



ESHA magazine

EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2010

There is no quick fix against bullying

Scotland's new curriculum

**Celebrating ten years
of the EOA**



COLOPHON _

ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in across Europe. ESHA Magazine will be published ten times between now and the end of the school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

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ESHA is a Foundation that consists of 32 Associations of Heads and Educational employers in 25 European countries in primary, secondary and vocational education.

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Dear ESHA friends and members,

This is our fourth Magazine. As promised, from this month we would like to publish this magazine monthly. To do so we do need your feedback and lots of articles from member organisations. Do not hesitate to share your ideas or experience with 85,000 principals all over Europe. And not just European School Heads read this magazine, we also receive positive feedback from all over the world. This is the strength of internet.

Although summer holidays differ in the various European countries, by now all schools will have re-opened. I hope that all of you have started in good health and with renewed energy to improve education for our kids. The ESHA Board and ESHA office are both fully operational. We received the outcome of our bid as part of the Comenius Regio program. We just missed it (on 2 points!). Though this was a disappointing experience, we think we've found a new way to bring ESHA ideals further by sending in a proposal for a new European Grant. In August the ESHA Board met in Utrecht to make the next steps possible. In the mean time we've started with our working program, building the European Leadership Network. To help us realise our ambitions we've contracted a program manager named Fred Verboon to help us to build this network. More on this when we all meet in Cyprus in November. Have you already registered? If not please go to www.eshaz2010.com and do it now. Don't miss it. I wish you all the best in the new school year. ◀◀

Finland: Small secondary schools — problems and solutions

BY JUKKA O. MATTILA, PRESIDENT OF THE FINNISH ASSOCIATION OF SMALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS, FASSS

Tightening public spending, diminishing age groups and general migration from the countryside to urban areas have created problems to the educational situation of remote areas all around Europe. These issues are especially marked in Finland, where lots of small communities are scattered over a wide land area. To encourage discussion about the problems and solutions of this topic, I take Finnish small secondary schools as a case.

In Finland mainly private local associations, not the state or municipalities, have founded most of the Finnish secondary schools (later, practically all of these schools have gone under communal ownership). Partly because of this local background, partly due to the sparse population of the country, the size of Finnish upper secondary schools is generally very small by international comparisons. Out of the almost

400 Finnish upper secondary schools about 140, i.e. more than 30%, have less than 120 students (on three grades: school years 10-12). At the other end, the largest Finnish upper secondary schools comprise about 1000 students. Currently there is a tendency of merging urban medium size schools into these new “giant” schools, as they are called.



Jukka Mattila

Therefore, the number of medium size schools is diminishing. However, the small secondary schools have very successfully fought for their existence. Communities stick by their small schools because of their importance for the cultural and economical well being of the whole community. Instead of the secondary schools, communal cuts of spending have focused on small elementary schools. From year 1991 till 2008 the number of small elementary schools with less than 50 pupils declined from 2084 to 777.

The quality of teaching is remarkably even in all corners of Finland. This concerns also secondary education.

Further, the annual ranking lists of

the matriculation exams show no significant difference between small and larger schools. Therefore, the quality is not the problem. However, the quantity of pupils is a critical factor.

To counteract the effects of diminishing age groups and migration to the cities, The Finnish Association of Small Secondary Schools, FASSS (member of ESHA), was founded in 2002. FASSS represents the small Finnish secondary schools in relation to the national authorities and the media.



Currently, FASSS comprises 137 schools that are located mainly in rural and scattered areas. In the Finnish school world, FASSS member schools are the leading users of modern IT learning facilities for distance education. FASSS member schools have created a number of distance courses for their mutual exchange and benefit. Besides the annual national and local meetings for teachers, FASSS member school Principals have a joint email platform. This platform is closed from outsiders, providing quick professional peer assistance for even the most delicate daily problems.

« Out of the almost 400 Finnish upper secondary schools about 140 have less than 120 students »

The annual 64 page Benchmarking Guide of FASSS member schools is a rich source of innovative educational practice. Publication of the Guide was started ten years ago, so the 2010 issue is the 10th anniversary. In the Guide, each of the 137 schools presents their own good practices they would like to introduce to other schools.

In the European scale, a lot more of research and cooperation would be needed to address the current problems of small schools in general. ◀

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Agenda 2010

August 30

ESHA board meeting Utrecht

September 24–25

ESHA regional Conference in Budapest

October 13–15

Third ESHA regional Conference German Speaking ESHA members in Landau („Schulleitung in Innovationsprozessen – welche Rolle spielt die Schulform, welche die Größe der Schule?“)

October 15

deadline for new EC grant application

November 4–6

ESHA biennial conference Limassol Cyprus.
(www.eshaz010.com)

Norway: There's no quick fix against bullying

MRS. SOLVEIG HVIDSTEN DAHL, PRESIDENT, NORWEGIAN UNION OF SCHOOL LEADERS (NUSL)

Bullying is on the rise in Norwegian schools. The increase in upper middle school relates to a rise in cyber bullying. How is the situation in European schools at large?

