

LONDON

InstEd

ISSUE ONE SPRING TERM 2007

A magazine from the Institute of Education, University of London

Call me Al

The children's commissioner
for England speaks out

Rights of passage

14-19 education: a right, not a privilege

Background matters

Challenging misconceptions
about refugee children



Welcome



Welcome to the first issue of London InstEd, a new magazine for people who work in the education sector in the capital.

The magazine is produced by the Institute of Education (IOE), which specialises in teacher training, professional development courses and research in all phases of education and related areas of social science.

London InstEd's aim is to share the results of this research as well as look at the wider issues which affect people working with children and young people in London. In this issue we have focused on diversity and have included a feature on extended schools, an interview with the Children's Commissioner for England, and an article about a project taking place in a London primary school which promotes the well-being of refugee and asylum-seeking children.

We hope to include something for everyone, from those who work in nursery schools to those in sixth form colleges and from support staff to headteachers.

In each issue, which will be published once a term, we will aim to provide teaching tips, feature projects and initiatives from London schools and highlight some of the courses the IOE offers. We will also give our staff and students the chance to share their views and experiences.

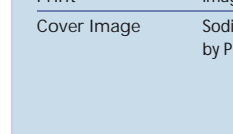
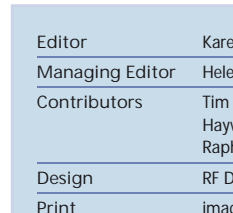
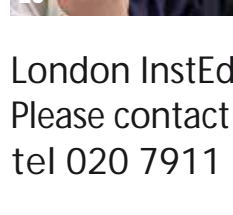
We hope you enjoy reading the first issue and welcome your feedback. Please contact us with your thoughts; let us know what you would like to see in the next issue and also tell us what's happening in your area. Your opinions count; after all, it's not just every child that matters!

With best wishes,

Karen Shead
editor
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Tackling climate change

MORE than 700 London primary schools have signed up for a scheme which will inform children about climate change.

The London Schools Environment Award was established in 2003 to develop children's sense of responsibility for their environment. It was set up by the Capital Standards Network, a partnership between the Mayor of

London, the Association of London Government, Transport for London, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, the Metropolitan Police, the Environment Agency and the 28 London boroughs working with environmental charity EnCams.

Mayor Ken Livingstone said: "These awards are helping children to learn about looking after the environment, to tell their parents how they can live a greener lifestyle and crucially helping the next generation of Londoners to live a healthier lifestyle as they grow up."

The schools are asked to submit their work by Friday 1 June. A distinction award of £2,000 and a highly commended award of £1,000 will be presented to two schools in each London borough.



London schools lead the way

LONDON schools have been praised for their GCSE results, which saw them beating the national average for the third year running.

Figures published in the government's achievement and attainment tables last month showed that almost one in three London state schools achieved 70 per cent, or above five A*- C grades.

On average 58.3 per cent of pupils in greater London gained five or more good GCSE passes in 2006 compared with an England average of 57.5 per cent.

Schools minister Andrew Adonis said: "I'd like to congratulate all students and teachers across the capital on these fantastic results, which really put London schools on the map."

"Ofsted's recent verdict of dramatic improvements in London schools is a further testament to the hard work of teachers, pupils and parents and shows that our investment in London Challenge to raise standards is working."

"Everyone involved in London education should be proud of these results."

Awards for heads

TWO London headteachers have been recognised and rewarded for their work.

Keith Ajegbo, formerly of Deptford Green School in Lewisham, was knighted in the New Years Honours and Gerry Curran, of Featherstone Primary in Southall, received a lifetime achievement award as one of the country's most outstanding teachers.

Sir Keith Ajegbo sits on the government's External Advisory Group, which makes recommendations

for the education of 14- to 19-year-olds. Mr Curran was awarded his title at the Teaching Awards 2006. He was praised by the judges for creating what they described as "the most spiritual school in Britain".



TOP PRIMARIES

CAMDEN has been ranked seventh highest borough in the country for the overall effectiveness of its primary schools. Eight schools are in the top 5 per cent and 17 in the top 25 per cent. These figures are from the government's 2006 primary school (key stage 2) achievement and attainment tables.

OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS

TWO special schools in Hounslow have been recognised as among the most effective in the country. The annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools named The Cedars Primary School in Cranford and Lindon-Bennett School in Hanworth as schools whose overall effectiveness was outstanding.

HEALTHY STATUS

MORE than 50 schools in Islington and Camden have achieved National Healthy School status. To achieve this the schools met over 40 criteria. Islington now has 25 schools with the status and Camden has 32.

ANTI-BULLYING

A NEW programme to tackle bullying has been set up in Islington. The Anti-Bullying Youth Panel was launched in November by UK children's charity beatbullying. Development officers from beatbullying are working directly with young people to address the problem of bullying in their community.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

THIRTY schools in Barnet have received awards for their sporting achievements. Towards the end of last year 29 primary schools received an Activemark award and one secondary school received a Sportsmark award in recognition of their commitment to sport. These marks are awarded annually to schools that offer a wide and exciting range of sporting activities.

If you have news from your borough, email k.shead@ioe.ac.uk and tell us about it

Gap between home and school internet use

SCHOOLS in the UK are not giving young people the skills they need for problem-free use of the internet, a study from the IOE has revealed.

Researchers at the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media surveyed over 7,000 young people in nine European countries and found that while virtually all 12- to 18-year-olds surfed the internet with ease at home, they needed help in dealing with problems including legalities in downloading music and handling social encounters in emails and instant text messaging.

Although teenagers in the UK used the internet more in school than those in the other countries, 4 out of 10 felt schools should give them better internet access, and 6 out of 10 said teachers never talked to them about the web.

Andrew Burn, who carried out the UK study, called the Mediapro project, said: "Schools need to do more to harness the communicative possibilities of this powerful technology, which allows children to communicate, cooperate, play and learn online."

Mediapro was funded by the European Commission. For more details see www.mediapro.org



A boost for science

REVITALISED science teaching in two London boroughs has led to raised standards and more 12- to 14-year-olds wanting to study science, research from the IOE has found.

The percentage of pupils in Hackney and Tower Hamlets achieving national standards in science tests rose by 5 per cent between 2003 and 2005, after teachers received intensive training in pupil-centred teaching. This was compared with the national increase, which was 2 per cent.

Researchers Natasha Serret and Sue Dale Tunnicliffe found pupils doing more work in small groups, undertaking more experiments and increasingly using computers and other new technology.

Michael Reiss, head of the IOE's School of Mathematics, Science and Technology, and director of education at the Royal Society, said: "In many science education initiatives, officials have simply told teachers what to do. In

the Teacher and Science Effectiveness Enhancement Programmes, consultants worked with science teachers to find new classroom approaches. The result has been lessons that excite pupils, get them talking about science and lead to better exam grades."



- A NEW science and technology centre which aims to address the skills shortage in the London science industry was launched last month.

The Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Support Centre will be based at Science Learning Centre London at the Institute of Education.

Tools to take you forward

A TEN-POINT plan to help disinterested students re-engage with school was launched in December.

The advice, contained in a step-by-step toolkit for teachers, is the result of a two-year research study involving 60 young people in five London secondary schools.

The study, funded by the London Challenge, took a group of disengaged students and their teachers away from the classroom to outdoor locations. Students were involved in activities from canoeing to abseiling and were set a range of tasks designed to boost their self-esteem and teach them new skills.

Kathryn Riley, project leader and a professor at the IOE's London Centre for Leadership in Learning, said: "Back in the classroom the improvement in the students' behaviour and motivation was immediately noticeable.

"Students who had been labelled as troubled or troublesome became happier in themselves and came to

recognise that learning can be rewarding and enjoyable."



Findings from the study, called Re-engaging Disaffected Students in Learning, are supported by the National Union of Teachers and the NSPCC.

The schools which took part in the project are Thomas Tallis, Kidbrooke, and Eltham Green, all in Greenwich, and Henry Compton and the Bridge Academy in Hammersmith and Fulham.

- To find out more about the toolkit contact Erini Konstantinidou at e.konstantinidou@ioe.ac.uk

Setting is great – for those at the top

SECONDARY schools must rethink the way they place pupils in classes if all children are to reach their potential, warns a study by IOE researchers.

A survey of English secondary schools showed that 62 per cent of pupils preferred to be in classes with others of similar ability (setting) as long as they were in the high or middle sets. Those in the lower sets said they preferred mixed classes with pupils of all abilities (mixed ability) because of the stigma attached to being considered “thick”.

Pupils who preferred setting said

that it enabled teachers to assign work at the right level. But those who preferred mixed ability did so because it encouraged cooperation and help.

The study was carried out by Susan Hallam, head of the IOE’s School of Lifelong Education and International Development, and Judy Ireson, head of the School of Psychology and Human Development.

“Pupils’ Preferences for Grouping Practices” was published in the British Educational Research Journal in August 2006.

Benefits of nurture groups

A NEW handbook on the principles of nurture groups shows how vulnerable children can be successfully supported in mainstream schools.

Nurture groups are small classes that meet children’s developmental needs in a safe and caring environment.

Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines: Helping children to achieve by Sylvia Lucas, Kim Insley and Gill Buckland, from the IOE’s School of Early Childhood and Primary Education, is a handbook for nurture group teachers and assistants.

The principles encourage them to recognise children’s behaviour as a means of communication which, when dealt with appropriately, enables children to access a curriculum reflecting their individual needs.

Jim Rose, director of the Nurture Group Network, which has published the book, said that schools which have set up nurture groups have achieved over 80 per cent success in helping the children adjust to mainstream education.



