



## GEP ACADEMIES WEEKLY BULLETIN

### WEEK COMMENCING 16th NOVEMBER 2020

#### Reminders for this coming week:

##### **PAY COMMITTEE**

17.11.20

16.30 – 18.00

##### **GEP/AST ALL HEADS MEETING**

19.11.20

08.00 – 11.30

##### **AST/GEP JOINT DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEETING**

20.11.20

08.30 – 10.00

#### Forthcoming meetings:

##### **AST/GEP JOINT SENIOR TEAM**

23.11.20

10.00 – 11.30

##### **TRUSTEES & GLAC CHAIRS**

23.11.20

16.30 - 18.30

##### **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

07.12.20

16.00 – 18.30

##### **BOARD MEETING**

14.12.20

13.00 – 15.30

##### **GEP/AST ALL HEADS MEETING PLUS TRAINING**

14.01.21

TIME TBC



#### **Earthrise – by Graham Tuck**

Just before second lockdown began, I met up – outside and appropriately distanced - with my friend Simon (Mr P). Together we have enjoyed a long, sometimes difficult but always unconditional friendship. And so we argue. Constantly and comfortably. One of our big ones is around the English language (He's an actuary and I'm an English graduate so he has no right...at least, that's what I tell him). He likes his English to be chiselled in stone, no changes and with rules (particularly the ones about the apostrophe and the splitting of

infinitives and the things you had to write out lots of times at school) fiercely applied. "It's fewer, not less!" The ossification of language.

From that last barb, you'll understand that I don't agree with my friend. Language, I believe, is about change. The change that took us from Chaucer to Shakespeare and beyond. 1990's society needed something to describe an iteration of modern man, so "metrosexual" was coined: a brilliantly constructed portmanteau and no better or worse than the Bard's melding of "lacklustre" and "madcap" 400 years before.

"OK, Mr P," I say, in an attempt to win him over to my cause through his love of all things scientific. "What about Earthrise?"

His response is typically to the point but I give it another go.

"Earthrise," I repeat. "Until we got to the moon, there was no such word. Then, we got there and looked back and saw what no-one had seen before. We had to find a word for it. So we called it Earthrise. Beautiful isn't it? And only 50 years old."

...Simon goes to the kitchen to pour us a beer and to re-arm...

I think that we now have the equivalent of Earthrise in our understanding of teaching. The problem is that because of a legacy that in part derives from accountability and inspection, judging and grading, we are sometimes struggling to adjust to a new perspective, a new language and a new way of leading teaching. It is a perspective that looks away from the performance of the teacher, and towards the impact of that teaching on the learning and progress of those they teach. So, for example, when we talk about teacher feedback, we focus on what the student does with that feedback and how this supports their understanding and future learning. And when we ask

teachers to improve their planning, we give them the tools, the training and the opportunity to practise that enables them to achieve this improvement. The good news is, that the new Ofsted inspection framework endorses this new approach: it is also an approach that is well underway with our secondary leaders of teaching in the trust.

So here are five interrelated questions around teaching and learning that I'm looking forward to working on with our Trust's secondary leaders of teaching:

- 1) How do our teachers portray curriculum content in a way that renders it comprehensible to young minds (so that our students know more and remember more)?
- 2) How do they expose students' understanding (and lack of understanding) and use this to guide their subsequent actions and those of their students?
- 3) How do we ensure that our leadership of teaching supports themes 1 and 2?
- 4) How can we ensure that these two themes can be developed to support any future remote learning?
- 5) How do we gather evidence of impact – including for our disadvantaged and SEND cohorts? How do we use that evidence to shape our future priorities?

In a school I worked at recently, a history teacher had written on the classroom door an invitation to colleagues: "I'm working at the moment on how my questioning can sharpen my students' understanding of the First World War and what it meant for the men who fought in it: please come in and give me feedback".

Culturally, you may feel that your school is not yet ready for such an approach. In fact, it may sound hopelessly idealistic.

But then, so was Earthrise before we got to the moon.

