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The Beauchamp Papers 1

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# Schools of Tomorrow

Towards a new understanding of  
outstanding schools

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Malcolm Groves

John West-Burnham



Schools of Tomorrow  
*The First Beauchamp Paper*

Malcolm Groves and John West-Burnham

with contributions from

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Dave Burley

Tony Cooper

Steve Gallaher

Hugh Howe

Maria Kaparou

Anne McKormick

Bob Mitchell

Danny Smith

Alan Stevens

Julie Taylor



# Foreword

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## Julie Taylor

Chief Executive, Thomas Deacon Academy

Chair of The Beauchamp Group

When I took up my first post as Headteacher in 2007, I had no idea about the challenge I had taken on in terms of securing meaningful school improvement. Although I believed that improving exam results for children was very important, for me it never felt enough to do that in isolation from the families and the community of the children we served. Successive educational change has seen greater focus on hard data, alongside increasing measures which seem to have little to do with the reason I became a teacher and subsequently a Headteacher - to make a difference to children's lives. What I believed was that school improvement which is secured through collaboration and not just competition has a huge amount of benefit both in terms of innovation and improvement. If everybody is working towards the same shared goals, underpinned by shared values, knowing the part they need to play, then surely their goals will be achieved.

As I have journeyed through my successive headships (I am now on my third!), I have become increasingly determined to seek out successful schools, school leaders, teachers and others who make it their business to know and understand the communities that they work in. Not only that; through the empowerment of their communities, they ensure the educational experience becomes a better one for young people and their families. My heartfelt belief is that we can all achieve life-changing things in our schools and communities if we believe we can and then carry out creative and determined actions to achieve our goals.

My headship journey has brought me into contact with some inspirational people, and it is through my association with them that the Beauchamp Group was formed. We came together in the spirit of a strong belief that community engagement changes schools for the better; that schools can help to change communities for the better. Above all, we believe that schools and communities working together can radically transform the futures of young people.

Schools of Tomorrow is the next stage in this journey. I hope you feel inspired to join us!



**Schools of Tomorrow** has six chapters. They are sequential and linked, but written in such a way that you can also read each independently.

- 1. Dreams and wishes** - the story behind The Beauchamp Group and the development of Schools of Tomorrow.
- 2. The Manifesto for Change** - produced in 2012, the Manifesto sets out the guiding principles and aspirations behind Schools of Tomorrow.
- 3. The Outstanding School of Tomorrow** - this chapter sets out the School of Tomorrow Framework.
- 4. The Case for New Thinking** - John West-Burnham sets out the evidence and presents the thinking on which Schools of Tomorrow is based.
- 5. Cameos of Change** - three snapshots of how schools today are working to become Schools of Tomorrow.
- 6. Agenda for Change** - sets out our plans for 2014 and how you can become involved.



# Dreams and Wishes

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This chapter tells the story of The Beauchamp Group so far and the process of development that lies behind the School of Tomorrow framework.



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## Beginnings

In November 2011, a group of twelve school leaders met for a day at Beauchamp College just outside Leicester. They reviewed developments in education policy and how these reflected what they wanted for their schools and for all schools.

As a result they decided to write a short statement to restate their fundamental values, and to see if it drew the interest and support of other school leaders. The Beauchamp Manifesto was published in February 2012. It forms Chapter 2 of this publication.

Encouraged by the response, the newly-formed Beauchamp Group set up a programme of themed working groups and development days to consider how to turn the rhetoric of the manifesto into reality in schools, and to support this with a strong base of evidence. A steering group of volunteers was established to coordinate this work and consider longer-term development.

The first development day clearly identified the importance of also engaging students in this task. As a result, nine schools offered to become learner hubs, to involve groups of students in research and development activity designed to increase our understanding of what makes a truly outstanding school. All their

projects have been designed in response to their local context and issues and priorities for improvement - a key characteristic of schools engaged with and part of communities.

At the most recent event at the University of Warwick in June 2013, students from six schools worked together to produce two short video films that encapsulated some of their initial thoughts and ideas of their [Dreams](#) and [Wishes](#) for education in schools now and in the future. Click the link to watch the video.

## Identity and Learning Research

The other major contribution young people are making is through research being undertaken as part of the Identity and Learning Theme. A sample of 67 students and 18 staff from 5 different secondary schools in different parts of England have been interviewed, looking at learner identity and how learning is changing, particularly through the impact of digital technology. All interviews have been video-recorded and the results are being analysed and edited for wider use. The outcomes will be used as the basis for the third Beauchamp Paper scheduled for publication in May 2014.



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**Some initial indications:**

1. Students and staff share a common language for speaking confidently about themselves as learners, how they learn best, and how this is changing with the increased use of various forms of digital technology.
2. How young people and staff use social media and digital technology is very varied and affected by both their own interests and the local social context, although the use of Facebook and Twitter are universal.
3. Students and staff with a White English heritage tend to describe their identity individualistically and in relation to their personality, hobbies and interests. Those with a different heritage tend to describe identity in relation to ethnicity, place of origin, family background, faith and religion and family and community values.
4. Many young people make extensive use of digital technology, the internet and social media in their learning, and to a much greater extent than is known and understood by the majority of their teachers. How students are equipped with the skills to manage this effectively is a major concern for the future, given that attempts to control and direct use will be ineffective or, at best, limited.
5. Students and staff are very aware of the issues for personal security and safeguarding that can arise from the use of social media sites. Whilst most take care with security settings and what they post, some consider that it does not apply to them and others gain confidence from the anonymity provided. For staff, being able to maintain personal confidentiality and a separate professional identity is a major concern.
6. Students and staff are very aware of changes in their learning, and perceived benefits and risks. For example, reading is seen as having increased but to be of shorter passages and in digital formats; and both independence of learning and collaborative learning have improved through the varied use of digital media. Some students are also developing high levels of knowledge and expertise in specialist areas from their pursuit of their interests.
7. There are many examples of very good and effective practice emerging from the ways that individual students and staff use digital technology in their personal learning and collaborative and facilitated learning, which can potentially be shared more widely.



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## Next steps

At this stage, there are two main lines for future enquiry emerging:

1. How important is it for young people to have a sense of identity, and a language for confidently describing it, in order to develop as successful, well-rounded global citizens with a sense of spiritual and moral well-being? Is this a prerequisite for developing a purposeful complexity of self-identity in a global, social context?
2. What are the main learning processes and skills to be developed and established for lifelong learning in the digital age, given the rapid changes in technology, formats and mediums?

**Schools of Tomorrow** is the first result of all this development work both by students and school leaders. It provides the underpinning framework for what will come later.

The Dreams and Wishes of young people and their continued engagement in research will also be core to helping inform the future direction of this work to understand and shape ‘outstanding’ schools of tomorrow.



# The Manifesto for Change

## 2012

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The Beauchamp Manifesto, reproduced here, was first published in February 2012. It has since attracted over 150 active supporters.

The Beauchamp Papers, of which this publication is the first, will take the messages of the Manifesto forward, showing how the move from rhetoric to reality can be made.



# Why this manifesto?

## Founder signatories - January 2012:

John Baumber	Chief Executive, Learning Schools Trust
Mark Bennison	Principal, The Hazeley Academy, Milton Keynes
Tony Cooper	Formerly Executive Head, The Cottenham Academy, Cambridge
Clive Corbett	Head, Pershore High School, Worcestershire
Steve Gallaher	Executive Head, Invenio Academy, Scunthorpe
James Hilton	Head, Hilton Primary School, Derbyshire
Helen Holman	Head, Orchard School, Bristol
Hugh Howe	Principal, Beauchamp College, Leicestershire
Bob Mitchell	Formerly Vice-Principal, Beauchamp College
Julie Taylor	Principal, Havant Academy, Hampshire

## Authors and conveners:

Malcolm Groves  
Mike Goodfellow

Community engagement changes schools for the better.

Schools can help to change communities for the better.

Schools and communities working together can radically transform the futures of young people.

We believe, with the support of a growing body of evidence, that these three insights hold the key to effecting long-term improvement in educational outcomes for our country.

Education reform is properly concerned with our nation's place in international comparisons. The present focus on high quality teaching in classrooms is necessary, but it is not sufficient to create the enterprising workers and active citizens of the future.

The concentration on standards - raising attainment in particular academic subjects - is also necessary, but it is also not sufficient to create the lifelong learners, who have imagination and passion as well as intellect, which our society needs to hold its head high in the global economy of the future.



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In addition, poor educational performance seems to us to be a reflection of deep-seated deprivation and social dislocation. In a world of rapid economic, social and technological change, society seems increasingly fractured and fragmented. Rapid change and economic necessity puts a new value on social and citizenship skills, tolerance and civic responsibility. A 'national standards' story is at odds with a focus on building change from within – using communities as the leverage for change.

As our school system goes through rapid, fundamental, and in many respects irreversible, change, it is crucial that the insights we have gained over many years into the interdependence of school and community are not lost. But, equally, the values and principles that underpin those insights need to be understood and applied afresh in the very different world of the present and future.

This manifesto is our attempt to kick-start the process.