Positive older teachers

A UNIQUE four-year study has found that long-term teachers are more positive about teaching than most people assume.



The study of 300 teachers in 100 English primary and secondary schools found that those who have been teaching for 30 years or more were, on the whole, positive.

Gordon Stobart, from the IOE’s School of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, who carried out the DfES-funded study with colleagues from Nottingham University, said: “People who have been teaching for 31 years or more are usually portrayed as negative and just hanging on. But we found that many had decided what they wanted, which gave them a better balance.”

The study of teachers’ effectiveness over time found that primary teachers were more positive than those in secondary schools.

A LITTLE MORE CONVERSATION

The IOE’s London Centre for Leadership in Learning (LCLL) offers seminars for practitioners and others interested in education.

These seminars, called learning conversations, encourage direct participation with leading writers and thinkers in education. They also give people the chance to talk and think about issues facing education today.

This year’s topics include:

- Re-engaging disaffected students
Kathryn Riley, a visiting professor at the LCLL, 25 April
- Developing Sustainable Leadership
Brent Davies, professor of leadership development, University of Hull, 3 May
- Teacher learning communities
Dylan William, deputy director of the IOE and professor of educational assessment, 14 May
- More black leaders – different leadership paradigms
Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, manager of a CPD programme called Investing in Diversity (offered by the LCLL), 20 June

All conversations take place from 5.00 – 7.30pm at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL. Entrance is free to members of the LCLL and costs £5 for non-members.

The event hosted by Brent Davies is sponsored by SAGE publications.

For further details contact Adrian Hall on a.hall@ioe.ac.uk or 020 7612 6689.

Chartered London Teachers Conference

The annual CLT conference is taking place at the IOE on Monday 26 February. The conference is for people working towards CLT status and colleagues looking to develop whole-school approaches to CLT.

For more information contact the CPD office on 020 7612 6589/6987 or email cpd.inset@ioe.ac.uk

Call me AL

In March 2005 Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green became the first children's commissioner for England. What has he done since then and what is he going to do to make sure the voice of children and young people is heard? Karen Shead reports

THE children's commissioner for England has many titles to his name. He is a Sir, a Professor and a Doctor. So when meeting him for the first time it's difficult to know how to greet him. His staff, and the children he works with, have found a solution: they call him, quite simply, Al. But somehow on first meeting this doesn't seem right

responsibility. The commissioner and his team act as the voice of children and young people in the country, and with 11.8 million of them – 36 per cent in and around London – it's no mean feat. Neither was being appointed, says Sir Al.

"The actual process was the most gruelling in my professional career," he confesses. "It lasted for two months and there were six stages, three of which were done by children."

The first challenge was a one-hour written test followed by two 45-minute "interrogations" by young people. "They asked me very penetrating questions about why I wanted the post: could I persuade them I understood them, and what was I going to do?"

The Office of the Children's

Commissioner (OCC) is an independent organisation set up by Parliament as part of the Children Act 2004. The commissioner has a broad area of responsibility but has to work within the framework of the five outcomes of Every Child Matters and have

regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Sir Al has a long history of working with children. He worked as a paediatrician for 30 years; from 1993 he was the Nuffield professor of child health at the Institute of Child Health and at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust; and in July 2001 he was appointed the national clinical director for children at the Department of Health.

"This gave me a great insight into the plight of children in all circumstances across the country and so when the opportunity arose to appoint a children's commissioner, I put my hat in the ring," he says.

Even though he describes the selection process as "gruelling", he has since employed the same method to interview his 24 members of staff. "They have all been challenged by the children's panel," he grins.

Sir Al is a strong believer in involving children in making decisions which will affect them. Not long after taking up the post he publicly suggested children should be involved in the selection of teachers but says he received a "hostile response" from some organisations.

"It's important to emphasise that we are not saying children should make the decisions, but that their views should be part of the selection process," he stresses. "We recognise young people have important things to say.

"Children and young people – I keep referring to them like this as they feel aggrieved if they are referred to just as children – are at the heart of this organisation," he explains. "They have been involved in setting up the premises, selecting our staff and



– Sir Al seems more appropriate.

Sir Al then, or to use his full title just this once, Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, took up the post of children's commissioner for England full-time in July 2005.

It's a role which comes with great



Photo: Rebecca Reed

helping us to write a strategic plan.

“Their participation matters – and I emphasise the word participation and not consultation,” he stresses. “Consultation means adults ask children but then adults decide. Participation means children and young people are

Sir Al is a strong believer in involving children in making decisions which will affect them. Not long after taking up the post he publicly suggested children should be involved in the selection of teachers but says he received a “hostile response” from some organisations

actively involved in making decisions.”

So strongly does he feel about participation that it is children who are responsible for the fun, modern design of the OCC’s offices.

There are bright red and green seats in the reception area; the office walls are painted in striking primary colours; and on one of the doors is a huge paperclip – which one can only imagine is the stationery cupboard. And Sir Al’s

office is not immune to the touch of childhood. There are two black and white funky, patterned sofas complete with teddy bears perched in the corner, which make a refreshing change from the more typical formal conference table and chairs.

Setting up the office has been the “most practical challenge” so far, says Sir Al, but there have been many others.

“It’s been the most challenging year in my 40 years since I graduated,”

he confesses. “It’s the first time I’ve been given a totally clean piece of paper and asked to draw a new organisation on it.

“We’ve had to meet public expectation. People have been lobbying for 20 years for a children’s commissioner so there was a massive expectation of what we would be doing even before I took up the job.”

The first step he took was to make contact with the children’s

commissioners in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and New South Wales in Australia, who he says welcomed him and gave him advice. Step two was to look at how the OCC can relate to the nation’s children and young people.

“We really have been trying to ask the exam question ‘what is it like to be a child or young person today?’” he says. “And we’ve done that in four ways.”

The team has analysed what others have said on the subject, collated input from their own fieldwork, commissioned a survey questioning more than 2,000 11- to 16-year-olds about their lives, and run a national campaign called Shout! Turn up the Volume.

The campaign, which was an art competition, invited children to tell the OCC about issues which concerned them.

Sir Al says the artwork they received was “by and large sunny” but as the children got older the images changed. “They were much darker and were of self-harm, of worry about the environment, and about being bullied,” he says.

"A very different perception of life seemed to come through the artwork."

By collecting and digesting all of this information the OCC now has a "very strong knowledge base" of what young people feel about their lives. Sir Al says their main concerns are safety and security, family disruption and bullying.

It's been the most challenging year in my 40 years since I graduated. It's the first time I've been given a totally clean piece of paper and asked to draw a new organisation on it

Bullying is something Sir Al experienced as a child when his family moved from the mining town of Bedlington in Northumberland to Surrey. "Moving from the north to the

"Family breakdown is a serious issue. We ask them 'What would you like us to do for you?' and they say 'Please wave a magic wand and stop our families falling apart.'"

As well as these issues, other areas of concern include school environment, school lavatories, and stress.

"We are one of the most tested nations for children in education in the world and they feel very aggrieved about the amount of stress they are

subjected to. They ask us 'Please Al, can we enjoy school?'"

Now that these issues and concerns have been identified, what's next for Sir Al and his team?



Photo: Will Walker

south in the 1950s was like going to Mars in many ways. I had a North Country accent and was made fun of for that. One of the first things I had to do was lose my accent to survive and be invisible in the playground," he explains.

"A lot of young people are telling us one of the reasons they gather in street corners is because that's where they feel safest," he continues.

"Our challenge now is to focus," he declares. "At this moment in time we are seriously focusing on our strategy for the next five years. Frankly we can't do everything ourselves so we are going to have to make some difficult decisions as to what we do in partnership with other organisations.

"We have made a very helpful start," he says, "but we have a long way to go." ■

London education in numbers

Today there are **6,700** more teachers and **14,600** more teaching assistants in London than ten years ago

There are currently **23** city academies across London with a further **60** planned by 2010

London secondary schools are improving faster than those nationally. **One in four** London schools (and rising) achieved outstanding GCSE results in 2005

London is the fastest improving region in the country and **four** London authorities rank in the **top ten** most improved authorities from 1998–2006 (Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham, Haringey and Lambeth). Four more are in the **top 20** (Hackney, Islington, Wandsworth and Lewisham)

In 2004 the percentage of pupils in state secondary schools with English as a second language was **50.3 per cent** in London as a whole and **28 per cent** in outer London. This compares to a national average of **11 per cent**

Of the country's pupils from ethnic minorities, **38 per cent** study in London

The Brig idea

The commissioner for London schools, Professor Tim Brighouse, talks about outstanding school staff, transformability and Fermi questions. Intrigued? Read on



TOWARDS the end of last year Ofsted reported on the state of London schools and the London

Challenge in particular.

What did they say? One of the main pieces of their evidence is that the headline figure in tests at 11 (level four and above) and at 16 (five or more higher GCSE grades) are respectively at and above the national average and improving faster. In terms of value added, particularly bearing in mind relative poverty levels, London schools do better than anywhere else in the country.

In other words if you happen to be living in poverty it's a better idea to send your kids to a London school than not. Surprisingly too – the general media would never believe it – it's also a better deal if you are well off. On every school meals band London schools outperform the average of schools elsewhere.

My job is now very much part time so I get the chance to do things I used not to be able to do, such as visit an international conference in America, where they were, frankly, astonished by the performance of London schools and naturally anxious to discover why it is happening. I explained that in my opinion the key factor which has

made the difference is the quality of staff in schools. I reckon there are more "outstanding" school staff than ever. What do I mean by "outstanding"?