### **Actions for Heads:**

The joint AST/GEP heads meeting is taking place on Thursday 19th November via Zoom and will start with the secondary heads meeting at 9.15am with primary heads joining at 10.30am. The combined phase meeting will finish at 11am and primary heads will continue until 12.15pm. Please [click here](#) for the agenda and papers.

Please kindly submit your school workforce census information (snapshot date -5th November) to Head Office as usual, as advised via the SBM Bulletin, by the end of November, including:

- a pdf school census sign-off sheet (including the review process and feedback)
- a pdf of your workforce census summary report AND all sub-reports

It is important that the trust has evidence of all schools meeting statutory deadlines, as well as details on the content of the census to assist in planning and further reporting. Please upload to [GEP shared documents\Upload to GEP\YOUR SCHOOL\Admin Confidential](#) - in the relevant census folder.

### **Actions for Governors and Trustees:**

You can view GEP/AST upcoming training sessions for governors by [clicking here](#).

## School Improvement Update:

### Discourse Series on Leadership

CST are running a series of webinars entitled '**Discourse Series on Leadership**' as part of their agile seminar programme. While we are immersed in the COVID-response, it is important also to carve out some 'heads up' time, where we can think and talk collectively on ideas that are core to education leadership. These seminars are a member benefit and so please if asked do say you are part of GEP.

The Discourse Series on Leadership is led by those immersed in school leadership and who have all contributed to the ResearchEd Guide to Leadership, published by John Catt.

The first of the discourse series is with **Stuart Lock**, CEO of Advantage Schools and editor of the ResearchEd Guide to Leadership.

**Topic: SLT's responsibility to get better, constantly - A different approach leadership.**

**Date: Thursday 19th November, 09:00-10:30**

To join this agile seminar and participate in the discourse series, use this [link](#) or dial +44 131 460 1196 or +44 203 051 2874

Meeting ID: 872 9454 5990; Passcode: 441083

This session will explore how leaders might approach leading schools as a domain-specific enterprise, rather than through generic competencies that may not transfer. It will emphasise knowledge of the persistent challenges in schools, alongside the people, curriculum, and core business of schools, and explore how expert leaders go about solving those problems.

The rest of the discourse series on leadership will include:

- **Tom Rees**, Executive Director of School Leadership & **Jen Barker**, Dean of Learning Design, Ambition Institute, on **Friday 4th December, 09:00-10:30**
- **Jon Hutchinson**, Assistant Headteacher, Reach Academy Feltham, on **Thursday 14th January 2021, 09:00 -10:30**
- **Luke Sparkes**, Executive Director and **Jenny Thompson**, Executive Principal at Dixons Academies Trust, on **Thursday 28th January 2021, 9:00-10:30**
- **Steve Rollett**, Deputy Chief Executive of CST, on **Tuesday 9th February 2021, 9:00-10:30**

Please diarise those dates if they are of interest to you and we will publish the zoom links once received.

### Education Policy Institute in partnership with ASCL and CST - Moving forward: digital learning lessons for leadership

Very little guidance and detail has been shared on how schools are expected to operate remotely and minimise learning losses, as well as how schools can integrate blended learning within their longer-term offer.

Join EPI, CST and ASCL at a virtual panel discussion taking place on **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November at 4pm**, chaired by David Laws (Executive Chairman, Education Policy Institute) to explore how schools should shape their approaches to blended learning.

This event will enable attendees to listen to leading representatives from the sector sharing both their experiences and perspectives on how schools should shape their approaches to blended learning. Attendees will benefit from hearing these insights and acting on recommendations shared by the expert panel.

Speakers include: Steve Rollett(CST), Geoff Barton (ASCL), Dr Kate Chhatwal OBE (Challenge Partners), John Murphy (Oasis Community Learning), Stephen Munday CBE (The Cam Academy Trust and Chartered College for Teaching), Jenny Dunne (New Bridge Group), Dawn Haywood (Windsor Academies Trust) and David Laws (Education Policy Institute)

[Click here to register.](#)

## **School Operations:**

### **Pay Policy 2020-21**

Further to feedback received, the Pay Policy has been subject to some further amendments and is available on GEP Shared Documents.