Our worst suspicion has become reality. Bullying is once again on the rise in Norwegian schools.

Bullying darkens every school day for thousands of Norwegian pupils. The last couple of years have seen an ugly rise in the statistics. The positive effect former Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik initiated by launching his Manifesto against Bullying, has unfortunately withered away. This development must be stopped before it's too late. Remember, Bondevik's offensive reduced the overall rate of bullying in school by 30 percent from 2001 until 2004. Hard effort works. Relentless labor's exactly what's needed to counteract bullying – the major threat to every European school's vulnerable learning climate.



On the rise

Now bullying is once again rising as the number one threat against a well-functioning learning environment in schools across the country. Our current Educational Minister, Kristin Halvorsen, has placed the problem on the agenda. The recent National Pupil's Survey confirms that one in five pupils experiences bullying in Norwegian schools. This number is stable, and certainly not satisfactory, given all the government measures taken against bullying. The next national school review covers learning environment. We need to reveal if the school's measures against bullying, and the national legislation itself, serves their purpose. The Education Minister doesn't rule out the possibility of creating a national ombudsman for bullying, comparable to the Children's ombudsman which already is an institution in Norwegian society.

That is about time, the way we see it. After PM Bondevik's Manifesto against Bullying scientific programs meant to reduce or prevent bullying experienced a significant rise in popularity. Now the leader of one of the programs, called Zero, Mr. Gaute Auestad, reports that bullying in upper middle school has risen by 144 percent from 2004 until 2008. Is this representative for the situation in other European countries? Why is it so in Norway? The demand for scientific programs is dropping. This is by itself discouraging. Likewise, we see that even schools which have completed such a program, still experience an upsurge in bullying. This is especially disturbing.

Continuous effort needed

There isn't a quick fix against bullying, the way we in The Union of Norwegian School Leaders see it. Mr. Auestad, master of the Zero-program, agrees with us. Efforts against bullying need to be sustained over a significant time period. Year by year programs and strategies must be applied to keep up the pace in order to sustain the positive effects of completing an anti-bullying program. A continuous application of behavior rules, attitude work and team effort between school management and teachers are as such needed. Professor in Behavioral Studies at the University of Stavanger, Mr. Erling Roland, supports this view. He claims that the recent increase in reform policies in Norwegian schools have diverted resources that could have been used in the fight against bullying. It is likely that the school's second social responsibility, that being creating socialized and free-thinking individuals, has paid the prize for this.

« Unmerciful reality shows serve as inspiration and fuel for bullies »

Creating well-socialized and empathic individuals must not be stacked at the bottom of the school's to-do list. Learning results are of course of utmost importance. School managers should still be granted sufficient resources to manage both tasks equally well. Bullying needs to be addressed constantly. Mr. Bondevik claimed that fighting bullying

is a leader's responsibility. We couldn't agree more, and are prepared to lead the way on the battlefield.

The threat of cyber bullying

There's no doubt that the growth in bullying is closely linked with an increase in violence in the media. Our Union, the Master of the Zero-program and school scientist Ingrid Lund at the University of Agder agrees. Lund

conveys that the influence of media and the society at large reduces the threshold that prevents bullying. Tasteless and violent reality shows serve as inspiration and fuel for bullies. We as adults cannot shirk our responsibility of being upstanding role models. Also, schools don't deserve to become a trash bin for every problem our society neglects elsewhere. Just as important as continuous awareness, is up-to-date countermeasures against new forms of bullying. Mr. Roland and Mr. Auestad argue that the significant rise in bullying comes as a result of the rise in cyber bullying specifically.



Cell-phone harassment, harassment through social media, and the Internet at large, constitute a vast percentage of reported cases of bullying in Norwegian schools. The bully stalks the victim from school and all the way home. All the way into bed even, so to speak. School managers should therefore be allowed to implement stricter restrictions on especially the pupil's use of social media during the school day. We must not lose the battle against bullying in school. If we fail, we will create a situation that will haunt the pupil, and render him or her into a loser in our modern knowledge based digital society. Courage and awareness amongst governmental regulatory institutions together with enlightened school managers are the keys to eliminating bullying. There is no time to lose – bullying as a phenomenon will not go away by itself. ◀

Sources: Telephone interviews with:

- *Mr. Gaute Auestad, University of Stavanger*
- *Professor Erling Roland, University of Stavanger*
- *Mrs. Ingrid Lund, University of Agder*
- *The National Pupil's Survey by the Educational State department*
- *Zero-program statistics, University of Stavanger*