First and foremost outstanding staff believe in the "transformability" rather than the predictable "ability" of the pupils whom they meet. They seem to convey the message to their pupils that whatever the self-doubt or challenge they face, that they, the staff, believe in them. "Suspend your disbelief," they seem to say. "If you choose – and it is

"Suspend your disbelief," they seem to say. "If you choose – and it is your choice – to do as I suggest then you'll succeed." And more often than not the prophecy proves correct

your choice – to do as I suggest then you'll succeed." And more often than not the prophecy proves correct. These outstanding teachers' belief in young people brooks no denial. They put down a youngster's failure to learn not to a lack of ability but as a challenge to their teaching – or the need to consult a colleague who might have more success in unlocking the mind. They treat teaching as a cooperative activity – "Come, class nine, we aren't going to let this tricky maths problem beat us. Together we'll all solve it." And so they do. They are masters of storytelling as part of their brilliant explanations, which along with questioning are their essential stock in trade. For example I met one

recently who had become proficient in the use of the seven question words for first, second, third and fourth order questions and was collecting "Fermi" questions. Look it up on Google.

None of such teachers use the give away phrase "these children" nor "What more can you expect of kids from backgrounds like this?" These teachers go far beyond caring for children to the rather more demanding attitude of caring passionately about the adults the children might become.

Now I am not so naive as to believe that every school and every teacher is like this: indeed some of those reading this are probably reflecting

that what I have described is not their experience. But there are far more than there used

to be. And it's been the job of the London Challenge to arrange things – through school improvement, bespoke leadership support, persuading the Treasury to introduce key sector worker housing schemes, financing the Chartered London Teacher professional development programme for teachers and many other initiatives – so that these outstanding teachers and schools are recognised and supported in their efforts. They deserve nothing less. What they do changes life's chances for young people and thereby our collective future.

That's what working in London schools is all about. ■

Background matters

Schools can play a vital role in promoting the well-being of refugee and asylum-seeking children, and including issues in the curriculum which affect these children can help with participation, integration and achievement. But how do you do this? Karen Shead visits a primary school in Hackney to get some answers

ELEVEN-year-old Sodique Olabiyl stands up, holds his head high, takes a deep breath, and recites a speech which begins “I have a dream...”

It is a speech many are familiar with, but few would be able to recite with as much confidence as Sodique. The reason he knows it so well is that last October his school year, Year 6, performed the UK premiere of a new American play about Martin Luther King called *We Are the Dream* and Sodique played the main role.

It was performed by pupils of Woodberry Down Community School as part of Black History Month, an event the school celebrates with gusto each year. The play is one example of the many innovative projects which take place at the school with the aim of involving all of the children, many of whom come from different backgrounds. Out of the 420 pupils some 80 per cent are from black or minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Headteacher
Greg Wallace,
Woodberry
Down
Community
School**



Every year during Black History Month each school year studies a different person who has played an important role in black history, for example Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Rosa Parks. And after delivering his speech Sodique had no problem reeling off facts and figures about them.

Headteacher Greg Wallace believes it is important to embrace such events. “Including black and ethnic minority

If you want to change ideas and show children their background is something you value, you need to include issues in the curriculum in a sustained, meaningful way

children has to come through what you teach the children and not in a one-off lesson,” he says. “If you want to change ideas and show children their background is something you value, you need to include issues in the curriculum

in a sustained, meaningful way.”

The school has gained recognition for its inclusive work with refugee and asylum-seeking children and for making issues which affect these children part of the curriculum. Twenty-five per cent of the children are refugees, many from Africa, in particular Somalia and Nigeria.

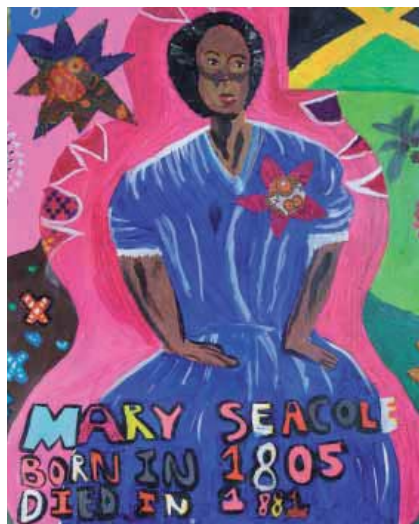
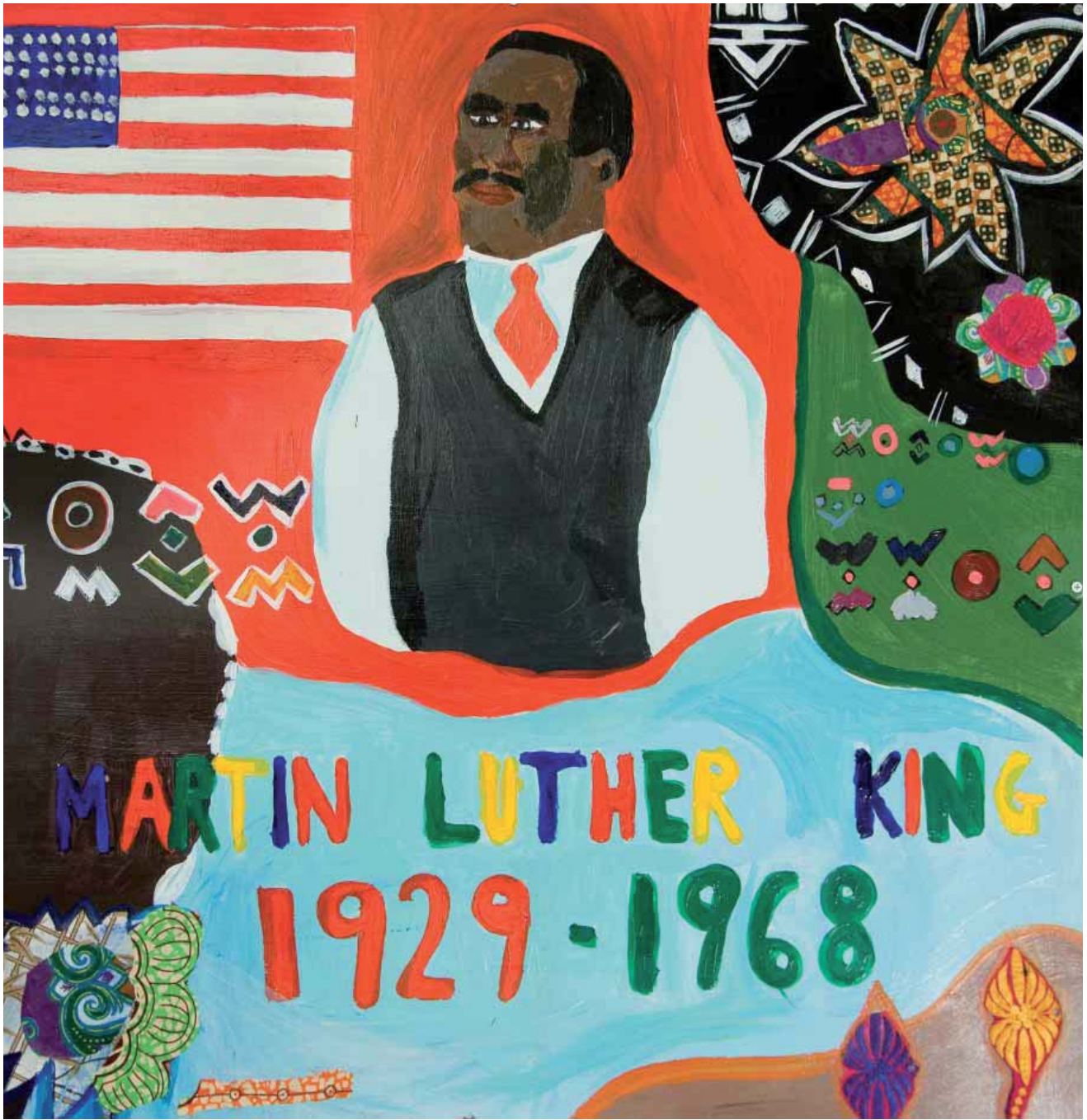
“It’s about changing the ideas of children who have misconceptions about refugee children,” Greg explains. “Some children think it’s a bad thing to be and use the word ‘refugee’ as an insult, but in reality it’s a brave thing and is often the start of a tragic story.”

The school has developed a project based on a book called *The Other Side of the Truth* by Beverley Naidoo. The book tells the tale of two children from Nigeria, a brother and sister, who are forced to flee from their homeland and seek refuge in England.

The six-week project is unusual in that it is a cross-curricular one. It brings in many subjects including English, geography, maths, PSHE and citizenship, and a strong focus is placed on learning key skills.

“We did lots of work about Nigeria before they started reading the book,” says Greg. “This kind of preparatory work enabled children to comprehend what they were reading; they already had images in their heads to support their understanding of the text. If we want to include refugee children, or change attitudes, we need to find a common starting point.”

The project inspired staff to take children on a trip to the other side of ►



Photos: Philip Wolmuth, Paintings by pupils from Woodberry Down Community School



the city to follow the journey from Victoria to Peckham that the two characters did when they came to London.

“We were walking down Peckham Road and one boy asked me ‘When are we going to see Sade and Femi?’ He thought these two – the main characters in the book – were real, which was great!” Greg exclaims. “Inevitably, all the children start to identify with the plight of the children in the book.

“We have started with a book which has more relevance to the children here at the school, and they come to each lesson wanting to know what happens next,” says Greg. “The teaching and the learning for the children is much better.”

The content of the book also lends itself to discussion on emotional and personal issues, which fits into PSHE and citizenship.