### **HR template documentation**

The following template documentation has recently been produced to assist schools:

- Template Service Occupancy Agreement and contractual clauses for any new caretakers appointed to the Trust who have a residential property included as part of their terms and conditions of employment
- Contract for Services to provide to individuals undertaking work within our schools on a self-employed basis
- Template salary statements

### **Staffing data**

There has recently been a number of pieces of HR data produced to support other central team functions and to feed into the following:

- Annual Report
- Teacher recruitment and retention - presented to the Board of Trustees
- Government reporting (such as the Gender Pay Gap, Facilities Time Reporting and Salary Surveys)
- Auditor's requirements

### **COVID-19 Operational Impact - National Evidence**

(a) [Paper](#) prepared by the Children's Task and Finish Group (TFC) for SAGE.

The paper considers the role of children in the transmission of COVID-19 and assesses the evidence. The main points are summarised below.

#### **Impacts on children and young people**

- There continues to be strong evidence that children and younger people (<18 years) are much less susceptible to severe clinical disease than older people (high confidence).
- There is clear evidence of the negative educational impact of missing school, particularly for younger children, as investments in children's learning tend to accumulate and consolidate over time (high confidence).
- There is evidence that the pandemic has negatively impacted the mental health of children and young people, and that school closures cause impairment to the physical and mental health of children. Evidence suggests that the mental health of adolescents is particularly affected (high confidence).

### **Impacts on teachers and school staff**

- ONS data from 2 September to 16 October show no difference in the positivity rates of pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers and staff, relative to other workers of a similar age (medium confidence).

### **Role of children, young people and schools in transmission**

- Evidence suggests that mixing outside the home continued to occur during school closures. Following school opening in September, the reported number of contacts for children aged 5-11 and 12-17 in England increased overall and in schools (medium-high confidence).
- Overall reported contacts at this time occurred primarily within schools, but also in the home and community (low confidence).
- The increases in infection levels among children and particularly young adults occurred at about the same time as the opening of schools (medium-high confidence).
- Epidemiological data and modelling show that there were signals of increasing transmission, and epidemic growth, in the wider population before the reopening of schools (medium confidence).
- Education is a major part of children and young people's lives, but transmission to children and young people can occur in household, community and educational settings (high confidence). We cannot separate out the infection risk from behaviours and contacts within schools from the wider 'end to end' behaviours and contacts associated with school attendance but taking place outside the school.
- Since schools reopened in Sept 2020, PHE indicate that there have been more than 1000 instances where there have been two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in educational settings. There is no current direct evidence that transmission within schools plays a significant contributory role in driving increased rates of infection among children, but neither is there direct evidence to suggest otherwise (low confidence).
- There is some evidence from contact tracing studies that pre-school and primary aged children are less susceptible to infection than adults (low-medium confidence). The evidence is more mixed for secondary aged children and older children seem to have similar rates to adults.
- Children can transmit within households as well as in educational settings. As the prevalence of infection in children aged 12-16 increased between September and October, ONS analysis suggests that children aged 12-16 played a significantly higher role in introducing infection into households (medium confidence). The difference is less marked for younger children (medium confidence). The relative rate of external exposure (i.e. bringing infection into the household) for children aged 2-16 was found to be higher than for adults. For those aged 12-16 there was a marked increase in the period after schools opened.
- No two schools are the same, with differences for example in class sizes, structures and ventilation, among other things. Differences in the school environment and the level of mitigations in place will influence the potential for transmission in schools. Mitigations such as ventilation (and others) are important in all school settings.

Appendices to the paper summarise the data used in the report and provides an overview of school transmission studies.

(b) [Paper](#), prepared by the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behaviours (SPI-B) and DfE consider the evidence on the benefits of remaining in education.

The overall conclusions in this paper are:

1. **School closures put educational outcomes at risk, especially for disadvantaged students**

High Confidence). Existing inequalities (High Confidence) and attainment gaps (Low/Medium Confidence) are already being exacerbated. Opportunities for early identification of emerging learning problems are also missed during school closures (High Confidence).