## What are the core principles behind our understanding of highly effective schools?

1.

# Our four core principles

## *1. Placing schools at the heart of their communities*

Why do we believe in the importance of community engagement?

- Firstly, schools are likely to be more effective in raising standards if they draw their communities into their work, for example by engaging more closely with parents or local employers or public agencies in shared understanding and initiative about learning. A school's communities offer a valuable resource that it can call on in order to undertake its contribution more effectively.
- Secondly, schools are likely to be more effective if they reach out to work with their immediate social networks, particularly families, to encourage them to invest more at a personal level in their children's education.
- Thirdly, schools should work with the wider communities, beyond the families directly involved with the school, to help generate social capital and cohesion. This work, along with many other agencies and players, strengthens the bonds in



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those communities and in the long run provides a more stable and productive backdrop for the school's work.

- Finally, schools can create value for their local communities, for example by providing their facilities as a base for community activities which may have no immediate direct pay back but which contribute to the common good.

## ***2. Preparing young people for the society of today and tomorrow***

In a society where the speed of change in the political, social and economic environment in which young people are growing up continues to accelerate and where there is a diminished moral and spiritual framework, it is crucial we prepare our young people for the society of today and tomorrow. An awareness and understanding of their 'communities' (locally, regionally, nationally, globally, and including e-communities), and of their own capacity to influence, take responsibility for, and shape the future of those communities, is as important as their achievement of high standards in 'key subjects'.

## ***3. Personalising the role of the school at the heart of its communities***

Just as personalising learning has transformed our approach to raising attainment for all our students, personalising our relationship with our local communities focuses on the needs and context of the locality. If the strengthening and regeneration of communities is to be driven from the bottom up, schools' roles will be determined locally. A national 'one size fits all' approach to community engagement is not appropriate.

## ***4. Recognising outstanding schools at the heart of their communities***

Schools should be judged by the quality of their role at the heart of their communities as well as by more orthodox agreed measures of raising attainment. We need to find the right way to do this so as not to cause distortion and to understand more about how this focus, far from being an additional burden, actually makes higher academic standards more achievable through its impact on learner motivation. This will require further development of OFSTED's current expectations in relation to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



## What do these principles mean in real terms?

1.

**Rhetoric into reality means demonstrating that outstanding schools are in fact those:**

- where leadership has a deep-felt personal commitment to community engagement, which includes but goes beyond current OFSTED expectations of engagement with parents and carers
- with an unambiguous capacity in the leadership team to promote and engage in community and partnership work.
- which are themselves models of what a strong community feels like and how it conducts itself. For many children and young people schools offer the closest experience of community they are likely to have.
- that directly connect schooling to real-world experience, including the involvement of a wide range of people sharing their knowledge, ideas and skills, and acting as co-educators.
- where the opportunities provided for children and young people offer 'role', 'responsibility', and 'risk' in order to learn how to take their place in society and contribute now – this has implications both for curriculum and for approaches to teaching and learning.
- which make full use of all that we now know about how humans learn so as to develop profound learning.



- that offer increased responsibility and leadership to young people for the conduct of their lives and learning, supporting their broader development as resilient, creative individuals, active citizens and enterprising workers in the society within which they will live.
- which contribute to increased social capital, with the school and its communities becoming mutual providers of resources, expertise, employment and learning experiences, each to the other.

But the responsibility does not sit with schools alone. It is shared by all, as individuals, as organisations and groups, and as a society. It encompasses all the roles we play, as employers, community leaders, workers, parents and citizens.

Deepening community engagement is about schools and stakeholders together listening and engaging, responding appropriately in the interest of learners, and being able to demonstrate an impact within a range of outcomes that includes:

- **students** - and their attainment, happiness, health, safety, and, participation within school and in the community;
- **parents** - with regard to the home and school partnership, the support they are given as parents and educators, and in their own educational development;

- **other schools and providers** - nursery, primary, secondary schools and post sixteen educational institutions, in relation to the seamless transition and effective progress of children and young people;
- **collaborative partners** - with regard to agreed priorities and targets, within, for example, arrangements for 14 to 19 provision or addressing additional needs;
- **employers** - with regard to the skills required for their businesses and the readiness of young people for the world of work;
- **wider communities** - in terms of contribution to economic growth, reduction of crime, and access to services and facilities, as well as understanding and appreciation of global citizenship and the place of e-communities.



## What practical steps can we take to create this reality?

**The Beauchamp Group is committed to transforming rhetoric into reality.**

Individually and collectively, we will look for ways to achieve this, by:

- **continuing to explore issues arising from a commitment to the core principles in additional papers or communications, for example:**
  - the curriculum implications for schools which are placing themselves at the heart of their communities;
  - the concept of personalising schools' roles within their communities;
  - the concept of the school as a model of community itself.
- **engaging in, and supporting, research to inform understanding of the core principles by, for example:**
  - developing tight models of accountability to measure the full range of outcomes for outstanding schools.



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- **encouraging others to understand and commit to the Group's four core principles for outstanding schools by, for example:**
    - identifying other schools and education 'experts' willing to endorse and commit themselves to the principles;
    - promoting the Group's views to influence policy makers at local, regional and national levels.
  - **building schools' capacity to become truly outstanding by, for example:**
    - sharing best practice within and outside the Group that illustrates the four core principles in action;
    - building a portfolio of schools in action;
    - helping schools translate the rhetoric into reality through leadership development.



# **The Outstanding School of Tomorrow**

# 3

From the thinking and development activity the Group has undertaken over the last 18 months, a new framework for school accountability, the School of Tomorrow, is being developed. This chapter outlines the framework. In the following chapter, John West-Burnham sets out the evidence that underpins this approach. Chapter 5 then offers some brief cameos of what this can look like in practice today.



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## Building a new model

The 2012 Manifesto argued the need to develop “*tight models of accountability to measure the full range of outcomes for outstanding schools*”. It suggested this required a broader range of measurement that produced neither distortion nor burden, building on, but going beyond, current OFSTED expectations. It is not suggesting focus on academic standards is unnecessary, but that it is not sufficient to create the lifelong learners and enterprising workers and citizens, with imagination and passion as well as intellect, our society needs for the future.

The **School of Tomorrow** framework is the outcome of that thinking. It suggests there are four fundamentals, of equal importance, in becoming a school of tomorrow of the highest quality that equips its learners to live confidently and effectively in tomorrow’s world, whatever shape that may have.

Outstanding schools of tomorrow both secure high levels of achievement for all and lie at the heart of their communities. The evidence and reasoning behind this simple statement is set out by John West-Burnham in the next chapter,

The four fundamental dimensions of performance, each of equal importance, are:

- **Highest levels of achievement**

All learners make the highest levels of progress in relation to their own starting points towards agreed national standards.

- **Highest levels of well-being**

The ethos of the school secures for all highest possible levels of health and happiness and of physical, social, emotional, cultural, moral and spiritual welfare and development. This contributes to securing highest levels of achievement.

- **Highly effective preparation for adult and working life**

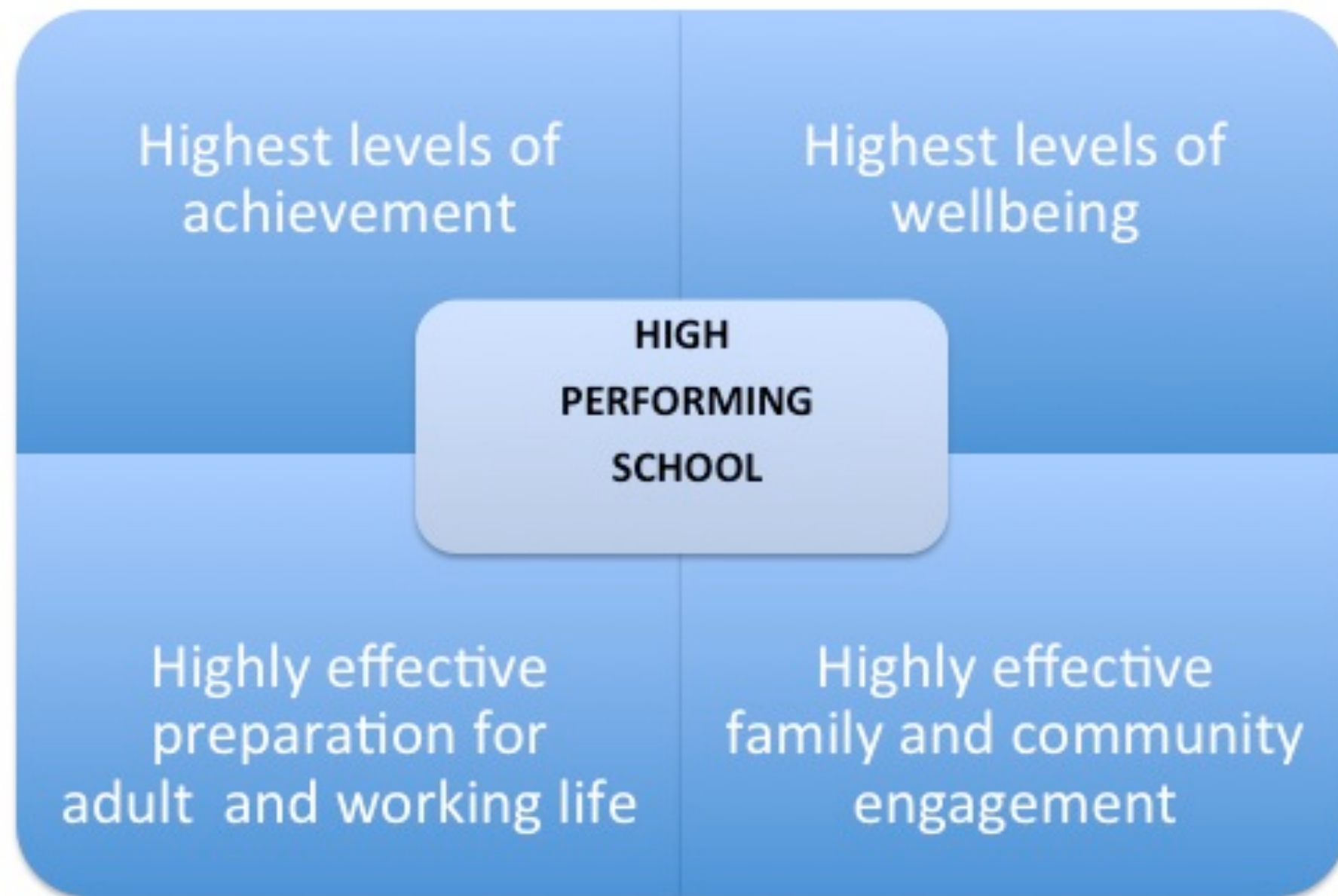
All learners achieve increased responsibility and leadership for the conduct of their lives and learning, supporting their broader development as resilient, creative individuals, active citizens and enterprising workers in the society within which they will live.

