys and Girls: Can Our Kids Go Gender Free?', one of the biggest takeaways for me was the reaction to the documentary among the 'Primary Education' community on social media. The programme showed a mini experiment, over just six weeks, challenging gender stereotypes held among Year 3 children in an English school.

I noticed the reactions particularly because I'm a campaigner for challenging gender stereotypes in childhood and have trained current and trainee teachers in how – and why – to challenge gender stereotypes. Teachers who watched the programme were keen to implement the same approach in their own classrooms, but didn't always know where to start. Despite there being over 20 years' worth of research into the benefits of challenging gender stereotypes in terms of educational outcomes, teachers have not been given the resources and skills to do so.

What about teacher training?

The Let Toys Be Toys campaign carried out an online survey of teachers and educators across the UK after the programme first aired, to find out what training teachers had received around recognising and challenging gender stereotypes. Of the 370 respondents, they found:

- only 19% of teachers were advised as part of their initial teacher training (ITT) to challenge gender stereotypes, and that they were not always given ways to combat stereotyping effectively
- a quarter of teachers said that their training reinforced, rather than

challenged, gender stereotypes

- 80% of teachers had not been offered any training (continuing professional development/CPD) in the previous five years about challenging gender stereotypes and unconscious bias.

With the new RSE curriculum now statutory, all primary school teachers will be teaching pupils about what gender stereotypes are, but it is unlikely your staff – or you! – will have had adequate training on how and why to challenge gender stereotypes, and how they affect the whole curriculum, a child's life outside school and the whole school ethos.

As the 'No More Boys and Girls' documentary showed, by explicitly challenging gender stereotypes you can also initiate remarkable changes in both ability and behaviour. After just two weeks of practice with a tangram puzzle, the top 10 pupils went from all boys to five boys and five girls, while the boys' observed bad behaviour went down by 57%.

This article suggests some areas you can look at, with recommendations of further reading, training and videos to watch.

Exploding myths

As the Let Toys Be Toys survey showed, a quarter of teachers had ITT that reinforced stereotypes. Myths in education about gender stereotypes might include:

- boys are slower than girls to read
- girls are naturally quieter than boys
- science and maths are boys' subjects
- boys are better at sport than girls

- boys and girls can't work together or be friends with each other.

The list could go on! Some of these stereotypes are affected by 'innocent socialisation' of children from when they're born, but not all of them. A common theme perpetuated by trainers is an expectation that boys will underachieve.

The 2009 publication, *Gender issues in school – what works to improve achievement for boys and girls* by Professors Becky Francis and Christine Skelton, is a great place to start with your staff. Some staff will have seen boys who underachieve or girls who are 'naturally' better behaved than boys, so discussing and exploding the myths that you may have been taught in your own training or hear being reinforced by colleagues or parents requires nuance and repetition.

The book *Boys Don't Try? Rethinking Masculinity in Schools* by Mark Roberts and Matt Pinkett is a great reference tool for understanding how reinforcing gender stereotypes affects boys' underachievement and can lead to them fulfilling this expectation (and therefore reinforcing the myths!).

Curriculum... and walls

You may have heard about campaigns to decolonise the curriculum (see, for example theblackcurriculum.com), but you can also apply a gender lens to the historical figures, key events and topics that are taught at primary school. Have a look at your schemes of work: how many women are included? On your history timelines, are the key events about men?

It can be hard to find the women, as

history and society are dominated by white men, but you can discuss why there are fewer women and research more women to include. Social media often has campaigners and teachers who are doing some of this work – look at @Herstory_UK or @History_Girls on Twitter but there are others.

Think more broadly about where men and women are represented: what do the wall displays and corridors show? What are the names of your classes? If they're named after authors, or inventors, or scientists, or local celebrities, how many are male and how many are female?

Audit your books

Have you flipped through the non-fiction books recently to see what the illustrated dictionaries or encyclopaedias show when they define 'nurse' or 'doctor', 'firefighter' or 'police officer'? What assumptions are made in lesson plans or in textbooks about the role of men and women? Obviously with budgets tight, you can't go out and replace all the books, but it's worth considering an audit, with clear parameters, of where there are really obvious gender stereotypes in say, picture books: mums always pushing buggies, dads always doing DIY.

You may note how most non-human characters are male, or how few non-white characters there are in any books. CLPE and BookTrust have been researching representation in children's books, building upon the work *The Observer* did for a couple of years on the top 100 picture books.