“The book is dedicated to Damilola Taylor, the schoolboy who was killed in 2000, and so we talked about him. We also talked about Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian writer and activist who was executed, and bullying.

“These are quite complicated issues for children and there’s no easy way to explain these things to them. But avoiding that fact isn’t an option. In fact, to change negative attitudes to include children who have experienced terrible things you have to delve quite deeply into realms that perhaps aren’t associated with the typical primary

school curriculum,” Greg stresses.

The school also ran a programme of events related to the project during Refugee Week in June. Every year the school celebrates Refugee Week and in the past pupils performed a musical about Diwali and took part in a Cuban night and a Turkish

night. The latter included a mosque, built by pupils, which today sits in one of the school corridors in all of its colourful glory.

Greg strongly believes in making subject content relevant to pupils.

“We work in one of the most challenging schools in London, in one of the most deprived areas,”

he says. “People say there is a lot of disaffection in schools, but if you want to raise standards you need to study things which are relevant to these children.”

Professor Jan Blommaert, chair of languages in education at the IOE, says that in today’s society it is relevant to make

refugee issues part of the curriculum.

“There are now more than 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, so this is no longer a small and negligible minority,” he says.

But, including issues which affect these children is not always easy, he explains.

“The category ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’ doesn’t tell you much about how you can teach these children,” he says. “In order to teach them you need to be familiar with where they come from, which languages they speak, whether they are literate and if so, in which writing system?”

“Well, just as you think you have assembled that knowledge about a particular group – say people from Congo – a group of people from Sudan or Iraq come in, and you have to start from scratch.”

This description is familiar to Greg.

To change negative attitudes to include children who have experienced terrible things you have to delve quite deeply into realms that perhaps aren’t associated with the typical primary school curriculum

“It can be a challenge,” he says, “but it is a journey that can help you, as a teacher, to constantly review, change and develop.

“In London we have the potential to become world-class educators by embracing diversity as the starting point for what we teach.” ■

Over the next few months there are several CPD courses taking place at the IOE which relate to teaching refugee and asylum-seeking children. They include:

- 28 February: Supporting refugee children in the early years
- 8 March: Teaching refugee and asylum-seeking children
- 14 March: Teaching mathematics to pupils with EAL in the primary school
- 16 March: Whole-school responsibility for the inclusion and achievement of secondary EAL and minority ethnic students
- 8 June: Developing speaking and listening opportunities for EAL pupils

For more information about CPD courses, contact the CPD unit on 020 7612 6589 or cpd@ioe.ac.uk

School daze



When IOE doctoral student Cilel Smith carried out research on the learning experiences of refugee children in the UK she discovered a lack of resources to introduce them to their new schools. To fill this gap she has created a pack which not only teaches school rules and regulations, but also aims for inclusion and allows for assessment

WHEN a child opens the box with My New School written across the lid, the first thing they see is a bright orange board game. On this board is a picture of a school building and inside this is a snaking path which takes the child from start to finish. The path, which is made up of boxes – some with numbers and some without – is surrounded by visual images including a red bus, a packed lunch and Shakespeare.

A roll of the dice will see a child move along the path. If she lands on a square with a number she picks up the corresponding card, which will either tell her something about her new school or instruct her to carry out a particular activity.

It is a fun and novel way to introduce children to their school, and the board game is only one part of what is an induction, inclusion and assessment pack. The pack also contains a teacher's handbook, two activity books, an audio CD and reading cards.

The materials in the pack are provided in English as well as nine other languages: Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, French, Polish, Somali, Tamil, Turkish, and Urdu. And the pack comes in two editions: one for 10- to 16-year-olds and another for early primary age.

Cilel developed the game as a way to introduce pupils, in particular newly

arrived non-English speaking pupils, or those lacking previous educational experience, to their school. When they arrive they can be introduced to the game by listening to the CD. They can then go on to play the board game, or as Cilel recommends, work through a series of activities beforehand.

There are four levels of activity. Level one introduces the pupils to the new school; level two introduces them to the pupils and teachers and explains the school rules and subjects; and level three is mainly concerned with assessment of prior learning and preparation for level four, which is the board game.

It is a fun and novel way to introduce children to their school, and the board game is only one part of what is an induction, inclusion and assessment pack

Assessment can start from day one, but Cilel suggests delaying formal assessment until the child has settled in to their school. "In the first two weeks I suggest teachers go through the process of settling the child by using stages one and two, where they get to know teachers and make friends," she says. "After that

they should be on level three and then formal assessment can begin."

By the time the child reaches the end of the board game they will know all they need to about their school and will also receive a certificate to say they have ownership of it. "This is when inclusion kicks in," explains Cilel. "They feel accepted. That's why it's called My New School." ■

- For more information see www.interruptedlearning.com
- Cilel will present her game at The Education Show, which is taking place from 22 to 24 March at the NEC Birmingham

A sense of belonging

An exhibition currently showing at the Museum of London shares the voices and memories of people who have found refuge in London, as pupils from West London Academy discover

AS the pupils enter the exhibition they quickly scatter off in their assigned groups to look at the things which catch their eye. There is plenty to look at. There are colourful drawings, photographs, musical instruments and clothes, all of which belong to people who have come to London seeking refuge.

The pupils, from West London Academy in Northolt, Ealing, then huddle around a timeline which charts events that have caused refugees to come to

Britain and provides the answers to the questions on a worksheet prepared for them by their teacher, Carol Morrison.

The exhibition, called *Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees*, is on until the end of February. It tells the personal stories of why refugees come to London, the challenges and barriers they face and the contributions they make. It also explores the importance of family, the role of a community and culture, and ideas about home and belonging.

It's a colourful exhibition with objects ranging from a typical Kurdish wedding dress to a framed Arsenal football shirt

At the end of the autumn term the group of pupils, from Year 7 to Year 13, went on a school trip to central London and this exhibition was their first stop. It was chosen by Carol, the school's EAL (English as an additional language)

coordinator, as it echoes the experiences of some of the children.

"The children are all from diverse backgrounds and have come here for a variety of reasons," she explains.

Everyone enjoys the exhibition. Shova, 16, says: "We all come from different



places, we have different customs, and this exhibition tells us about that. You also see the history." Sonia, 13, adds: "We learn how people came to London; it makes it real. There is a story of a man who came with a blanket and one man with just a bag."

It's a colourful exhibition with objects ranging from a typical Kurdish wedding dress to a framed Arsenal football shirt. There are areas cordoned off where you can sit down, put on a

pair of headphones and listen to people talking about their experiences. There are interactive items, such as a display with wooden flaps which you have to lift to read information. For example, in one called "in the news", you lift a flap with a news headline about refugees to discover the truth behind the story. There is a similar display

about languages. The word "hello" is written in six languages; lifting the panel shows which language the word belongs to and a recording reveals how it is pronounced.

"That's my language!" exclaims one girl as it is said in Arabic.

Although there are a number of interactive displays, Carol wishes there were more for the younger children as they can get bored quickly: "I don't think some of the younger ones realise the

significance of it," she says. "The older ones seem to get more out of it."

One of the target audiences for the exhibition is secondary schools and materials have been developed to address the requirements of citizenship at key stage 3. There is an online teachers' resource pack to support this, with links to English, geography and history. The activities and resources encourage debate and raise awareness and understanding of London's diversity, human rights, politics and justice, and the media.

Although some of the materials in the exhibition may be difficult for younger children to understand, primary schools have visited the exhibition, and the museum's access and



Photos: Museum of London

learning department runs several workshops for people of all ages – art workshops are taking place throughout February.

At the end of their visit Carol says the pupils will have learned something not only by visiting the exhibition but also by simply taking a trip into the city centre.

“When we are back in the class we will talk about the exhibition and also about things like how many stops we passed on the train,” she says. “On the way I had to explain what a busker was and we also had to explain social rules like giving up your seat to an older person and not chewing gum when you come into the museum.

“I can understand why teachers are scared to take children on school trips,” she says, “but I think it’s a great thing to do. They get so much out of it.” ■

- **Belonging: Voices of London’s Refugees** runs until 25 February at the Museum of London, London Wall. Nearest tube stations are St Paul’s, Barbican and Moorgate. Admission is free.

- The museum is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5.50pm and Sunday 12pm until 5.50pm. See www.museumoflondon.org.uk for more information.

Have you visited an exhibition, museum or gallery in London which you would recommend to other schools? If so, email k.shead@ioe.ac.uk and tell us about it



Henry the who?

If you have ever wondered just how much teenagers know about history, a research project currently underway at the IOE could provide some answers.

The study, called *Useable Historical Pasts: A study of students’ frameworks of the past*, aims to shed light on students’ conceptions of history.

The research, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is being carried out by history lecturers Stuart Foster, Ros Ashby and Peter Lee, and research officer Jonathan Howson.

Peter Lee said: “Routinely, politicians, public figures, academics and the media lament that young people today don’t know any history. In making this criticism commentators typically focus on students’ alleged lack of knowledge of specific content items, for example, the dates of the Second World War, or the names of Henry VIII’s wives.”

But, he said, it is not possible to tell from tests of key facts whether students leave school with a coherent framework of knowledge linking past,



Photo: National Portrait Gallery, London

present and future which they can use to make sense of their place in the world.

“The same criticism has been made for at least a century despite the fact that schools, teaching and society have all changed radically. We need to understand what students do know.”

Through written tasks and interviews of two groups of students – one which opts for history at KS4 and the other which abandons history after Year 9 – the study will explore students’ conceptions of the past during Years 10 and 11.

The project is due to end in August.