- **Highly effective family and community engagement**

The school makes highly effective contributions to increasing social capital, with the school, its families and communities becoming mutual providers of resources, expertise, employment and learning experiences, each to the other. It is a learning community, with effective local, national and international networking at all levels.

The **School of Tomorrow** will need to demonstrate effectiveness in all four dimensions. The next stages of our work in 2014 will examine the nature and measurement of effectiveness for each, and explore the implications for leadership.





The Outstanding School of Tomorrow Model



# The Case for New Thinking

**John West-Burnham**

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**John West-Burnham  
sets out the evidence  
and presents the case  
for the thinking behind  
the School of Tomorrow  
framework.**



# Introduction

In writing about the outstanding school of tomorrow there is inevitable caution. Such writing is at worst a dogmatic extension of current thinking or, at best, an aspirational scenario that is so fraught with contradictory variables that it appears naïve or utopian. However, if the dictum '*the future does not exist, we create it*' is taken as a starting premise, then there might be grounds for optimism. We create our personal and collective futures by making choices that move us closer to a preferred future state. The Beauchamp Papers are working to inform such choices.

Education policy-making always seems to be a balancing act between evidence and dogma, with successive governments being located at various points on the spectrum. Of course it has to be recognised that one person's dogma is another person's evidence. Objectivity is elusive in almost every aspect of educational decision-making; perhaps one can only hope to be less subjective. Any debate about the nature of the outstanding school of tomorrow is also beset by the endemic short-termism of educational policymaking, with the inevitable disjointed incrementalism that results.

This is where the School of Tomorrow approach is so important in seeking to relate educational policy to a moral and evidence-based perspective, which locates the school in a symbiotic relationship with its community:



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*“Schools should be judged by the quality of their role at the heart of their communities as well as by more orthodox agreed measures of raising attainment. We need to find the right way to do this so as not to cause distortion and to understand more about how this focus, far from being an additional burden, actually makes higher academic standards more achievable through its impact on learner motivation.”* (Beauchamp Manifesto 2012:6)

The very concept of the outstanding school is bound to be problematic and contentious in the absence of any sort of national consensus as to what constitutes an effective education, let alone an outstanding one.

This discussion is therefore based on four key factors:

- The ethical foundations that should inform any discussion about education in the future. *(The Wellbeing dimension)*
- The significance of the social factors influencing educational success *(The Family and Community Engagement dimension)*
- The development of strategies to secure outstanding teaching and learning for all. *(The Preparation for Adult and Working Life dimension)*
- The *leadership* that is necessary to secure optimum outcomes across all dimensions

Each of these is now considered in turn, beginning with a proposition, setting out the evidence and argument that supports that proposition, and concluding by drawing out the implications for tomorrow’s outstanding school.



### The values of the school of tomorrow

#### Proposition 1

The outstanding school of tomorrow is one in which every child is entitled to a holistic educational experience which is rooted in personal well-being, delivered on the basis of equity and responsive to the personal needs of every learner.

The school of tomorrow is defined in essentially moral terms with an explicit focus on the overarching entitlement of every child to well-being which includes exceptional levels of personal achievement. The outstanding school of tomorrow develops a culture, and secures systems and strategies, that embed equity and inclusion, starting from the premise of the centrality of the needs of the vulnerable. Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child offers a very clear view of the moral basis of education and the entitlement of every child:

- (a) The development of the child 's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child 's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;



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(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

The potential impact of an explicit and embedded value system in a school is demonstrated in the evaluation of the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) (Sebba and Robinson 2010), based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

*“The RRSA has had a profound effect on the majority of the schools involved in the programme. For some school communities, there is strong evidence that it has been a life-changing experience. In the documentation from one infant school, the head said, ‘After 16 years as head teacher at [...] school, I cannot think of anything else we have introduced that has had such an impact’.”*

*The values based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ‘guide to life’ provided by the RRSA has had a significant and positive influence on the school ethos, relationships, inclusivity, understanding of the wider world and the well-being of the school community, according to the adults and young people in the evaluation schools”.*

This view seems to point to an implicit recognition of a fundamental ethical framework based on the well-being of each child and the centrality of a holistic model of education.

*“Wellbeing serves as a double duty. It directly supports literacy and numeracy; that is, emotional health is strongly associated with cognitive achievement. It also is indirectly but powerfully part of the educational and societal goal of dealing with the emotional and social consequences of failing and being of low status. In this sense political leaders must have an explicit agenda of wellbeing, of which education is one powerful component”.* (Fullan 2007:46)

What follows from this perspective is the pivotal importance of equity as a guiding concept. The challenge here is that most educational systems have achieved a high degree of equality in their education systems (everybody has the right to go to school), but many systems have a long way to go with regard to equity (not everybody goes to a good school).

Tomorrow’s outstanding school needs to develop an empirically robust methodology to go alongside any strategies aimed at securing equity. This type of valid and reliable evidence base has long been the ‘Achilles heel’ of managing change and innovation in education. The sort of interventions that current evidence would seem to point to, and where further sustained research is necessary, might include:



- 
- *The development of language and social skills from birth.*
  - *A focus on literacy in the family from birth.*
  - *Targeted interventions to engage the most vulnerable learners.*
  - *Community based strategies designed to secure well-being e.g. parenting, diet and psychological health*
  - *Opportunities for engagement in sport and the performing arts across the community.*
  - *Community renewal projects, including environmental projects*
  - *Support for vulnerable groups*
  - *Developing student leadership in all aspects of educational and community life.*
  - *Schools openly and actively collaborating in cross community projects.*

There does seem to be a case for arguing that an explicit values system, derived from an ethical hegemony, is a fundamental component of any model of education, because of its link to natural justice, and also because of the possible relationship between consensus around values and academic performance:

*“The high quality and performance of Finland’s educational system cannot be divorced from the clarity, characteristics of, and broad consensus about the country’s broader social vision . . . There is compelling clarity about and commitment to inclusive, equitable and innovative social values beyond as well as within the educational system”.* (Pont et al 2008: 80)

The defining distinctiveness of education in Finland is probably explained through the related concepts of ‘consensual authoritarianism’ and ‘egalitarian conformity.’ Everybody knows, accepts and acts on the ‘right things’. In discussing the consistent success of the Finnish education system Sahlberg (2011:130) argues:

*“Trusting schools and teachers is a consequence of a well-functioning civil society and high social capital. Honesty and trust . . . are often seen as the most basic building blocks of Finnish society”.*



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The school therefore has to engage in a constant internal dialogue about its own values as a community and then to be active in working with the wider community in securing consensus around key issues relevant to the education of young people. No decision taken in a school can ever be value-free. One of the most powerful attributes of the school of tomorrow has to be moral confidence and clarity, based on the informed consent of community members.

The school of tomorrow is first and foremost a moral community, sharing a clear set of values and working to embed them into the daily lives and experience of every member of the community. This view of the school has very real implications for leadership, participation and voice that are discussed in the final section of this chapter.