The campaign End Sexism in Schools is focusing initially on KS3 English, but might give you ideas for how to collate data. For younger pupils, Let Toys Be Toys and the National Literacy Trust offer a downloadable poster specifically about tackling gender stereotypes through literacy and language.

Mind your language

Language can often be the hardest thing to notice and change about yourself, but it can have a huge effect on young children. Some of the tips from Let Toys Be Toys, which are adapted from original resources from the

Further resources

End Sexism in Schools:

endsexismschools.wordpress.com

The Fawcett Society: campaigns for gender equality and women's rights at work, at home and in public life.
www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

Institute of Physics: has resources to address gender imbalance in the sciences at www.iop.org

Let Toys Be Toys: a campaign asking the toy and publishing industries to stop promoting toys and books as only suitable for girls or boys.
www.lettoysbetoysoy.org.uk

Lifting Limits: the equality charity lists research about the benefits of challenging gender stereotypes at liftinglimits.org.uk/evidence-and-sources

UK Feminista School Resource Hub: to tackle sexism in schools, see ukfeminista.org.uk/resources-hub

NEU, focus on language, for example:

- challenge stereotypes when you hear them, using real-life examples ('my dad's favourite colour is pink', 'my husband often cooks dinner')
- don't address the children as 'boys and girls' but as 'children', and find other ways to divide them up
- use language that acknowledges different families and does not make sexist assumptions about parents' roles – don't assume 'mum' will sign the form or always be picking up
- keep talking about stereotypes when you see them; don't put them in an RSE twice a term box.

Take into account the age of staff

It's worth thinking about what your current staff experienced in their childhoods and at school. What was 'normalised' in their own schooldays, in terms of sexist behaviour and attitudes? When I did some training of BEd students, aged 18 to 20, I was struck by how many of the young women (there were only three men!) felt that 'sexism' was subjective

and should not always be challenged in the classroom – unlike racism, which they had no qualms about challenging.

In her study of toy catalogues and advertising throughout the 20th century, Dr Elizabeth Sweet shows that the toy market swung back to becoming more segregated from the mid-1990s, and it's since then that these students teachers have grown up. The Young Women's Trust 2015 study showed attitudes were going backwards:

- one in three young women (aged 18 to 30) thought men are better suited to being an IT technician compared to 10% of women aged 31 and over
- 40% of younger women thought people of both genders could be a plumber, but 66% of older women thought this
- one in three young women thought nursing and caring were better suited to women than men, while just 13% of older women felt the same.

One approach is to refer young teachers to their Public Sector Equality Duty obligations under the Equality Act (see www.equalityhumanrights.com), and remind them that sex is included as a protected characteristic to ensure no sex discrimination.

Adopt a whole school approach

The 'whole school approach' is about ensuring gender equality across the whole school, with an explicit culture of 'anti-sexism'. A gender equality and 'anti-sexism' ethos from the top down (SLT and governors) is a recommendation from organisations such as UK Feminista, Lifting Limits and the Institute of Physics to ensure not only a greater gender balance across science and arts subjects, but also in mutual respect between boys and girls.

It is an approach well worth researching for both primary and secondary schools since the Everyone's Invited revelations and the subsequent Ofsted findings in its review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. ■

KCSIE 2021: key changes for school leaders

The DfE's 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) 2021 sees a number of changes and shifts in emphasis. **LUKE RAMSDEN** outlines what needs to be incorporated into staff training and strategic planning

With 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) changing every year, there is now an entire industry of articles, webinars and guides around supporting safeguarding leads with updating their safeguarding policies. It's a significant job given the importance of getting this area of school policy correct, not least with the detailed check that safeguarding gets in any inspection.

This article does not attempt to go into the minutiae of the changes in KCSIE (see Annex G for a table of substantive changes). Instead, the aim is to highlight the key strategic changes that arise from this updated guidance for schools.

1. The role of governors

All governors – not just the designated safeguarding governor – need to recognise that KCSIE 2021 goes beyond the basis that 'Governing bodies and proprietors have a strategic leadership responsibility for their school's or college's safeguarding arrangements' (paragraph 78).

Paragraphs 82 and 83 state that governing bodies should ensure there is a 'whole school' approach to safeguarding, that where there is a concern 'child's wishes and feelings are taken into account' and that schools should have systems in place for 'children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.'