2. **School closures cause impairment to the physical and mental health of children.** Evidence suggests that the mental health of adolescents is particularly affected (High Confidence). Cognitive, social, and emotional developmental outcomes are also at risk (Medium Confidence) as is physical health (Low Confidence).
3. **School closures have a particularly adverse impact on vulnerable children due to reduced access to essential services** (High Confidence). Other lockdown-related stressors for children and parents, such as economic uncertainty, are also likely to be exacerbated (Medium Confidence).
4. **Extended periods of remote learning can lead to poorer educational outcomes, although some sources suggest that in the short-term adverse outcomes may be limited** (Low Confidence).

(c) The DfE released a [briefing](#) to accompany the above papers.

### HR COVID-19 Response - Clinically (Extremely) vulnerable

We will continue to strictly follow government guidance regarding:

- **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable** (to work from home w.e.f. 5<sup>th</sup> November) – School should ensure a discussion is had and 'working from home' self-assessments are up-to-date. A government letter should have been sent to all CEVs.
- **Clinically Vulnerable** – government advice is that clinically vulnerable people can continue to work onsite subject to any identified risk mitigating measures, as identified through C-19 Return to Work Self-Assessment and as relevant pregnancy risk assessment esp. for those over 28 weeks). Related forms for access by relevant GEP staff can be found [here](#).

Schools have been advised that discussions should take place with these staff and school's C-19 risk assessment updated.

#### Contacts:

Jack Mayhew: CEO	jmayhew@gepacademies.com	01483 888188
Ali Larcombe-Fish: COO	alfish@gepacademies.com	01483 888022
Andrew Roach: Education Director	aroach@gepacademies.com	01483 888047
Lisa Wilde: Financial Controller	Lwilde@gepacademies.com	01483 888022
Lyndsay Cameron: SCITT Director	Lcameron@georgeabbot.surrey.sch.uk	01483 888070
Jo Coles: HR Manager	jcoles@gepacademies.com	01483 888074
Richard Wiseman: Estates Manager	rwiseman@gepacademies.com	01483 888007
Ben Sayers: Head of IT	bsayers@gepacademies.com	01483 484837
Gary Lelliott: Head of Governance	gelliott@gepacademies.com	01483 888007
Jackie Blackwood: Teaching School Manager	jblackwood@gepacademies.com	01483 888047
Graham Tuck: Director of Secondary Education (school improvement)	gtuck@gepacademies.com	
Kathryn Krynicki: Director of Primary Education (school improvement)	kkrynicki@gepacademies.com	
Carol Pearce: Primary SIP	Cpearce@athenaschools.co.uk	
Jane Abbott: Secondary SIP	Jane@lawn3.com	
Gaby Sutton: Senior Administrator/PA to CEO	gsutton@gepacademies.com	01483 888188

## **Jack's visits and meetings this week:**

<b>Guildford healthcare project meeting</b>	<b>16.11.20</b>	<b>16:00 – 17:00</b>
<b>Data Dashboard meeting</b>	<b>17.11.20</b>	<b>09:00 – 10:00</b>
<b>1:1 with SiP Jane Abbott</b>	<b>17.11.20</b>	<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>
<b>Kings budget review</b>	<b>17.11.20</b>	<b>14:00 – 15:30</b>
<b>Pay Committee</b>	<b>17.11.20</b>	<b>16:30 – 18:00</b>
<b>GEP/AST All heads meeting</b>	<b>19.11.20</b>	<b>09:15 – 12:15</b>
<b>ICFP approach meeting</b>	<b>19.11.20</b>	<b>12:30 – 13:45</b>
<b>Guildford Grove virtual school visit</b>	<b>19.11.20</b>	<b>14:00 – 15:00</b>
<b>Joint Development Group meeting</b>	<b>20.11.20</b>	<b>08:30 – 10:00</b>
<b>Executive meeting</b>	<b>20.11.20</b>	<b>10:00 – 12:00</b>
<b>Fullbrook virtual school visit</b>	<b>20.11.20</b>	<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>