## Implications for the outstanding school of tomorrow

- 1. A shared value system that is rooted in securing the entitlement to equity and excellence for all.*
- 2. School policies, strategies and processes that are concerned with translating principle into practice and ensuring that the school's values are made concrete for every member of the school community.*
- 3. A commitment to inclusion, addressing disadvantage and maximising the academic and personal potential of every individual through a focus on his or her well-being.*
- 4. Leadership focused on securing consistency and preventing failure.*
- 5. The ability to demonstrate the relationship between principle and practice.*



### The social variables influencing educational success

#### Proposition 2

Tomorrow's outstanding school recognises that to secure equity it has to engage with the factors that are the most significant and influential in determining educational success and enhanced life chances. This means that it is actively engaged in securing positive outcomes in terms of family life, community, poverty and social class according to its context.

Proposition 2 does not mean that teachers become social workers – a worrying cliché because, by definition learning is a social process so teachers and learners have to be social workers. What it does mean is that schools become active agencies in their communities and, pivotally, key resources in securing high social capital. Schools thus engage with literacy across the community, provide family support workers and psychiatric nurses and make the school a community resource in order to address the causes of disadvantage. The underlying principle here is 'predict and prevent' rather than 'find and fix'. Early intervention is more effective, more cost-efficient and more equitable than working to put things right.

There is a significant political and conceptual debate about the relative significance and impact of the social and contextual and school based variables. The school improvement perspective, which has dominated the last twenty or thirty years of thinking and practice, has tended to focus on the school itself as the primary source of improvement. Alternative perspectives recognise the importance of the school but place significant stress on socio-economic factors, arguing that in terms of well-being, life chances and social success it is these factors that will always outweigh, and often explain, the success of school-based approaches.



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Three broad conclusions seem to emerge from the research analysing the factors influencing student learning. First, student background characteristics - especially social, economic and cultural background – frequently emerge as the most important source of variation in student achievement. Second, school-related factors, which are more open to policy influence, explain a smaller part of the variations in student learning than student characteristics. Third, among school level variables, the factors that are closest to student learning, such as teacher quality and classroom practices, tend to have the strongest impact on student achievement. (Pont et al 2009: 33)

From this perspective the overarching influence is a student's social context. School policies are important, but not as relatively significant as the quality of the classroom experience. This in turn is subordinate to social, cultural and economic factors. Silins and Mulford 2002 reinforce such a perspective:

*“Most school effectiveness studies show that 80% or more of student achievement can be explained by student background rather than schools”. (2002: 561)*

This leads to the very clear conclusion:

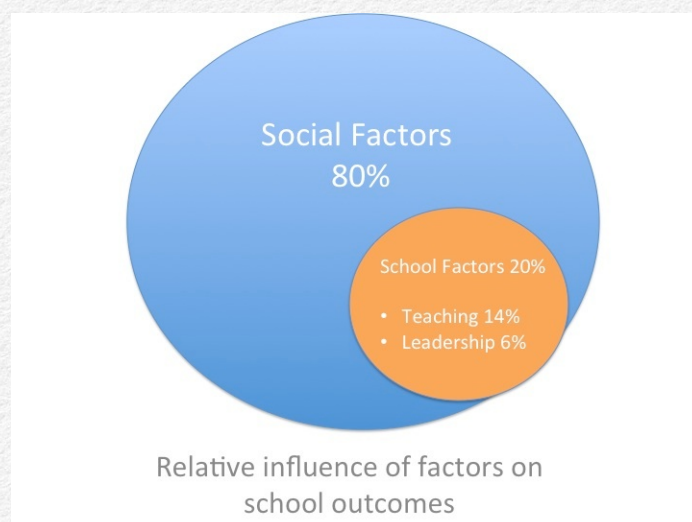
*“Schools can - and should – be charged with narrowing educational inequality. However, a focus on general school improvement policies will not be sufficient to do the job.”(Clifton and Cook 2012:5)*

The school is a significant variable, and in some respects the most open to influence and change. However the other key variables – poverty, social class, parenting and family life and the quality of community engagement - can be addressed with varying degrees of potential impact by schools – if the role of the school is radically reappraised.

Educational success in the school of tomorrow, however defined, will still be the result of the interaction of two key variables - social factors and school factors. The current consensus points to the social factors – parenting, community, social class and poverty being responsible for 80 per cent of the variables influencing academic success, well-being and life chances. The school by contrast is only directly responsible for 20 per cent of the factors influencing the outcomes. Within schools the greatest impact is in the quality of teaching with leadership directly contributing relatively little but indirectly, through its influence of teaching, being very significant.



The scale of the challenge is best exemplified in the following diagram, illustrating the relationship of these factors.



This argument is reinforced, with some differences in ratios, in a subsequent study:

*“At present, the tragedy of school change is that only about 30 per cent of the explanation for variations in school achievement appears to be attributable to factors in the school . . . Perhaps it is now time for leaders to lead their schools and exert their influence far beyond the school walls “. . (Moreno et al 2007:5)*

Another way of understanding this is to consider the implications of the very simple fact that children spend only 15 per cent of their lives each year in school. While that 15 per cent is disproportionately significant it would be naïve in the extreme to pretend that the school can function hermetically sealed from

the community it serves. It is equally fallacious to argue that ‘*You go to school to learn*’ or ‘*If you don’t behave you will not learn*’. Children and young people are never not learning; they learn in every context, every experience and this has to be recognised and respected in any proposition about schools for tomorrow.

Thus tomorrow’s outstanding school secures the 20 per cent that it directly controls by focusing on the quality of school-related factors. But it is also equally engaged in issues related to the socio-economic context of the school. In their study of the effects of inequality in society, Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) are unambiguous in their conclusions:

*“Although good schools make a difference, the biggest influence on educational attainment, how well a child performs in school and later in higher education, is family background”.*  
(2009: 103)

With regard to the significance of the family, the evidence gathered by Desforges (2003) is very clear:

*“Parental involvement in the form of ‘at-home good parenting’ has a significant positive effect on children’s achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation”*



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Desforges goes on to identify a range of other factors that influence the relationship between family life and engagement in education:

*“ . .a great deal of the variation in students’ achievement is outside of the schools’ influence. Family social class, for example, accounts for about one third of such variance”. (Ibid: 21)*

If the family is significant, then so is the community; Putnam (2000) is robust about the impact of the community as expressed through the concept of social capital:

*“ . . child development is powerfully shaped by social capital.....trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity within a child’s family, school, peer group, and larger community have wide-ranging effects on the child’s opportunities and choices and, hence, on behaviour and development”.*

Edgar summarises the central issues:

*“Because human and social capital develop within families and through wider social networks, our schools must be re-conceptualised as just one part of the learning culture, and become embedded in society in new ways”. (2001: 160)*

Jerrim (2013:3) demonstrates the very real impact of family and social advantage:

*“High achieving boys from the most advantaged family backgrounds in England are roughly two and a half years ahead of their counterparts in the least advantaged households by the age of 15”.*

Morally this is an issue at the heart of equity in education in a democratic society – high achievement is very clearly correlated with family wealth. It might be that, as appropriate, the outstanding school for tomorrow actively engages with the 80 per cent in order to move towards equity and to close the various gaps that can compromise the potential of children and young people.



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## Implications for the outstanding school of tomorrow

1. *This school ensures the 20% that it does control is working to optimum effect.*
2. *Effective learning and academic success are seen as the result of partnerships involving vertical integration (early years to higher education and horizontal integration (family, community and other services).*
3. *This school is a model for an effective community.*
4. *The school is active in developing leadership capacity across the community especially with students.*
5. *School leaders are social entrepreneurs, developing social capital through projects that have the potential to enhance the communities within the school's orbit.*



### The nature of learning and teaching in tomorrow's school

#### Proposition 3

Learning is a social experience rooted in family, community and school that is outstanding in the extent to which it is both personalized and rooted in authentic social relationships.

The dominant and pervasive model of schooling is essentially one of engagement with subjects. This is rather bizarre, as it is only schools, and secondary schools in particular, along with higher education, that are actually concerned with subjects. The vast majority of people do not 'do' maths or science. They solve problems, make decisions, and work closely with others in doing so. Only in education is working with another person seen as cheating – for most adults it is a requirement of their work. If one of the functions of schooling is to prepare young people for adult life then the school of tomorrow will need a very different approach to the curriculum and teaching and learning. By any criteria the world that young people will inherit will be one of great complexity and challenge. Climate change, population growth, political extremism and the demands of an increasingly heterogeneous society all point to the redundancy of traditional models of teaching and learning.

Tomorrow's outstanding school will therefore be less concerned with the teaching of subjects and more concerned with learning how to apply subject knowledge in collaboration with others. This is not to neglect or diminish the importance of subject knowledge but rather to see it as a means, not an end; and to shift the emphasis of schooling to acquiring the disciplines of the subject, not just the diluted information. This implies a very different perspective on learning; in essence the school of the future starts with learning and the curriculum and teaching are derived from what we know about successful learning for every



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learner. This in turn implies that in the future schools will function around a set of propositions about learning rather than teaching – whereas teaching the curriculum rather than the learning of students currently drives many secondary school timetables.

A possible range of propositions about future learning might include:

***Every learner is unique*** – every learner has a unique personal profile in terms of literacy, stage of cognitive development, intrinsic motivation and ambition, preferred learning strategies and personal needs. This complex set of variables can only be properly responded to through a strategy based on personalized pathways that respond to the needs and dignity of the individual learner.