Working together

A STUDY taking place at the IOE’s Thomas Coram Research Unit aims to address a central issue in the government’s Every Child Matters agenda and the related youth agenda Youth Matters – the need for greater collaboration between services and their workforces to achieve improved results for children.

The study, called *Working Together: Inter-professional working in multi-purpose children’s settings*, examines inter-agency and inter-professional collaboration in two types of multi-purpose children’s service – extended schools and children’s centres.

The main focus of the study is the

diverse children’s workforce employed in multi-purpose services. It includes teachers and health, childcare and social service staff who work in schools and children’s centres, but may be employed by agencies external to the school.

The aim of the study is to contribute to the development of the children’s workforce strategy and the Every Child Matters and Youth Matters agendas by highlighting the factors which in particular relate to training, structures and the different professional understandings and values involved in inter-professional working in multi-purpose children’s services.



Photos: istockphoto.com

Value added

Rather than teaching Britishness, citizenship education should be about learning to live together in a world characterised by diversity, says Hugh Starkey

YOUNG people in London studying citizenship come from a wide variety of backgrounds and many have links with other countries through families and friends. While all who study in Britain should feel that they belong here, many students and teachers identify with other countries as well. Those who feel only a weak sense of national identity may well be active citizens.

Citizenship education in an age of globalisation should not be education for Britishness. It should, though, seek to encourage understanding and acceptance of the core values, principles and procedures that underpin British democracy, for it is these principles rather than a sense of national identity that enable social cohesion. This implies education for cosmopolitan citizenship.

Since citizenship was introduced to the national curriculum in 2002, schools have had to work hard to provide the high quality and motivating experience that young people deserve.

But negative press coverage can

undermine the progress we have been making. In September 2006 Ofsted's report, *Towards Consensus: Citizenship in secondary schools*, concluded: "Significant progress has been made in implementing national curriculum citizenship in many secondary schools."

The press chose to focus on another conclusion – a lack of consensus on aims and the fact that "in a quarter of schools surveyed, provision is still inadequate, reflecting weak leadership and lack of specialist teaching".

We are fortunate at the Institute of Education in being able to work with partner schools whose commitment to citizenship education is outstanding. Since we are also able to recruit excellent students from a variety of backgrounds who are determined to make a difference, we feel we are helping to move the subject on. We are actively involved in training specialist teachers of citizenship, as seen in the courses

we offer: the PGCE Citizenship, the MA Citizenship Education, and special CPD courses leading to the DfES Certificate of Citizenship Teaching. These are offered in distance learning as well as face-to-face versions. A number of our doctoral students are investigating citizenship education for their PhDs. Citizenship education is required to consider the implications of diversity in the UK. This can be based on commitment to universal human rights and the need

Citizenship education in an age of globalisation should not be education for Britishness

for mutual respect based on a common ethic, rather than on the more obvious manifestations of difference. Together we can help to extend and enhance democracy since this is essential to social cohesion. ■

Hugh Starkey is reader in education at the IOE and is the course leader for the MA Citizenship Education. He is also the co-author, with Audrey Osler, of *Changing Citizenship: Democracy and inclusion in education*, published by Open University Press

Need some tips for teaching citizenship? Hugh Starkey and Jeremy Hayward offer their top ten

1. Borrow lesson plans from websites such as www.citized.info or www.bbc.co.uk/newsround
2. Do we practice what we preach? Citizenship is, in part a feeling of belonging. Do your classes encourage this?
3. Free speech isn't an absolute. Hate speech, racism and ridicule have no place in schools. Article 13 on the Rights of the Child states that "Children should have the right to freedom of expression ... as long as this does not harm the rights and reputations of others."
4. Build on the experiences and insights your students bring to the lessons. Give them opportunities to set the agenda.
5. Don't expect to know the answers to every current issue. Think what the good questions are.
6. Sign up for one of the DfES-sponsored citizenship certification courses at the IOE – central government funding is still available.
7. Try to incorporate "change actions" into the learning. These are opportunities for students to try and impact on the world, perhaps through contact with elected representatives or campaigning on an issue they feel strongly about.
8. Is your school taking on trainee citizenship teachers? A partnership with a PGCE course can help to raise the status of the subject and trainee teachers often develop excellent resources for the department.
9. Use the DfES self-evaluation tool kit to focus your priorities for developing the subject.
10. Join the Association for Citizenship Teaching. The regular events and journal can help you keep abreast with the latest developments in the subject.

Jeremy Hayward is the course leader for the PGCE Citizenship at the IOE

London issues

The planned ending of the London Challenge next year prompts renewed consideration of what resources and support arrangements London needs. Raphael Wilkins considers the future of education in London



WHAT is a good education in 21st century London? Which aspects of education need transforming and which need preserving? What should be the future role of schooling in society? A new year is a good time to revisit these questions.

Assuming schools continue to combine helping parents bring up and care for their children with giving children and young people the increasingly sophisticated knowledge and skills they will need, what technologies and forms of school organisation will serve both functions well?

The big issues for London, as elsewhere, include developing cultures of multi-professional working across children's services, and securing a full contribution to the Every Child Matters agenda. There is widespread interest in the capital in increasing the quality of partnerships with parents and the use of student voice as a force for school improvement and systemic change.

The different localities in greater London are different worlds: in some parts, socio-economic extremes exist

in close proximity; some political boundaries bear little relation to transport routes and school choices; staff recruitment and retention can be problematical; and London-wide arrangements for governance, support, shared resources and collaboration are complex and patchy.

In the more challenging areas, the overall picture is of dramatic improvements. A number of authorities are working through, or beginning to think about, the Building Schools for the Future programme in ways which stimulate reassessment of their vision.

In some local authorities, more needs to be done to create a sense of ownership of schools by their ethnically diverse communities. Across London, broadening the range of pathways available at age 14 and over is a complex task. Improving cross-phase transition and achieving better connection between learning in and out of school feature on local agendas, as does addressing the behaviour and disengagement of some groups of young people.

London's leaders of learning already debate these issues, but it will be important to clarify aims and to design new infrastructures and ways of working. To do this we need strong partnerships, applied research, collaborative problem-solving and innovation. But all of that starts with conversation. ■

Dr Raphael Wilkins is head of consultancy and knowledge transfer in the London Centre for Leadership in Learning, part of the Institute of Education

Read ability

The benefits Reading Recovery offers to young children who are struggling to read and write have long been highlighted, but what's in it for the Reading Recovery teachers and the teacher-leaders? Karen Shead visits a teacher-leader training class to find out

WHEN Viv Stockin is asked why she is taking part in the two-year training course to become a Reading Recovery teacher-leader she doesn't hesitate to answer.

"It's my dream job," she smiles. "I trained as a Reading Recovery teacher in 1993 and really enjoyed it and when the opportunity came up to train to be a teacher-leader I was really excited."

When you see Viv in action it's easy to see why she loves the job and wants to return to it – she has been working as a literacy consultant in Wolverhampton for the last eight years.

As she encourages the young child she is working with to "find his loud voice" so he can say the words he is reading from the book with confidence and teaches him how to write a w in the sand box, her enthusiasm is evident and so is his. Throughout the half-hour session, which he will have every school

day for a period of three to four months, she has his full concentration.

It's this desire to make a difference which inspires many experienced teachers, and in the case of the current cohort on the teacher-leader course, literacy consultants, to become Reading Recovery teachers and teacher-leaders.

Julia Douëttil, Reading Recovery National Network coordinator, says one of the things Reading Recovery teachers talk about is feeling empowered.

"They have a strong sense of why they are doing it and how it will work. Their reward is the satisfaction of knowing that they can change children's lives for the better," she says. "The most frequently heard comment Reading Recovery teachers

make is 'It really works, like nothing I have ever done before.'"

Those who become teachers provide the one-to-one daily intensive lessons which the Reading Recovery programme offers; the teacher-leaders are responsible for overseeing the programme in an education authority, training the teachers and providing them with opportunities for professional development.

Reading Recovery is a highly structured intervention strategy to help children who have made almost no progress in reading and writing during their first year at school. But not all schools use Reading Recovery. First of all, an

They have a strong sense of why they are doing it and how it will work. Their reward is the satisfaction of knowing that they can change children's lives for the better

education authority must decide that it wants the programme to be available in its schools and then it has to acquire an accredited teacher-leader, explains Julia.

"The decision to train rests with the school, because there are staffing and funding implications in freeing up a qualified teacher to teach individual children."

To become a Reading Recovery teacher people have to take part in a one-year training course; to become a teacher-leader it takes two years. The first year involves studying at the Institute of Education (IOE) while teaching children in their education authority and the second is completed while working in the teacher-leader role, again in the education authority.





Teacher-leader training has taken place at the Reading Recovery National Network centre, based at the IOE, since 1991, and in 1997 became a master's level qualification – it is now an MA Literacy Learning and Literacy Difficulties (professional route).

Currently there are eight participants in their first year who, once a week, come together at the IOE for seminars with the Reading Recovery trainers.

As trainer Val Hindmarsh explains, the sessions are not about prescriptive teaching but are about “sharing and discussion”.

This was evident at a session in the late autumn. Members of the group were working in pairs from chapters of Marie Clay's new core text for Reading Recovery teachers – Literacy Lessons, Designed for Individuals, Parts 1 & 2 – discussing particular points and then reporting back to the class.

A great deal of discussion followed; concerns were aired and advice was given. The main concern seemed to be

that they didn't want to confuse a child who is already struggling to get to grips with reading and writing. Val reassured the group that the teaching isn't about being “right or wrong” but will often depend on the needs of the child.