Check that your safeguarding training for governors covers all these points. It is vital that governors are aware of the heightened focus on their responsibility for safeguarding across the school, and that they all understand and can have a say in it.

An interesting point for safeguarding leads is the comment that children should be able to 'give feedback' having reported concerns. Your current safeguarding procedures may not cover this, in which case you need to give it some thought.

2. Differentiating allegations and concerns

One of the biggest changes to KCSIE this year is the division of part four (allegations against members of staff) into two sections: **Section 1:** allegations that may 'meet the threshold' and should be referred to the LADO.

Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold. This means separating allegations against members of staff into

'It is vital that governors are aware of the heightened focus on their responsibility for safeguarding across the school'

concerns that meet the threshold and 'low-level concerns'.

The key issue here is that it's left up to the judgement of the headteacher as to when the LADO is contacted. Paragraph 410 gives some examples of 'low level concerns' which probably wouldn't meet the threshold for LADO involvement:

- being overly friendly with children
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

KCSIE does specify that low-level concerns such as this should be regularly reviewed and, if a pattern of poor behaviour is noticed, 'the school will consult with the LADO'. However, the worry may be that safeguarding concerns that should be reported to the LADO will now not be passed on.

It's important that this new system doesn't result in safeguarding issues not being taken seriously enough and real problems going unreported. Schools might consider stating in their policies that where there is uncertainty about the level of concern, the LADO will be consulted as a way of guarding against this.

3. Effective response to sexual violence and harassment

KCSIE 2021 was delayed so that it could take into account the Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. Unsurprisingly, part 5, 'Child on child sexual violence and sexual

harassment' is updated and gives far more detailed guidance in how to manage allegations.

Note paragraph 452, which states that schools should 'look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour... Consideration should be given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the inappropriate behaviour to occur.'

This review of concerns, and safeguarding concerns more generally, should (if not already) be included as a regular agenda item in leadership team meetings and governor meetings.

4. Reassuring students

Most staff members will do this already, but it's very welcome to see paragraph 18 making it clear that 'all staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.'

I am sure that this will be given plenty of weight in safeguarding training in every school!

5. A lack of reporting doesn't mean it's not happening

Another welcome addition to KCSIE 2021 is the statement that policies should recognise that 'even if there are no reported cases of peer-on-peer abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported' (paragraph 145).

This principle now has to underpin schools' safeguarding strategies (and is indeed something that Ofsted and ISI will be looking for in inspections). Schools must therefore be thinking hard about what they can do to improve reporting of peer-on-peer abuse, or any safeguarding issues, and what else they are doing to find out about possible issues in the absence of reporting.



Safeguarding concerns should be a regular agenda item in leadership and governor meetings

6. The end of sexting

Note that 'sexting' has been replaced by the longer but more precise 'consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos'. It would be sensible to adopt the same terminology in your policies and school information.

7. Letting out school facilities

SBMs, bursars and facilities managers should note the clarification regarding safeguarding when the school lets out its buildings or facilities. Paragraphs 155 and 156 of KCSIE 2021 state that if the activity is under the direct management of school staff, the school is responsible for safeguarding arrangements.

If the service or activity is provided by another group, the school governors should 'seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed)'. Safeguarding requirements should be included in any lease or hire agreement as a condition of use.

8. Online safeguarding

There's an emphasis throughout KCSIE 2021 that all safeguarding issues can potentially occur online, or have an online element. This needs to be reflected in staff training.

Annex B, 'Further information', contains a new section on cybercrime, recognising that: 'Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.'

9. Role of the safeguarding lead

KCSIE 2021 has added yet more duties to the role of the safeguarding lead (see Annex C). The imperative to have a team of safeguarding leads rather than just one is therefore even stronger, particularly in large schools.

Safeguarding leads now have 'lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes' of children who have experienced child protection issues, including supporting 'teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustment to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential'.

This will require some thought at the start of the academic year, and a clear understanding of how this relates to the work of the SENCO and other academic or pastoral leaders.

It can be difficult if there are several different people who see themselves as having 'lead responsibility', so it's important to discuss having clear lines of accountability. ■

Tackling sexual harassment

REBECCA JENNINGS provides guidance for staff as part of a toolkit of activities designed to build confidence in understanding and challenging sexual harassment

Following the publication of Ofsted's 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges' (2021), which uncovered an epidemic of sexual harassment and abuse among pupils in schools and colleges, an inclusive RSHE curriculum is now high on the agenda for schools, with a focus on respect for others, risks and implications of online and peer to peer harassment.