***Learning is a social process*** – this points to the development of personal, interpersonal and community based behaviours and strategies that create effective learning environments. In particular this points to learning as a collaborative process.

***Intelligence can be learnt*** – cognitive potential is not fixed at birth (nature) nor is it solely the product of environment (nurture) it is rather nature via nurture. Cognitive interventions – the skills based curriculum – can enhance the possibility of equity by developing skills and strategies that may not always be avail-

able through the learners social context. This is particularly true of literacy and a range of higher order cognitive behaviours.

***Learning can take place anytime, anywhere with anyone*** – this means according far greater status and significance to learning in the family, with peers and across the community. Most students spend 15 per cent of their lives in school. For the remaining 85 per cent of the time, when they are awake, they need to be engaged in a range of personal, family, peer and community-based learning opportunities, such as sport, music, drama, community projects, and having fun. And we need to recognise that some of these communities may be on-line ones.

***The purpose of teaching is to enable learning*** – this implies the teacher as coach mentor, facilitator and scaffolder. It also points to the range of possible learning relationships where the whole community is actively engaged in reciprocal teaching and learning.

For a very small proportion of people, teachers in schools and higher education, academic subjects are fundamental to their personal growth, well-being and happiness. For everybody else they are part of a personal portfolio of knowledge, skills and personal qualities. The school of the future has a core curriculum, centred on skills – literacy, numeracy, relationships, thinking and reasoning and ICT. These are learnt through a sequence of learning relationships rooted in the family and community.



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If the purpose of education is to prepare young people for their personal and collective futures then tomorrow's outstanding school has the confidence to develop confidently critical young people – and this means skills and attributes. For Law (2006:):

*“Children should be encouraged to scrutinize their own beliefs and explore other points of view. While not wanting to be overly prescriptive, I would suggest that skills to be cultivated should at least include the ability to:*

- reveal and question underlying assumptions,*
- figure out the perhaps unforeseen consequences of a moral decision or point of view,*
- spot and diagnose faulty reasoning,*
- weigh up evidence fairly and impartially,*
- make a point clearly and concisely,*
- take turns in a debate, and listen attentively without interrupting,*
- argue without personalizing a dispute,*
- look at issues from the point of view of others, and*
- question the appropriateness of, or the appropriateness of acting on, one's own feelings”.*

Of course, this skills based approach cannot be content-free. The study of subjects is fundamental to any concept of education. But the academic disciplines are only valid in the extent to which they enable personal growth through collaborative learning experiences. Equally, from a neurological and psychological perspective, the most effective learning seems to be rooted in challenge and problem solving. This has obvious implications for assessment and success criteria.

Tomorrow's outstanding school recognises that learning is a social process – but also responds to the fact that every learner is unique and therefore designs learning opportunities that are highly personalized and responsive to the needs, motivation, talents and potential of every learner. This means a very high level of learner involvement in the design and delivery of their learning programme and in supporting the development of other learners. Information technology and digital learning is clearly a fundamentally important resource in this context.



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## Implications for the outstanding school of tomorrow

1. *Learning is a personalized experience based around the principles of 'stage not age', an entitlement to access relevant learning experiences and modes of learning.*
2. *Throughout the formal years of schooling parents, peers and members of the wider community are seen as co-educators.*
3. *The school has to become an authentic community enabling learning for all through internal and external collaborative partnerships – bonding and bridging.*
4. *Issues of performance and accountability are based on a model of quality assurance through mutual review and community involvement in defining and judging outcomes.*



# Leadership for tomorrow's school

## Proposition 4

Leadership for the school of tomorrow has to be seen in terms of collective capacity rather than personal, hierarchical status. Leadership is a resource to be developed as and when it is needed irrespective of age, status or formal role. Equally, leadership needs to be seen in terms of a community rather than an organisation and in terms of collaborative relationships.

One way of understanding the implications for leadership of the model of the school of tomorrow that has emerged in previous sections is to distinguish between leadership in an organisation and leadership in a community. David Hargreaves (2011:17) provides a powerful and graphic example of the differences between organisations and communities by comparing two centres of innovation in the information science industries – Silicon Valley and Route 128, near Boston. Quoting Saxenian (1994), Hargreaves demonstrates the differences between the two centres.

### Route 128:

*“.. is based on independent firms that internalise a wide range of productive activities. Practices of secrecy and corporate loyalty govern relations between firms and their customers, suppliers and competitors, reinforcing a regional culture that encourages stability and self-reliance. Corporate hierarchies ensure that authority remains centralised and information tends to flow vertically. The boundaries between and within firms and between firms and local institutions thus remain... distinct in this independent firm-based system”. (Saxenian, 1994: 3).*



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**Silicon Valley**, by contrast, works by being:

*“ . . . a regional network-based industrial system that promotes collective learning and flexible adjustment among specialist producers of a complex of related technologies. The region’s dense social networks and open labour markets encourage experimentation and entrepreneurship. Companies compete intensely while at the same time learning from one another about changing markets and technologies through informal communication and collaborative practices; and loosely linked team structures encourage horizontal communication among firm divisions and with outside suppliers and customers. The functional boundaries within firms are porous in a network system, as are the boundaries between firms themselves and between firms and local institutions such as trade associations and universities.”*

(Saxenian, 1994: 2)

The differences between Silicon Valley and Route 128 are a graphic illustration of one of the most powerful ways of understanding the differences between autonomy and collaboration – the concept of bonding and bridging social capital. Successful teams, schools, families, clans – in fact almost any sort of human engagement need to bond. At the same time, in varying degrees according to context, they also need to bridge. Route 128 companies are not as successful as Silicon Valley for the simple reason that they are more disposed to bonding than

bridging. Schools are more likely to secure equity and authentic inclusion if they are culturally committed to openness and collaboration – to bonding (building internal integrity) and bridging (developing significant relationships across institutional boundaries).

The challenges in moving from a culture rooted in bonding – essentially the territorial imperative to a culture rooted in bridging – are substantial. The history and governance of schools reinforces the idea of institutional autonomy as the norm – movement towards a competition driven market economy can only reinforce this dominant perspective.



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**Leadership in the school of tomorrow, therefore, has to model a range of behaviours to reinforce collaboration and mutual interdependence:**

- 1. Using dialogue, personal and community conversations to articulate, define, explain, justify and exemplify the moral foundations of the community and partnerships.*
- 2. Embed learning processes at the heart of every role, strategy and policy*
- 3. Work through targeted interventions and projects designed to focus energy, resources and commitment on securing equity.*
- 4. Build capacity and sustainability through systematic succession planning and leadership development across the community.*
- 5. Develop a high trust community through an explicit focus on quality relationships.*
- 6. Build rich networks*
- 7. Focus on collective and personal well-being.*



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# Cameos of change

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This chapter offers three cameos of schools in different contexts, of different types, and at different points of development, each striving to become a school of tomorrow.

Each has made, and continues to make, a considerable journey of change. Along the way, each has faced particular issues, as will be inevitable for all who set out on a course of values-based change.

This glimpse of a part of each journey may give a sense of both optimism and possibility for anyone contemplating such an undertaking.



# Removing Barriers to Learning

## Lyng Hall School

### Key insights from this cameo

- **Placing the student and their needs directly at the centre of all thinking and organisation.**
- **Creating new roles and structures which reflect this rather than historical patterns.**
- **Accepting and responding creatively to the significance of social and economic factors factors in influencing educational achievement.**
- **Understanding the central place of all families and engaging with them on their terms.**
- **The importance of flexibility and rapid response.**
- **Building long-term capacity within the community.**

### The context

Lyng Hall School in Coventry has just over 700 students including 130 in the sixth form. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. Around half of the students are White British, but there are significant proportions from Indian, Pakistani, and African heritages. Around a third of students speak English as an additional language, with 38 languages represented. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above average, as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is very high. The prior attainment of its students is mostly well below average.

### The realisation

It is now five years since head Paul Green reorganised the school's approach to inclusion and wellbeing. The school had been working hard, and with considerable success, to improve teaching and learning and outcomes for students, since coming out of special measures several years previously. But it had become clear to Paul and the leadership team that, in order to make further rapid advances in the context of the school and its



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community, something else was needed as well. There were factors outside the school, such as poverty, unemployment, or debt, which impacted inside the school, because of the anxiety they caused to the children involved. This in turn damaged children's capacity to concentrate and learn well in lessons, however outstanding the teaching.

Drawing on pockets of practice and emerging thinking, the team of teaching assistants was reorganised and restructured into a new role. The driving focus of this change was to enable the school to focus more effectively on whatever was necessary to remove barriers to learning for all its students. The intention was to focus support around the child to address all those other things that impact on the emotional state of the child in school. This was not an end in itself but seen as necessary to achieve the outcomes in learning that would unlock the future for those young people.

## The change

The new role of associate teacher that resulted is parallel to the role of the teacher, equally focused on outcomes, performing a different but equal role to the classroom teacher, who remains responsible for learning.