“The training sessions can be challenging,” explains Val.

“When you learn all of these new strategies which are different to what you have been doing for years, confidence can take a dip,” she says. “You find high achievers doubting themselves.”

But participants agree that being challenged is no bad thing. Anne Davis, an experienced teacher and literacy consultant for Waltham Forest council, says: “It makes you challenge everything you thought before. It doesn't necessarily mean you change the way you think about things but it does challenge your thinking. It's a steep learning curve but it's fantastic.”

Anne explains that Waltham Forest council was offered funding to train a Reading Recovery teacher-leader from

How to become a Reading Recovery teacher

Teachers must have QTS recognised in the UK and Ireland and at least three years' teaching experience at early primary levels. Teacher training is a one-year part time in-service course. It consists of at least 22 intensive training sessions delivered by a teacher-leader at the Reading Recovery centre.

How to become a Reading Recovery teacher-leader

Applicants should have a good honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject plus two years' relevant experience. Normally, the student is based in the UK or Ireland and must be seconded by their employing education authority.

the Every Child A Reader campaign. This is a three-year project, launched in July 2005, which has brought together charities, businesses and government in a project to fund skilled Reading Recovery teachers in mainly inner-city schools.

Anne says when this opportunity came up she jumped at the chance.

“As literacy consultants we do an awful lot of work with Year 6 but it's too late to fix these problems by then,” she says, “this is about getting in there at the right time and preventing it before it happens.” ■

For more information on Reading Recovery see www.readingrecovery.org.uk or call 020 7612 6585



Photos: istockphoto.com

Paving the way

Once a teaching assistant always a teaching assistant?
Not necessarily, finds Helen Green

THE class is concentrating on group work. “Think about how it feels to work in a group,” says Claudia, the tutor. “First, think about a time when you were in a group that was working well together. How did it feel?”

The four or five people at each table launch into lively discussions as they share their experiences and apply their thoughts to the pupils they work with as classroom assistants in London primary schools.

The class is studying for the Institute of Education’s foundation degree course, set up in 2005 to encourage non-traditional students to enter higher education. The tutor is Claudia Lapping, who coordinates the two-year course, established to allow teaching assistants to gain a qualification using their experience at work.

Claudia says: “The course offers a genuinely accessible route into higher education for people who may not have had the opportunity to study at this level before. It’s also

incorporated into each part of the course.

“What’s exciting,” says Claudia, “is that it integrates a work-based approach to study into a multi-disciplinary course that includes modules in sociology, linguistics, psychology, policy and ICT.”

The course draws on all of the IOE’s expertise, from arts and humanities to science and technology. “Students learn from specialists,” says Claudia, “and tutors incorporate their research into their teaching.”

There are currently 48 students doing the foundation degree, all women except for three, ranging in age from early 20s to late 50s.

Two assignments are being discussed in Claudia’s class today. It’s the first session of the new module and the students have been asked to write a 1,500-word essay, either on friendship or on Piaget, and also to prepare a 10-minute oral presentation. Each group has to present a chapter from *A World of Babies*, a book about childcare in different societies around the world. The groups will work together to identify the main points of their chapter and plan their presentations. In this session, though, the focus is on the process of working together rather than the content. They are looking at models for analysing groups.

After the discussion at individual tables, the class comes up with words to describe how people feel when they’re part of a successful group: comfortable, inspired, secure, valued, respectful.

They go on to describe how they feel when a group isn’t working well together – isolated, frustrated, inadequate, undermined. Claudia points out that any kind of group work – any kind of learning – makes you vulnerable and liable to be overwhelmed by these kinds of negative feelings.

This strikes home. “Most of us felt that way when we started this course – we didn’t know what to expect,” says Brenda Dimmock, from Holy Trinity C of E Primary School in Camden.

Amanda Blanchett from St Charles Primary School in Kensington and Chelsea agrees. “The positive thing is that we can admit that we still feel like that,” she says and adds: “We’re starting

The course offers a genuinely accessible route into higher education for people who may not have had the opportunity to study at this level before

to open up to each other now.”

They relate their experiences of group work to a theory suggesting some ways that groups interact – working together towards a common goal, creating obstacles, or seeking support and direction from outside. At their tables, the students discuss whether groups they have worked with fit into these categories. Though the lesson is almost over the class is buzzing with enthusiasm and there is lots of laughter.

Graham Bird, from Edith Neville Primary School in Camden, shares how a girls’ football team that he coaches has been through all three of these stages.

“They used to blame each other. Then when I started coaching them, they just turned to me all the time. But now they



a path to career progression for people working in schools without a university qualification.”

Students continue to work while studying: they get one day’s release from school each week so that they can attend classes. Their practice is



Photos: Phil Meech

work so well together that they're top of the league," he smiles.

The first cohort of the foundation degree will graduate in April, and some will go on to train as teachers. Claudia is pleased with their progress: "They're fantastic to work with; they have energy and ideas and ask a lot of questions. For some it's been a leap into a culture they have no knowledge of; most wouldn't have had this opportunity before. And it shows in their work that they've all made masses of progress." ■

The IOE intends to launch a new foundation degree for people working with children and young people from birth to 18. Designed to fit in with the Every Child Matters agenda and multi-agency working, it will cater for people working with children in and out of school. It is expected to start later this year.

For more information about both courses call 020 7612 6327, or email fdenquiries@ioe.ac.uk

Helen Green is the IOE's media and communications officer



Liza Myers, a teaching assistant at Hargrave Park Primary School in Islington is currently in her second year of the foundation degree. She tells us about her experience

Unlike many of her fellow students Liza started the foundation degree on the same day she started work as a teaching assistant.

"I had been working in the school office and running the breakfast club for a while and the headteacher said I would make a brilliant teacher. I started looking out for courses and then a flier came through about this one," she explains. "I'm probably the only one in the class who hasn't been a teaching assistant for very long – many have been in the role for seven or ten years and have now decided to take it further."

Liza, 42, left school at 15 with one O-level and didn't have previous experience of academia.

"It's all brand new to me," she says, "but the course leaders prepare you well and are always on hand for any questions. "It's absolutely brilliant and I'm really enjoying it

but it is hard work. You have to dedicate a lot of time to it."

The class meets once a week for an all-day tutorial and Liza enjoys the fact that the subject matter they cover is wide-ranging.

"We have studied psychology, done a module on SEN and also worked on deepening our knowledge of science, English and maths.

It's very broad and covers the whole spectrum, so it gives you a good base.

"You also get to meet like-minded people," she adds, "and I've made friends for life."

She is now almost halfway through the second year of the course and recently decided to apply for the BEd honours degree at the Institute of Education.

"I've always wanted to work with children but I never saw myself as a teacher," she confesses. "But now it's all worked out."

Head start

At 30, Liz Robinson, of Surrey Square Junior School in Southwark, is one of the youngest headteachers in London. After teaching for two years at a primary school in Westminster, she became a fast track teacher. After an assistant and deputy headship, she was appointed head in her sixth year of teaching. But what's it like to be a young headteacher in an inner London school? Liz explains

I was inspired by my first head, Sally Hindle, who was dynamic and made the role seem exciting. I also wanted to have a bigger impact on more children, and fast track enabled me to network with others of like mind. It showed me the possibility for young, exciting leadership in education.

It's amazing being a head – nothing can prepare you. It's wonderful to see things really happening and changing, to see the impact of following through ideas. The volume of work can be overwhelming; you need to prioritise and be quick in making decisions. And you need to be friendly with your recycling bin!

I act as a filter to stop staff getting overwhelmed with initiatives. I have a wonderful staff team, and our

distributed leadership works really, really well. People take ownership of development; excitement and motivation abound. Ofsted gave us outstanding for leadership and management in October.

Because of my age, some people expect me to mess up. Credibility has not been an issue with parents, children or staff, but it has been with mostly other heads. But in general, people seem to judge more now on what you do than your age.

How am I coping? I get feedback and listen to it; I have coaching sessions as well as sessions with a mentor, friends

and family. I've grown so much as a person; I think you have to be secure in yourself to make an impact. I also keep a life going outside – I sing in a gospel choir, for example.

London, like all major cities, has specific challenges. My school is over 40 per cent free school meals, and over 70 per cent EAL. Very poor housing, crime and drugs are on our doorstep. Behaviour and attitudes reflect this.

I was inspired by my first head, Sally Hindle, who was dynamic and made the role seem exciting. I also wanted to have a bigger impact on more children, and fast track enabled me to network with others of like mind

The school is one of the only common community institutions and has to serve many different functions.

We have introduced core values – compassion, respect, responsibility, unity, enjoyment and success – all the school community knows about them and we are explicitly teaching the children these skills.