Ofsted's core recommendation is that school leaders act now and act quickly, working on the assumption that sexual harassment is taking place whether it has been reported or not.

Nearly 90 per cent of girls, and nearly 50 per cent of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers. Children and young people told us that sexual harassment occurs so frequently that it has become 'commonplace'. The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal. (www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges)

Sexual harassment isn't a clear-cut topic and what may constitute harassment for one person or in one context won't be the same for or in another. Our aim should be to empower staff and students to question and to challenge behaviour which may be inappropriate, or makes them feel uncomfortable. Therefore we need to explore the nuances of harassment and how to begin an all-important conversation within a school setting.

The Everyone's Invited movement and Ofsted review have highlighted

Ofsted's recommendations

- Develop a culture where all kinds of sexual harassment are recognised and addressed, including with sanctions when appropriate.
- The RSHE curriculum should be carefully sequenced with time allocated for topics that children and young people find difficult, such as consent and sharing explicit images.
- Provide high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE.
- Improve engagement between multi-agency safeguarding partners and schools.

the prevalence of sexual harassment in schools. Saying 'it doesn't happen here' isn't an option anymore – all schools need to consider their role in educating children and young people in this area.

The Ofsted report also adds that carefully sequenced RSHE based on the statutory curriculum, which specifically includes sexual harassment and violence (including online), should be a vital part of our response to this problem.

Defining sexual harassment

The Equality Act of 2010 has this definition: 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them'. It covers indecent or suggestive remarks, unwanted touching, requests or demands for sex and the dissemination of pornography.

It is important that everyone is clear on the definitions of sexual harassment,

while acknowledging that people will feel differently about each item on the list below. Ultimately the harassment will have varying degrees of impact to each individual and the severity of each point is to be reported and dealt with in a sensitive manner and in one that ensures the harassment stops and the situation is dealt with as effectively as possible.

Acts of sexual harassment can occur online or face-to-face; the key message for schools to remember is that if an individual feels threatened, or reports they were sexually harassed, it is vital that their story is heard and that the young person feels supported, valued, and more importantly, that they feel safe.

Sexual harassment includes:

- telling or digitally sending sexual or personally sexual jokes or sexual taunting
- sending porn or links to porn websites
- inappropriate touching in passing or when stationary
- inappropriate sexualised gestures, noises or hand signals
- spreading sexual gossip
- taking intimate pictures without permission
- passing on intimate photos without permission
- 'upskirting', which means taking pictures without permission and/or knowledge looking up clothing
- calling people names with sexual connotations.

Discussion starters

Begin by looking at the following statements and discuss whether staff agree, disagree or are somewhere in between. These pointers can initiate healthy discussions between staff members and can assist with addressing values and beliefs in relation to this topic.

- Receiving a wolf whistle is only banter.
- Girls in school wearing short skirts are prone to sexual harassment.
- There are clear systems in school for pupils to report verbal sexual harassment.
- There are clear systems in school for pupils to report physical sexual harassment.
- Boys don't tend to report any sexual harassment.
- If a lad pings a female students bra strap, this shouldn't be a huge issue.
- If a pupil reports that another pupil is stalking them, this matter should be taken seriously.
- I feel confident that I know the correct steps to take if a pupil report receiving nude images.
- It is only males that harass females and there aren't any cases of same sex harassment or female to male harassment.
- Females tend to lead on the boys, especially if they wear suggestive clothing and make up.
- Boys tend to get hormones at around school age and they need to let off steam by 'cat calling'; they don't mean anything by it.
- The porn industry gives people the idea to harass others sexually.

Starting the conversation

Sexual harassment is an uncomfortable topic and one that makes many people defensive too. Staff may hold a variety of values around sexual harassment and it is important that staff remember to 'facilitate' sessions rather than relaying their own beliefs and opinions.

Setting boundaries before conversations can really help. A working together agreement must be set ahead of any delivery with pupils and certain points can be added as and when they arise (see the

'Ofsted's core recommendation is that school leaders act now and act quickly, working on the assumption that sexual harassment is taking place whether it has been reported or not'

full toolkit at my.optimus-education.com/challenging-sexual-harassment-toolkit for activities to use with pupils).