The Associate Teacher (AT) role is made up of a mix of component parts. Each AT's day is organised around these core elements:

- **Key worker** - each AT has caseload of around eight students with particular needs. Time is allocated to work with them individually, and, crucially, with their families as well.
- **Specialist** - each AT has a specialist role on behalf of the team. Examples of this include EAL, working with college-based students, gifted and talented work, wellbeing, and SEAL.
- **Curriculum support** – each AT will spend part of each week supporting students in identified curriculum areas or classrooms.
- **Cover** – each AT provides lesson cover for 20% of their time.
- **Incident support** – each AT can be called on to take the lead in responding to day-to-day incidents that may cause disruption in school.

The 20 ATs bring a wide range of skills and experience to the role. They also provide a critical mass within the wider staff group, and have served to change the nature and tone of staff conversation about students through their deeper and more personal insights into students and knowledge of family circumstances. They attend all curriculum planning meetings.



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Sarah worked as a teaching assistant in the previous structure. For most of that time she worked in lessons, often with groups of students, but she felt she was not always employed as fully as she might have been. As an AT she now gives support to a greater number of students than before and in a greater range of ways. She has a specific agenda with a number of children in any class she supports. She is much more focused on her personal caseload, which may include disaffected students, those with learning difficulties, those struggling to cope, or those with pastoral issues.

Her day revolves around a rota of cover, focused time for key children, and lesson support, all recorded in a day log. There is a significant element of self-management in her use of time within agreed parameters. All ATs have a map of priorities with students and operate with a mix of planned and flexi-time. Each caseload contains a balance of high profile demanding cases and those which are less stressful.

The inclusion policy is to integrate everyone, including catering for those with special educational needs. So Laura may be working with any student in the school at some time or other. This is a fluid process determined by needs. Some contact will be short-term and temporary, while for other students there will be a more consistent involvement. This flexibility and responsiveness permeates the school's approach to inclusion as well as its behaviour policy, where rules are positive and simple but

there are no fixed sanctions. *“There are rules, like be polite, be kind, but we don't have those sort of rules around sanctions. The same offence may need a different response for different children”*.

Sarah, like all ATs, has significant links with families and allocates time to speaking with parents every day, about learning, about behaviour, about attendance. Some she will ring every day, others just when there is a need. This contact can provide a real bridge between teachers and parents.

A key element in the school's work with parents is the use of structured conversations. These consist of a one-hour conversation with parents or carers, looking at data and targets, anything which is preventing the student succeeding, and what then needs to be put in place differently.

But work with families also extends far beyond this. Several ATs have been trained as Citizens Advice Bureau counsellors, and so, for example, have been involved in helping families resolve debt problems, where this has been adversely affecting family life and in turn limiting a student's capacity to succeed.



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## The work of ATs

*These examples give some feel for the range and scope of the work done by ATs and the impact on students.*

**Kumal** was a very disaffected young person. His prior attainment was very low (1% FFT, L2 English & Maths at KS2) and he displayed great frustration while he struggled with learning. An AT worked extensively with him both in and out of lessons. He had on-site provision which the AT managed. The AT liaised closely with Kumal's parents and teachers throughout. These interventions over time successfully bridged the gap and overcame these literacy, numeracy and behaviour barriers for this student. The result is he is now on track for Level 3 study, and is making an application to university.

**Mark** is a Y7 statemented pupil, with very severe behaviour needs. His mother was a heroin addict while she carried him in pregnancy. As a result he has no short-term memory or attention span. He did not attend primary school at all. On entry to secondary school he was nearly lost again as he was so disruptive on those few occasions he attended. Working in close conjunction with therapists engaged by social services, Lyng Hall initially began a response by having Mark in school for just one hour a day. During this hour he received three individualised 20 minute lessons, delivered by three different teachers, in literacy, numeracy and SEAL. Meanwhile the AT maintained close contact with the family and with social services. This intensive indi-

vidual programme has now been extended to an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. During the last 20 minute session each day, Mark is joined by two students from the tutor group he should eventually join. He has begun to smile.

**Tammy**, then in Y8, was very quiet in lessons and was becoming the subject of comment by other students. Tammy confided in her AT that she looked after mum at home as her dad worked long hours and her mum was ill. In school she was quite tired as she had been looking after mum and her little brother. The AT met with her regularly for some 'chillout' time to relax and discuss issues, and also helped Tammy to join Young Carers. The AT then maintained regular contact with Young Carers' Support Worker and with her mum. However, a few months later, Tammy's behaviour started to go downhill, which the AT learnt was due to the stress caused because her mother was due to have an important operation that kept being cancelled. Mum in turn was worried about Tammy's academic progress. So the AT worked with Tammy on regular reading sessions and had a weekly academic mentoring slot with her to review her progress. She also had bereavement sessions when her Nan died. They worked together on the issues of low self-esteem Tammy was experiencing, and her AT encouraged Tammy to start singing in a band, which she loved. Two years on, Tammy is a changed person, and now does not have regular contact with her AT. However should any need arise in the future, the link with her mum is still in place.



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## Value and impact of change

Chris Green, Director of Inclusion, takes up the story:

*“Inclusion in this school means making sure that every single individual child’s needs are met and what we do is appropriate for them. And this is a continuous and ongoing process. For example, just now I was dealing with two girls in Y11. They go to college one day a week, and have worked so hard they have finished that course. So we’re arranging now for them to do extra revision in English and Maths. But there’s no timetable available to them on that day. They could join Y10 classes, but the teachers then need to create specific programmes for them, and that’s what I’ve just been working on - to make that happen”.*

The associate teachers are key to making such a highly flexible, personalised approach to learning possible.

The impact of this change of approach is clear. The attendance rate has risen since the introduction of the scheme, from 89% in 2009 to 93% in 2011 and 95% in 2013. Persistent absence was reduced from 12 % to 1.8% in 18 months.

The pattern in relation to attainment outcomes is an equally dramatic story of improvement. The percentage of students achieving 5A\*-C grades (EM) had risen from 18% to 31% between 2004 and 2010. By 2012 this had risen to 50%, an increase di-

rectly attributed by the school to the impact of the associate teacher scheme.

This view was endorsed by OFSTED in 2012, when inspectors spoke very positively about the way the team of associate teachers work with students and families very effectively to make positive connections. They described the progress students make as at least good and sometimes outstanding.

*“All identified groups within the school make at least as good progress as their peers, and some better. This is particularly true of students who receive additional support for identified learning difficulties or who join the school other than at the usual times”.*

Asked what really creates this success, Chris replies:

*“It’s very hard to bottle. I think it’s something to do with us being probability thinkers not poverty thinkers. We embrace possibility. If something is failing we’ll give up and try something else, we don’t keep bashing on believing it’s going to work. Move on, try something else, try to find a route to success. Our philosophy is simply to ask ‘Will it benefit this child? Will it allow this child to make progress? Will it make them happier?’, and not to fall back on set ways”.*

The school monitors all its interventions on a six-week cycle. If something has not worked for a child in that time, it probably



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needs to be changed. In Chris's view, teachers who are not successful are those who stick to one way of doing things.

*"If something's not working, change it straight away, so it doesn't become an issue".*

The school has found other unforeseen benefits from the change. A number of ATs are ex-pupils, returning to their community after university. Most of its NQTs are now recruited from among its associate teachers, and most of these go on to become outstanding teachers themselves because of the insights the role has given them into students and learning. In this way Lyng Hall is starting to create a virtuous cycle of long-term change in both the aspirations and wellbeing of its community as well as its students.



### A 'NICER' curriculum

Victoria Park Primary Academy, Smethwick

#### Key insights from this cameo

- Deep reflection on the nature of outstanding teaching and learning.
- Connecting the curriculum to the real world of now and to an unknown future.
- Recognising the importance of enterprise and social skills.

#### The context

Victoria Park Primary Academy in Smethwick has 460 pupils on roll. 52% of these are eligible for a free school meal. 93% come from minority ethnic groups, and 68% speak English as an additional language. More than 40 different languages are spoken in the school

In 2007, Victoria Park was placed in special measures. One thousand days later it was, and has remained since, an outstanding school.

#### The realisation

What staff and pupils of Victoria Park view as 'outstanding' is, in the words of headteacher Andrew Morrish "*a deeply embedded culture of creativity that will guarantee lifelong learners*". This encompasses, but goes far beyond, present OFSTED criteria. Indeed at times along that thousand day journey, HMI were not especially impressed with what they were seeing. Andrew Morrish however did not fall into the trap of seeking a quick fix, but was instead laying his foundations carefully.

Like many urban schools serving a deprived multicultural community, pupils come to Victoria Park with a wide range of complex needs, be it language, behaviour, emotional or cognitive.



For a number of families, education is not necessarily high on their agenda. So Andrew concluded:

*“We had to find other ways of giving the children the tools to stand out from the rest. Of course reading, writing and mathematics are important and we all want to be top of the league tables. But for some schools, that’s just not going to happen. So instead, we need to load the deck - to deal these pupils a hand that will allow them to hold their own in society. Teaching pupils how to be independent, confident learners who are resilient and resourceful is essential if they are to stand out from the rest.”*

## The change

The change that happened at Victoria Park is grounded in a creative view of teaching and learning, and of a curriculum to support that learning which connects directly with the world beyond school. This cameo briefly describes both.