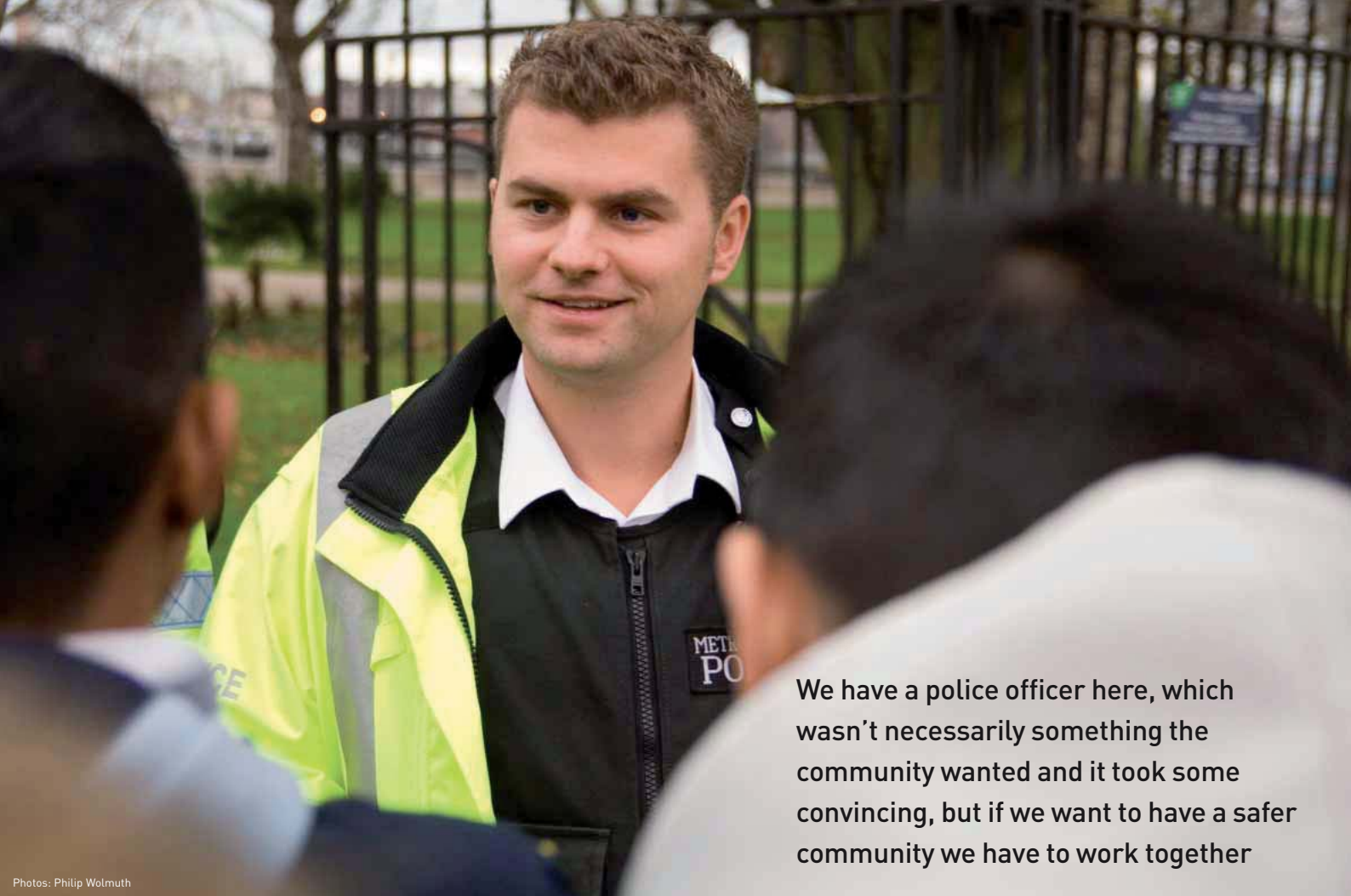
I think other young teachers should only consider becoming heads if they are really committed to being a leader. It's not an easy option, but for those who are interested and committed, it's a wonderful career and I would support them every step of the way. We desperately need more talent in educational leadership, and for those who are up to it, I'd certainly advise them to go for it.

Take a risk and don't let small-minded people tell you it's not possible – it is! Come and visit Surrey Square any time!" ■





How am I coping? I get feedback and listen to it; I have coaching sessions as well as sessions with a mentor, friends and family



We have a police officer here, which wasn't necessarily something the community wanted and it took some convincing, but if we want to have a safer community we have to work together

Schools in

By the year 2010 all schools are expected to offer extended services to children and their families. For some schools the transition will be easy; for others there will be many difficulties to overcome. Karen Shead asks two headteachers for their thoughts

THE opening statement in the new prospectus for George Green's Secondary School sums up the school ethos. "This school is all about people," it reads. "Everyone is valued and is fully included."

These are the words of the school principal, Kenny Frederick, who is passionate in her belief that it is not only every child that matters, but every person.

The school's new prospectus, aptly entitled Every Pupil Matters, tells you all you need to know about the school and

how it has embraced the government's Every Child Matters agenda. It gives examples of how the school has worked towards the agenda's five outcomes, including achieving the Healthy Schools Award, having a police officer on site, and offering a varied programme of activities to give children the opportunity to enjoy and achieve.

Two years ago, the school, an 11–19 comprehensive with 1,250 pupils in the Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets, was awarded full-service extended school status.

"We have always done inclusion work; inclusion is our byword," Kenny (pictured on page 24) stresses. "Every Child Matters and inclusion are the same thing in our opinion."

Before the school received full-service status it already offered many of the services an extended school is expected to provide. After-school activities, study support classes and community sports programmes were already in place. There have, however, been some obvious changes: there is a social worker on site and the school receives a weekly visit from a family therapist.

"We have always had multi-agency work going on but this has allowed us to do it more formally," Kenny explains. "We have a police officer here, which wasn't necessarily something the community wanted and it took some convincing,

but if we want to have a safer community we have to work together.

“There is also a full-time social worker based at the school and because we are a training school we have social work students in the school the same way we have trainee teachers,” she says. “We are constantly learning about each other’s professions.

“There’s a lot going on and it can be a bit of a headache,” she confesses. “Heads worry about how you manage all of these people and it is a challenge, but we talk to each other. It’s about effective communication.”

The school currently employs more support staff – many of whom live in the local community – than teachers.

“The biggest thing I’ve learned by getting the community on board is that your sphere of influence is much wider,” says Kenny. “It also means you can hand things back to the community and create sustainability,

It’s not just the work of heads; it’s not about me doing all of this,” she stresses. “It’s about sharing responsibility, valuing people, developing staff, distributing the leadership and trusting others to do it.”

The guidelines on extended schools state that teachers will not have to deliver services or take on extra responsibilities but instead will work with existing private and voluntary sector childcare providers and with support staff.

“The other argument about being an extended school is that it takes you away from learning,” says Kenny. “But if you take all of this away, what will the learning look like? We get the kids in the right frame of mind so the teachers can teach and the kids can learn.”

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work for the Island Sports Trust – a charitable organisation based at the school which provides a service to the community. It has a manager and eight part-time workers who are responsible for managing and facilitating community use of the school’s sports facilities.

“It is run and managed by young people,” says Stella. “And they get so much from it. It’s about giving them responsibility in a structured way.”

The Island Sports Trust is a social enterprise and is not a profit-making organisation. “You get money through the use of the site and the building, so it funds itself,” says Stella. “You have to invest time initially and then maybe in two or three years’ time you will get a payback on your investment.”

All in all, Kenny is pleased with the results and has nothing but praise for the ECM agenda. “It’s the best thing since sliced bread,” she says. “It allows us to support children and their families.

“We have to accept a wider role in the community and that is why we work with so many different people. We have learned huge amounts from all of this and it can only be beneficial.”

In three years’ time every school is expected to offer extended services and Kenny Frederick’s advice is to ►



Involving young people has also been a key aspect of the school’s success, says Stella. One project the school runs which highlights this is the Millennium Volunteers Project. It encourages 16- to 24-year-olds to volunteer in their community. Many of the volunteers have gone on to

which is what it’s all about.”

Community involvement has long been a priority for the school. In 1998 the school appointed a community senior leader, Stella Bailey, who is now deputy head extended schools.

“Schools need someone on the leadership team dedicated to getting the community involved so the responsibility doesn’t fall to teachers,” Stella says.

Kenny nods in agreement. “The fear people have is that they are going to have to do everything on their own.

An extended school provides a range of services and activities to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community. It should provide the following services:

- high quality childcare 8am to 6pm all year round
- a varied programme of activities
- parenting support including family learning sessions
- swift and easy referral to a wide

range of specialist support services such as speech therapy and family support

- provide wider community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities, including adult learning.

Not all schools will be expected to offer extended services from their own sites. Activities and services can be provided through the school site, at a nearby school or through a local provider.



It's not just the work of heads; it's not about me doing all of this. It's about sharing responsibility

do it sooner rather than later.

"Schools are probably doing most of it already and my advice is to do it now," she says. "The benefits are great."

But not all school heads believe the transition will be so easy.

Laura Wynne, headteacher of Argyle Primary School in Camden, which is a partly designated extended school, says that although the school already offers many of the activities prescribed on the extended schools "menu" (including a breakfast club, after-school clubs, lifelong activities, ESOL classes for parents, literacy classes for families, and access to family counselling services and play services through Camden council) they still have many obstacles to overcome before becoming a

full-service extended school.

"Much of what is going to be offered is a good idea but I have several reservations on some aspects of what is expected," she says. "My personal reservation is that a school is not the best place for 8 to 6 care. We have never provided childcare and we have to break down the problems associated with it and the logistics of it.

"Funding will also be an issue," she adds.

Laura believes schools will benefit from a support team, something which Kenny and Stella highlighted as the key to George Green's success.

"The workload will come in the managing of things," says Laura. "You have to employ a support team, a very high standard workforce who will work

to the school standards, understand its ethos, history, and policies, and another member of staff who has a different set of skills as a leader.

"It's an enormous amount of work," she stresses. "We have got a lot to think about."

Peter Moss, head of the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the IOE, has done research on extended schools. He points out that the process may be challenging, but the outcomes could benefit pupils.

"The process of change may not be easy," he says, "but the potential benefits of rethinking and reforming education and the school can be substantial for the general development and well-being of children and young people." ■

Reading aid

A GOVERNMENT announcement made in December that help will be given to 30,000 children a year with reading

difficulties by 2010–11 was welcomed by Jean Gross, director of Every Child a Reader (ECAR).