For example, some of the basic criteria for a 'working together agreement' could be:

- listen to different opinions and ensure they are respected even if you don't necessarily agree
- make sure you ask questions and make time for discussion
- not to ask personal questions or make personal comments
- ask for help after this session if you need further support or advice (refer to local and national support services)
- listen well to each other
- no judgement during the session.

Ensure respect, active listening and empathy are understood and committed to; this applies to the sessions staff will deliver as well as the thoughts of staff relating to this challenging topic.

It is essential that schools provide a safe space for pupils to speak with someone they trust if they feel they need to disclose peer-on-peer sexual abuse and harassment. Pupils therefore need to know they will be supported, and teaching staff should ensure that all pupils are supported and assured that they will be taken seriously and that any disclosures will be dealt with in line with schools' policies and safeguarding procedures.

It should be assumed that sexual assault is taking place within a setting and that is not to be tolerated. Pupils should receive the correct information around

treating everyone with respect, healthy relationships and the impact of sexual imagery online. These important topics should be covered through the school's relationship, health and sex education curriculum, in line with the requirements set out by the DfE.

Staff can ensure pupils are aware of the severity of sexual assault within school and this message can be covered during assemblies, lessons and with posters signposting to support services. If staff are struggling to take disclosures or manage sensitive conversations then it is essential they receive advice and guidance via the DSLs in school, and know that any reports of sexual harassment must be dealt with in accordance to school policy.

If a pupil approaches you with a disclosure, it is important to listen, not to ask any leading questions but to give the pupils time to talk. It is equally important to ensure the pupil is aware that the disclosure will be taken seriously and to acknowledge their bravery in speaking out.

To test your understanding of harassment, turn overleaf and take the staff quiz. ■

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How much do you know about harassment?

REBECCA JENNINGS shares a quiz to use with staff to promote understanding and discussion around sexual harassment

		True	False	Not sure
1	Over a third of female students at mixed-sex schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school.			
2	School staff can assure pupils of confidentiality if they make a sexual harassment disclosure at the initial stage.			
3	Sharing nudes or semi-nudes (previously referred to as sexting) can be defined as an act of sexual harassment.			
4	If a perpetrator denies the harassment and claims it to be 'banter', the disclosure should not be reported and the case should be closed.			
5	Sexual harassment and sexual violence are the same thing.			
6	Figures show that, between the ages of 17 and 18, the likelihood of a child sending an explicit image more than doubles.			
7	Perpetrators of 'upskirting' can face up to two years' imprisonment.			
8	Almost 80% of girls at secondary schools and colleges say sexual assault happens a lot or sometimes between people their age.			

Answers

1. True. According to the report "It's just everywhere": A study on sexism in schools and how we tackle it' (National Education Union and UK Feminista, 2017), over a third (37%) of female students and 6% of male students at mixed-sex schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school.

2. False. Do not promise confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further to discuss next steps (for example, with the designated safeguarding lead or children's social care). Staff should only share the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it. It is important that the victim understands what the next steps will be and who the report will be passed to. For further guidance, see 'Keeping children safe in education'.

3. True. The term 'sharing nudes or semi-nudes' is defined as the sending or posting

of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online by young people under the age of 18. This was previously referred to as 'sexting', or sometimes 'youth-produced sexual imagery'. This act is certainly within the remit of 'sexual assault'. (See the DfE's recent guidance on the sharing of photos of nudes and semi-nudes.)

4. False. The term 'banter' is too often used to mask harassment; it's only funny if both parties find it funny. If a child is offended by, or feels uncomfortable with, something that is said to them, then it most certainly isn't banter: it's bullying, or sexual harassment if spoken in a sexual manner. If someone says, 'Don't be upset, it's just a bit of banter', it isn't banter.

5. False. See the staff guidance document at my.optimus-education.com/challenging-sexual-harassment-toolkit for definitions.

6. False. The age is much younger.

According to the report 'Look At Me: Teens, sexting and risks' (published by www.internetmatters.org), the likelihood of a child sending an explicit image more than doubles between the ages of 14 and 15.

7. True – perpetrators can face two years in prison. By criminalising this distressing practice, it is hoped people are deterred from committing the crime. Upskirting, where committed to obtain sexual gratification, can result in offenders being placed on the sex offenders' register. The law sends a clear message that such behaviour is criminal and will not be tolerated. (See www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-law-comes-into-force for more detail.)

8. True. The name calling and the sexual grabbing elements are harder to explain for some pupils and many have given up with reporting. For detail, see the 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges' published by Ofsted in 2021. ■



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