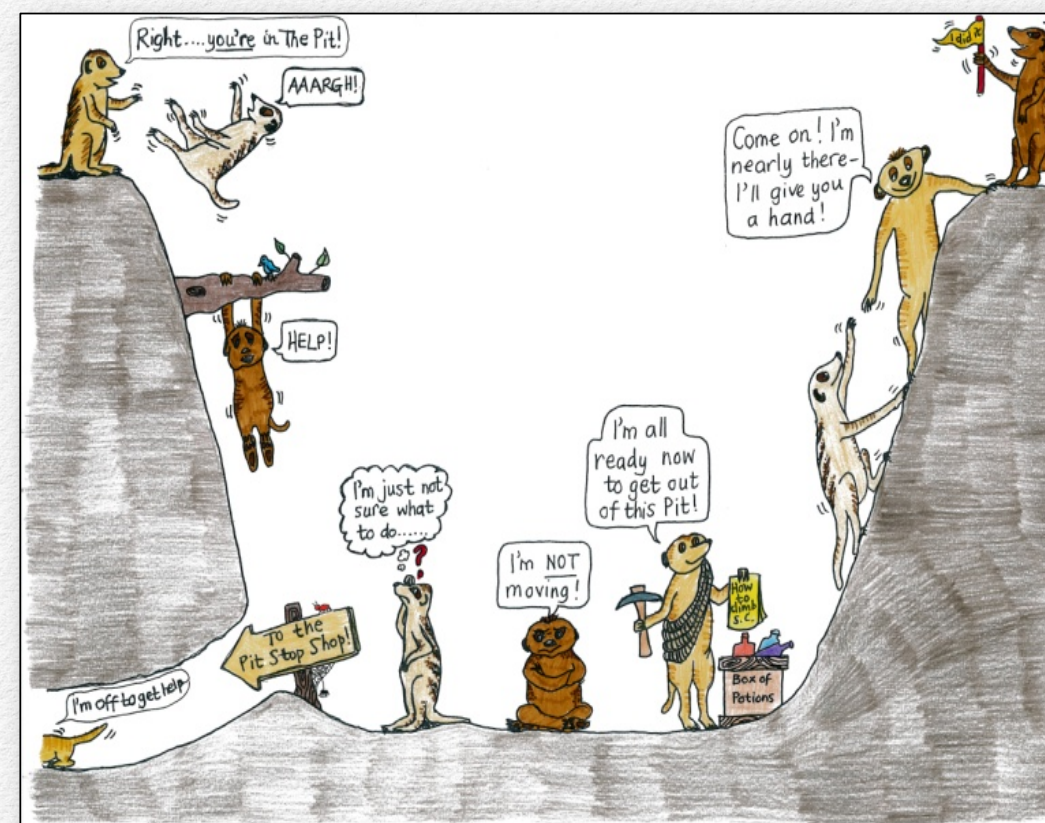
### a) Teaching and learning - ‘chuck ‘em in the pit!’

According to Andrew Morrish,

*“There’s one thing I hope you’ll never see at Victoria Park Academy and that is whole class teaching. It’s fine of course in very short bursts, especially at the start of a new topic, but by and large it has no place in the school”.*

In his view, the best teachers – those that stand out – get their differentiation in early so that the children are on task in groups right from the start. They facilitate the learning so that the teacher becomes more and more redundant, ensuring that at some point, every single child becomes well and truly stuck.

To help pupils understand the concept of active learning, teachers frequently ‘chuck ‘em in the pit’. For the pupils, ‘The Pit’ is a metaphor for being on task (in a state of flow), for the teachers, it simply means ‘differentiation’ or group work and so it is common for there to be several pits in operation during a lesson.





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Each pit essentially consists of two main phases of learning - confusion and clarity, depending on whether learners are at the bottom or top of the pit respectively. Pupils are often thrown into the pit with very little support, in the knowledge that they have to work collaboratively to get themselves out of it. For example, more able pupils may be thrown in the pit right at the start of the lesson, often with a Talking Postcard or tablet device with pre-recorded instructions from the teacher. Throughout the lesson, pupils evaluate whereabouts they are in the pit, be it stuck right at the bottom or almost on the verge of climbing out. Conflict is inevitable, but by working collaboratively a solution can always be found to climb out. Pupils love the independence and challenge as they use their learning tools to help them overcome problems, for example their trowel ('revising') or torch ('noticing'). At its most basic level, getting out of the pit requires only one thing - intelligence. Or what Piaget refers to as 'knowing what to do when you don't know what to do.'

Pupils know that it is only when they get themselves out of the pit that they have learned something new and achieved the learning intention. So getting stuck in the pit is essential as it is at this point that new learning takes place. Teachers therefore have to ensure they plan activities which ensure every pupil at some point during a lesson is stuck and is able to become unstuck without support from the teacher.

A typical example is in the Nursery, where children plot on a 'Challengeometer' how difficult they think their challenge is. The teacher then increases the level of challenge accordingly. If a child wants to draw a flower, the teacher may get the child to draw a flower but to include several of the new shapes they learned about the previous day (thus 'making links' with real life experiences and with previous learning). For Andrew,

*"Unless pupils become stuck and are able to show resourcefulness and a steely resilience at getting out of the pit either on their own or with the help of other learners, teaching will never be outstanding".*

## **b) The Curriculum for Learning**

For such teaching and learning to happen, there has to be a curriculum that supports creativity and thinking. After many failed attempts and false starts, in summer 2012 Victoria Park finally created its unique NICER© curriculum. Taking inspiration from the meaning of the word 'curriculum' ('running, flowing, lively, eager, swift') this is a bespoke challenge-based learning journey designed to enrich and enthuse pupils. In Andrew Morish's words,

*"We created something 'that pursues a winding course around a fixed point in a constantly changing series of planes'. With all three elements in place, we felt that we had a fit-for-purpose product that met the needs of all our pupils."*








The NICER© curriculum has five component parts, beginning by asking for each element five central questions:



The curriculum was created around a series of cross-curricular themes, each with an open-ended learning challenge. Skills ladders were produced for each area of learning including for each of seventeen learning capacities. With the themes identified and skills ladders in place, it was then necessary to define each of the five component parts and how each one might contribute towards the overall package. A NICER© curriculum is therefore one that incorporates the Now, Independence, Creativity, Enterprise and local Region. Including each of these five elements ensures that learning experiences are based on children’s own

interests with a clear local and regional flavour. And all this is carefully mapped and recorded.

NICER elements						
Child Initiated Activities and Ideas						
	Wiki?	Y	N	Forum	?	
	Events, news, celebrations, festivals etc					
	Thinking Tools				BLP capacities	
	PMI	CAF	C&S	FIP	Resilience	Resourceful
	AGO	OPV	APC	Hats	Reciprocity	Reflective
	BLP Potions					
	LOtC					
	Forest School				Arts mark	
	eHow videos				VP Zine	
	Social Enterprise Skills Ladder (SESL)			TASC wheel opportunities		
	SE1	SE2	SE3			
	SE4	SE5	SE6			
	SE7	SE8	SE9			
	Local trips, visits or visitors to school			V50		
				Ass		
				INSP		

Many themes are based around a social enterprise challenge, such as running a school business, designing an app, organising festivals, functions and events. Examples of other chal-



lenges require the creative use of a range of media including animation, dance and drama.

Nine skills of enterprise have been mapped and are recorded by pupils as their learning progresses.



### Value and impact of change

At one level the impact of change is seen in the school’s journey from special measures to truly standing out. But for Andrew Morrish it is probably even more about the learning culture that has grown up and its long-term impact on teachers and learners.

*“Being an outstanding teacher doesn’t necessarily mean having to teach outstanding lessons day in day out. That wouldn’t be possible and is likely to result in a burnout by the end of the first term. Instead, an outstanding teacher should aim to ensure that over the course of the year, every lesson that is planned and delivered is a good one packed with opportunities for pupils to be resilient and resourceful lead learners who are quick to celebrate the fact that, if they are stuck, then they are on the brink of learning something new. These pupils (and teachers) will seize the moment and reflect on their new learning, keen to reciprocate it elsewhere. These are the pupils that truly stand out. These are the learners of today and leaders of tomorrow.”*



### Starting from Scratch

#### The Hazeley Academy

#### Key insights from this cameo

- **Embedding community engagement within structures and curriculum.**
- **The place and nature of partnership.**
- **Balancing the conflicting demands of legitimate stakeholders.**
- **Community engagement supports better and broader student outcomes.**

#### The context

When it opened in 2005, The Hazeley School, as it was then called, was a school in search of a community. With just 240 pupils in Years 7 and 8, it was to grow to 1500 pupils over succeeding years, it was built on a green field site to serve a proposed new township on the outskirts of Milton Keynes. The township, and the local community it would have contained, is still awaited. In its early years the school drew pupils from over 40 primary schools around the city.