Scotland's New Curriculum — Curriculum for Excellence

BY PRESIDENT, IRENE MATIER, AN ARTICLE ON THE NEW CURRICULUM WHICH IS BEING INTRODUCED IN SCOTLAND, CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE (CFE).
PART II¹

For many years the Scottish curriculum has been recognized as having much strength. Prior to the introduction of curriculum for excellence there existed a well-respected curriculum for 3 to 5 year olds, a broad 5-14 curriculum, Standard Grade courses and a National Qualifications structure carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils at different stages. However, the various parts were developed separately and, taken together; they no longer provided the best basis for an excellent education for every child. To fully prepare today's children for adult life in the 21st century a curriculum that is less crowded, better connected and able to offer more choice and enjoyment was needed.



¹ First part of this article has been published in ESHA magazine 3 July 2010

In November 2003 a Review Group was set up to identify the purposes of education 3 to 18 and principles for the design of the curriculum. The Group was asked to take account of the views expressed during the National Debate, current research and international comparisons. As well as educational factors, the Group considered global factors which would have strong influences on the aims and purposes of education over the coming decades, including changing patterns of work, increased knowledge of how children learn and the potential of new technologies to enrich learning. In addition the Group was asked to take a broad view of children's development, within the wider framework of Integrated Children's Services, bearing in mind the wide range of adults directly involved in the education of children and young people, in early years centers, schools, and colleges and out of school learning. The result of this work is *A Curriculum for Excellence*. Each child has an enormous capacity for learning and the potential to achieve in different ways.

« Each child has an enormous capacity for learning and the potential to achieve in different ways »

Curriculum for Excellence applies to all children and young people from their earliest contact with the education system through to the time they leave school as young adults. It applies to the experiences provided in the different places where they go to learn: early years centers and nurseries; schools; and to colleges and others working in partnership with schools.

Because children learn through all of their experiences – in the family and community, pre-school centre, nursery and school – the curriculum needs to recognize and complement the contributions that these experiences can make.

It is designed to convey knowledge which is considered to be important and to promote the development of values, understanding and capabilities. It is concerned both with what is to be learned and how it is taught. The curriculum affects us all.



The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence is to ensure that all the children and young people of Scotland develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future. These are summed up in the aims of Curriculum for Excellence and the detailed wording of what are called the four capacities. These aims are that every child and young person should know they are valued and will be supported to become a successful learner, an effective contributor, a confident individual and a responsible citizen. These are the four capacities.



The Four Capacities Expanded

Successful learners

With:

- Enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- Determination to reach high standards of achievement
- Openness to new thinking and ideas

And able to:

- Use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- Use technology for learning
- Think creatively and independently
- Learn independently and as part of a group
- Make reasoned evaluations
- Link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

Confident individuals

With:

- Self-respect
- A sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being
- Secure values and beliefs
- Ambition

And able to:

- Relate to others and manage themselves
- Pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- Be self-aware
- Develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- Live as independently as they can
- Assess risk and make informed decisions
- Achieve success in different areas of activity

Responsible citizens

With:

- Respect for others commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

And be able to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- Understand different beliefs and cultures
- Make informed choices and decisions
- Evaluate environmental, scientific and technical issues
- Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

Effective contributors

With:

- An enterprising attitude
- Resilience
- Self-reliance

And able to:

- Communicate in different ways and different settings
- Work in partnership[and in teams
- Take the initiative and lead
- Apply critical thinking in new contexts
- Create and develop
- Solve problems

Experiences and outcomes have been developed for each curriculum area which build in the attributes and capabilities which support the development of the four capacities.



The expanded statements of the four capacities can also form a very useful focus for planning choices and next steps in learning. The attributes and capabilities can be used by establishments as a guide to assess whether the curriculum for any individual child or young person sufficiently reflects the purposes of the curriculum.

Taken as a whole, the experiences and outcomes embody the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities.

The changes brought about by Curriculum for Excellence should lead to improved quality of learning and teaching and increased attainment and achievement for all children and young people in Scotland, including those who need additional support in their learning.

We now have a single curriculum 3-18 which will be supported by a simple and effective structure of assessment and qualifications: this will allow the right pace and challenge for young people, particularly at critical points like the move from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary.

There will be greater choice and opportunity, earlier, for young people, to help them realize their individual talents and to help close the opportunity gap by better engaging those who currently switch off from formal education too young.

« The changes brought about by Curriculum for Excellence should lead to improved quality of learning and teaching and increased attainment and achievement for all children and young people in Scotland, including those who need additional support in their learning »

There should be more space in the curriculum for work in depth, and to ensure that young people develop the literacy, numeracy and other essential skills and knowledge they will need for life and work. There also should be more space for sport, music, dance, drama, art, learning about health, sustainable development and enterprise, and other activities that broaden the life experiences and life chances of young people. The curriculum is underpinned by the four values inscribed on the mace of the Scottish Parliament – wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity. These words have helped define values for Scottish society, and should help young people in Scotland define their own position on matters of social justice and personal and collective responsibility.