"We are delighted that the government has decided to roll out the Every Child a Reader programme nationally," she said. "This will make a huge difference to the lives of children who struggle to learn to read, especially those who live in poverty."

ECAR, which was set up in 2005, is a three-year, £10 million project that aims to show that, with the right resources, it is possible to help almost all children with literacy problems.

It does this by placing specialist literacy teachers

trained in Reading Recovery into schools to provide intensive one-to-one support to struggling readers aged six.

Research published in November showed that children who had the extra tuition made an average gain of 21 months in reading age in four to five months of teaching – well over four times the normal rate of progress.

- For more information on Reading Recovery, see page 16



Foundation stage for early years

A NEW framework for those who work in early years settings is due to come into force from September 2008.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) will be the phase of learning and development for children between birth and the end of the academic year in which they turn five.

It will be implemented in all registered early years settings as well as state and independent schools.

The new framework aims to ensure that all young children have access to an integrated learning and care experience which enables them to achieve the best outcomes.

A new act

KEY reforms to raise standards, give parents more choice and schools more freedom to innovate took a step forward in November when the Education and Inspections Bill gained Royal Assent.

Under the new reforms schools will, for the first time, have the statutory power to impose discipline on pupils.

The Act also extends schools' power to make parents take responsibility for their child's actions, allow for the creation of trust schools, and guarantee there will be no return to selection by ability – from admissions for September 2008 all arrangements must be in line with the new code.

Also, the 14–19 entitlement, as laid out in the Act, will come into force in 2013, when all young people will have access to 14 different diplomas.

Education secretary Alan Johnson said: "The measures contained within the Act are about raising standards across the board, especially for the most disadvantaged. We want every child to reach their full potential."



Photo: Phil Meech

Stepping up

The London Centre for Leadership in Learning (LCLL) has designed a framework of professional development courses to meet the opportunities and challenges that working in London offers. Vivienne Porritt describes some of these

OVER 300 languages are spoken in London's schools and 38 per cent of England's pupils from ethnic minorities attending state secondary schools are educated in the capital. The teaching workforce is young and mobile and there is a need for the wider workforce to reflect the diversity of the community.

London's pupils also bring specific challenges. Six per cent are the children of refugees and asylum seekers; there are high levels of pupil mobility and a high proportion of pupils who have suffered loss or bereavement. So the demand for continuing professional development, personalised to the needs of the individual, the school and the London context, is strong.

The capital has a high percentage

of overseas-trained teachers. There is a shortage of teachers for certain subjects, meaning that teachers may find themselves having to teach outside their specialist fields.

High teacher turnover is also widespread, especially early in a teacher's career. Add to this the numbers of teachers achieving leadership roles early in their careers and increasing numbers of support staff and CPD becomes all the more crucial.

Subject-based CPD is important, as are opportunities for professional and leadership training for teachers, support staff and the wider community.

At LCLL a key priority is to design tailor-made opportunities. In Waltham Forest, for example, we collaborated with the local authority and primary

heads to create a seven-month programme for aspiring leaders.

Investing in Diversity is another course we offer. This is a year-long course for primary and secondary black and minority ethnic teachers who would like to move into leadership positions. And another key opportunity in London is Chartered London Teacher status, which was set up to recognise and reward teachers' achievements.

We also run short courses, seminars, conferences, accredited courses offering an opportunity to gain further qualifications, and leadership programmes such as Leading from the Middle, Leadership Pathways and the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH).

But CPD does not have to mean a visit to the Institute of Education. Our tutors and consultants go out to schools for diagnostic visits, and we offer support for all aspects of individual, team and school development. Currently we are working with schools and local authorities to ensure that the new performance management regulations will motivate staff and improve learning for children and young people.

There is no doubt that CPD has moved centre stage, and here at the LCLL we see it as being at the heart of a professional learning community and school improvement. ■

For further information about CPD courses and programmes available, visit www.ioe.ac.uk/lcll

Vivienne Porritt is head of CPD in the London Centre for Leadership in Learning, part of the Institute of Education



Photos: Phil Meech Halley Street Primary School



Over 300 languages are spoken in London's schools and 38 per cent of England's pupils from ethnic minorities attending state secondary schools are educated in the capital

AMIR LEMOUCHI is a Year 5 teacher and team leader at Chapel End Primary School in Walthamstow. He is currently taking part in a tailor-made programme for aspiring leaders.

“ I don't want to be in a class for 40 years. I want to take on more responsibility, and this programme gives me a wider idea of what it is like to lead a school. It encourages you to think about managing people, what it means to manage well, how your opinions can influence a school and what you want to get out of children.

There are different professionals from the Institute of Education teaching the course and they are putting us in contact with headteachers in Waltham Forest. In one session we had the whole morning to talk to the head of a school.

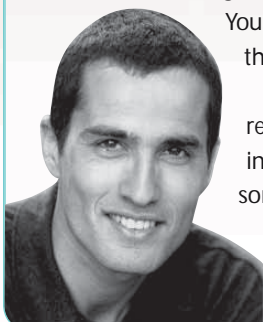
We had the opportunity to ask anything we wanted to and we were told what it was like, realistically, to lead a school.

There are seven units and each lasts one or two full days. Each unit covers a specific topic and is taught by a different consultant. One of the units we worked on was about leadership and raising pupils' achievements.

You have to be reflective and think about what you are good at and what you need to work at.

You know you are going to develop the skills you need.

I'm enjoying it and I would recommend it to people who are interested in becoming a leader in some shape or form. The next step for me would be to do the NPOH; this is a really good taster and it gears you up towards that. ”



NEENA SADIQ, assistant headteacher at Southborough High School, Kingston, recently completed the Investing in Diversity course.

“ It is a very rigorous programme. We started off with a residential week, which was nice but hard work. It was fulfilling, informative and self-reflective. We realised what we were doing in terms of our personal strategies and looked at areas for improvement. It set us up for what we were letting ourselves in for!

We then had a session once a month for the year. I attended every single one because they were that valuable to me and I didn't want to miss anything. We covered all different aspects of leadership and management.

You also make a lot of friends and become aware of what's happening on the other side of London; you are not just in your insular borough.

As a result I know my confidence has grown. I feel sure of myself in terms of how to approach things, what to do in a specific situation, how to prioritise and how to manage crises if they arise.

I've applied to go on to do the NPOH; 18 months ago I never thought I would do that. It was the Investing in Diversity programme which gave me the confidence to do this.

This course gets you ready for leadership: you will be well-informed about education in London. I have learned so much valuable information. It has been one of my best experiences. ”



Rights of passage

The onset of puberty and developing maturity has implications for the management of 14–19 learning, says Paul Grainger

THERE are good reasons for regarding 14–19 as a distinct phase of education. Young people increasingly know their own minds, wish to express their individuality and want to take more control over determining

Policymakers have come to focus on this phase as being vital for future economic performance. But according to some indicators, the performance of the English system is not as good as that of other advanced economies. Quite

rightly, the Nuffield Foundation has invested in a review of education and training 14–19 to try to identify factors behind relative performance and to assess how well young people are equipped for their future social and economic lives.

But although this

phase is perceived as part of a continuity, it really entails a major split at age 16. Attendance is a legal requirement before this age but currently not thereafter. The GCSE exam dominates all assessment at 16 but does not fit in with the wider range of choices after 16.

There is a step change into college or sixth-form life: often a new building, frequently far away. Much prior learning is set aside. Students have to adapt to new ways of working, different patterns of learning and curricula, an unfamiliar institutional vocabulary and different peer groups. For many this can be refreshing, heralding a new stage of approaching adulthood. But it splits the post- and pre-16 aspects of this phase, and therein may lie some of its weaknesses.

It takes many years and a determined policy programme to change an infrastructure, and the demands on 14–19 are too immediate. The solution, which finally has the full support of the DfES and the Learning and Skills Council, is partnership. It will take time to set aside institutional barriers: indeed there is some concern that the Building Schools for the Future programme may reinforce them. It will take legislation to change legal frameworks, but a culture of cooperation may be achieved more quickly.

However, there is a contradiction. For many years a market mindset has fostered competition between schools and colleges. One consequence of this has been a certain uniformity: competition has made all schools look similar, and colleges, too. We have lost, over the years, individuality and specialist courses.

Strongly led, collaborative partnerships could break down the institutional divide, promote progression and continuity and widen choice. Giving students access to a wider range of provision means that more school pupils will be able to attend college during key stage 4, and specialist provision can be made available to a much larger group of young people.

But partnerships are a complex dynamic. In a system where the encouragement of competition may still outweigh the drivers for collaboration, finding compatible partnership arrangements and developing structures for mutual benefit may prove to be a continuing challenge.

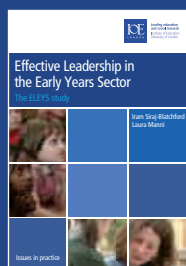
Paul Grainger is research and development officer for the London Region Post-14 Network, based at the Institute of Education. Details from www.ioe.ac.uk/leid/post14



Photos: Philip Welmoth

their future. There is a growing ability to manage elements of their own learning, and also an ability to resist aspects of the curriculum, or of school or college life, which are not seen as useful.

At this time, learners begin a formal process of external accreditation which will determine their career and fix their status in society. They now select subjects and courses that match their interests and aspirations. As they progress, there is increasing emphasis on specialisation, relevance and preparation for higher education or employment. Sadly, it is during this phase that as many as two out of ten young people disengage from education, training or employment and become part of an ongoing social and welfare problem.



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