#### The realisation

Perhaps inevitably in those early years, the new school focused strongly on building an internal community. When the opportunity came to appoint a new head in 2009, governors were aware that parental engagement was a weakness in the school, and were keen for this to be addressed, although they did not necessarily see engagement more widely than that.

Mark Bennison arrived as head in September 2009, bringing a much broader vision of the nature and significance of community engagement, and this in turn helped to shape and redefine governor thinking.



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## The change

For Mark, the starting point lies with student learning, and he locates community engagement within that, rather than the other way round:

*“We’re here first and foremost to educate children and prepare them for the world. There’s very little merit, in my view, in creating a vision around community engagement that doesn’t impact ultimately on learning and life-chances of young people. For me, it starts with the child and what we should be doing as a school to help prepare them to thrive in a very different world. It doesn’t actually start, for me, with the community and what we can do with our community and for our community, and what they can do for us. That comes later naturally because that’s another aspect of it.”*

He goes on to explain his understanding of those outcomes, in ways which embrace, but go far beyond, current national accountability measures:

*“Young people have to live in the world, not in a closed community which is the school of the past. I read, I hear, and I firmly believe, that to thrive in the 21st century, in a global post-information age, young people are going to have to come out of school - even the concept of coming out of school doesn’t make any sense, does it? - going to have to come away from me and my people, with skills, competen-*

*cies, and capabilities which we frankly didn’t need when I left school”.*

Among those skills and competencies he identifies the need to be *“life-long learners... (and) not just be well qualified, because qualifications are going to have to change”*. And he identifies the need for profound levels of social intelligence; *“They are going to have to be incredibly powerful networkers, social networkers”*.

He believes the best way to gain those outcomes is through a wider engagement with community:

*“I want those social skills, and the confidence that brings, to emerge out of engaging with the community, because it’s best done that way. Whether that’s bringing people in from outside or going outside ourselves and engaging with a wider community to develop that confidence”.*

## Strategy for Change

To advance this thinking, Mark adopted five main strategies:

- a. Strategic Plan
- b. Building capacity
- c. Partnership development
- d. Changed openness to parents
- e. Curriculum re-organisation



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## a. Strategic Plan

Community engagement was embedded within the new three year strategic plan. This was constructed around four key interlocking themes:

- Standards
- Personalisation
- Innovation
- Partnerships

Within the partnerships theme sat four key objectives:

- Leadership and governance
- Student voice
- Local and regional community engagement
- National and international partnerships

*“It was crucial this structure gave partnerships and community links equal parity to standards. I think historically it’s been a bolt-on extra, not necessarily with equal parity. Community and partnership links have a direct impact on standards - they’re so interlinked”.*

## b. Building capacity

Each theme was taken forward by a working group of interested staff, coordinated by a member of the SLT, and each subsequently worked with a group of students from the student council.

Mark wanted the partnership team to build:

*“a critical mass across the organisation of people who understand the role that a school could and should play in terms of brokering authentic community engagement and ..a developing concept of what it means for a school to play a part in building social capital within the school and beyond its walls.”*

This involved seeking out opportunities to reshape and re-focus staff roles. It meant finding and growing champions at all levels. And, above all, it meant a particular focus on the development of student leadership. Mark was keen to move student voice away from more peripheral issues to central areas of school development, and adjusted structures and roles to assist with this.



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### c. Partnership development

Through the work of the partnership group and key champions, a growing range of partnerships were forged, with local schools and with business in particular.

And an understanding of the nature of partnership played a key role in this. The relationship was two-way, and not dependent on size and power. For instance, the small neighbouring special school took the initiative to successfully bring together local school business managers to look at joint purchasing and other collaboration, and found Hazeley to be *“fully supportive, very forward and positive”*.

Highlighting particularly Hazeley’s sensitivity in approaching and developing partner relationships, the assistant head responsible comments;

*“It’s probably more than coincidence that we have such co-operation and demonstrable, measurable progress in quite a few areas. I think that’s about Hazeley’s attitudes. It genuinely is an outward-looking school. It’s proactive in working in partnership, without beating the drum and using their power, as they could being by far the biggest school in this relationship”*.

### d. Openness to parents

For Mark, parent engagement was one of the key challenges he faced. It required changes within the school.

*“A different way of looking at the way we communicate with parents and carers and primary stakeholders will make all the difference.”*

But the task of change is not without challenges outside the school itself. The biggest of these came from parents with a more traditional view of education.

*“They don’t want to hear this kind of thinking. They actually want to hear a quite traditional 3R’s approach. They’ve quite a limited perspective on their child’s education. Many of our parents will probably have thought about or tried to get their child into one of the grammars outside the area, or, if they can afford it, to a private school. Any concept of anything that’s a bit more innovative, more 21st century, you have to wrap it up in a very careful way when you’re communicating to our parents. That takes time and energy, and it’s a shame. But to make this really happen here, it means getting the buy-in of parents, who actually at the end of the day are at the heart of my community”*.



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So parent engagement is more than simply gaining compliance. It requires changes in outlook from all parties. The nature of this change for Mark involved a sense of:

*“being client-centred in our approach to things, not jumping to conclusions whenever a parent raises an alarm or concern .. that they’re acting that way because they feel that they know better, that they don’t have an understanding about what we’re about or what the school is about.”*

But the competing demands and interests of different stakeholder groups, in this case parents and staff, gave rise to tensions, the proper management of which are an inevitable part of leading for engagement.

#### **e. Curriculum organisation**

The other significant change lay in curriculum organisation, with the adoption of seven faculties; English Literacy, Maths and IT, Science and Technology, and four foundation faculties. Several of these have been specifically designed to support elements of the community engagement agenda. Global Citizenship brings together humanities and languages with a whole-school agenda around the global citizen. Wellbeing brings together sports, PE, physical health with food and catering, the development of life skills and social intelligence. And Enterprise is concerned with developing enterprise behaviours and entrepreneurship.

Three Cs provide the underpinning themes to this changed approach:

- a crafting of genuine self **confidence** in any given situation for students,
- nurturing their enterprising **creativity** to allow them to create their own opportunities for success in the evolving economic climate
- the building of an ethical, moral and values-led **character**, combining self-respect with a deeply held, genuine respect and empathy with others, of a similar or very different personal, social, ethnic or cultural backgrounds.



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## Value and impact of change

Four years on, Hazeley has just embarked on its second strategic plan. This follows an extensive visioning exercise with key stakeholders. That process made clear the journey the school had been on, and the striking convergence that now existed between different stakeholder groups in terms of the future they aspired to for young people in the school.

Whilst holding onto the importance of securing the highest academic achievement for all, there was now wide recognition this alone was not enough to equip students to live and work in the world of the 21st century. It would merely leave them well-qualified but unemployable.

Of equal importance is the growth of the three Cs. Every aspect of the school has a part to play here, but achieving them to the highest level meant recognising more fully the contribution of families and of learning beyond the school.

That goal would now mark the next stage in Hazeley's journey '*beyond outstanding*'.



# Agenda for Change

## The next steps

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The Beauchamp Group is committed to doing all it can to take forward the School of Tomorrow framework. This final chapter sets out our plans for 2014, and also how you might contribute. We want to work with, and to learn from, all who share our goals.



# Our plans for 2014

## Publications

We will publish further Beauchamp Papers to continue to build understanding and evidence around the School of Tomorrow Framework

- February 6 2014      *Family Engagement*
- June 4 2014          *Identity and Learning*
- Autumn 2014         *Wellbeing*

## Leadership Development

We are establishing a working group to plan and launch in Autumn 2014 a development programme for leaders aspiring to lead Schools of Tomorrow.

## Quality and Recognition

We are establishing a working group to explore how to establish criteria and credibility for some form of School of Tomorrow Quality Mark linked to validated self-assessment by schools.

## Learner Hubs

We will continue to find ways to involve young people directly in contributing to our work and to build on the work of our first learner hub schools

## Structure and Membership

We announce the formation of a new community interest company Schools of Tomorrow CIC. We expect this to be fully operational by late 2013.

This company limited by guarantee will be owned by our members, who will elect a council each year. The council will be responsible for appointing the directors of the company.

The business of the company will be to advance the aims and purposes of The Beauchamp Manifesto.

We invite all schools and individuals who endorse the Manifesto to become members of the company and to help grow its work and influence.

## Partnerships

We will continue to develop active partnerships with organisations who share our aspirations, building on our present partnership with **2020 Education** (a movement of young people, teachers, professionals and organisations worldwide, who believe in a sustainable and equitable future for the planet and an education which gives everyone the opportunity to understand the issues, and be part of the solutions, from an early age).



# Become involved

What can you do to help?

## Your Personal Check List Of Actions

### **Support the manifesto**

Visit our [website](#) to sign up to it.

### **Join our mailing list**

Free regular update mailing for all Manifesto supporters.

### **Become a member**

You can do this through the [website](#) or by emailing us at [info@schoolsoftomorrow.org](mailto:info@schoolsoftomorrow.org)

### **Make a donation**

You can do this through our [website](#). Every little helps us. We make no profit, relying entirely on voluntary input.

### **Work with us**

Consider joining one of our working groups, but we'd also be pleased to discuss other ways you might be able to help out.

## Contact us

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