The Guidance

Teachers have been provided with all the outcomes and experiences for each area of the curriculum and also a series of guidance documents:

- Building the Curriculum 1: the contribution of the curriculum areas
- Building the Curriculum 2: active learning in the early years
- Building the Curriculum 3: a framework for learning and teaching
- Building the Curriculum 4: skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- Building the Curriculum 5: the assessment framework (still to be published)

Building the Curriculum 1 was published in autumn 2006, as the first in the series of documents designed to support planning for the curriculum as a whole.

‘Building the Curriculum 1’ focused on the curriculum areas, each of which makes its own unique contribution to developing the four capacities of children and young people.





The foundation for this thinking was Progress and Proposals, and was then further informed by the education profession's response. It explains that each curriculum area makes its own unique contribution to developing the four capacities of children and young people, both within its own disciplinary contexts and through connections with other areas of learning. It draws on classroom practice to describe some of these contributions and possible connections.

Building the Curriculum 2 – active learning in the early years has already had considerable impact in both pre-5 establishments and in the early stages of primary education. Active learning is making the transition easier for children as the curriculum for the pre-school sector and the early years of primary are presented as one level. Children learn by doing, thinking and exploring with appropriate skilled intervention and teaching.



Building the Curriculum 3 – a framework for learning and teaching

aims to assist teachers in developing their understanding of the framework and how to use it as a technical document for curriculum planning. It clarifies that curriculum is the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated, the purpose is to help children achieve the four capacities and outlines their entitlement. It challenges all those involved in planning the curriculum to work as partners to provide more opportunities for vocational education and the need to promote greater flexibility and creativity. In addition, there is a continuing need to ‘raise the bar’ to ensure that young people are challenged to achieve to their maximum potential.

‘Building the Curriculum 3’ provides a framework for curriculum planners to meet these challenges and opportunities:

- a definition and purpose for the curriculum
- principles for curriculum design
- the central place of the experiences and outcomes and
- a range of entitlements for all children and young people.



It does not provide a set of templates which can be applied across the system – there is a need for models to be developed at local level to address local needs and circumstances.

There are implications for leadership at all levels and for continuing professional development.

Establishments and partners at all levels in the system must consider and reflect on the framework and to consider how, individually and in partnership, they can adopt the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence.

Building the Curriculum 4 – skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

Published in 2009 by the Scottish Government, it sets out key messages about how children and young people develop and apply skills as part of Curriculum for Excellence, so as to bring about the transformational changes needed to improve the life chances of young people in Scotland.

It is clearly stated that all children and young people are entitled to opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work. The skills are relevant from the early year's right through to the senior phase of learning and should provide them with a sound basis for their development as lifelong learners in their adult, social and working lives.

The skills should be developed across all curriculum areas, in interdisciplinary studies and in all the contexts and settings where young people are learning. Opportunities to develop skills may be offered in different ways appropriate to learners' needs, whether through active learning, interdisciplinary tasks or the experience of learning in practical contexts.

The skills include literacy, numeracy and associated thinking skills; skills for health and wellbeing, including personal learning planning, career management skills, working with others, leadership and physical co-ordination and movement skills; and skills for enterprise and employability.

Building the Curriculum 5 – the assessment framework

While this document has still to be finalised and published we do have a clear document setting out the government's strategy.

Standards and expectations will be defined in a way that reflects the principles of Curriculum for Excellence. This will support greater breadth and depth of learning and a greater focus on skills development including higher order skills.

A national system of quality assurance and moderation for 3 – 18 will be developed to support teachers in achieving greater consistency and confidence in their professional judgments.

A National Assessment Resource will help teachers to achieve greater consistency and understanding in their professional judgments. There will also be a major focus on CPD to help teachers develop the skills required.

Scottish Education is certainly at a crucial point. If we are to succeed in breaking Scotland's historic cycles of poverty, deprivation, health inequalities and poor attainment, we need curriculum for excellence to deliver its potential.

We live in exciting and challenging times! ◀

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/curriculumoverview/aims/fourcapacities.asp>



Partnership with Ghana

BY IAN BAUCKHAM

Just under two years ago, ASCL (the Association of School and College Leaders in the United Kingdom) made the decision to collaborate with two other organisations to launch Project Ghana. The two organisations concerned are Sabre Charitable Trust, and World Challenge. Sabre is a small independent charity working under UK law which has as its principal aim the improvement of schools in poor rural parts of Ghana, West Africa (www.sabretrust.org). World Challenge is a large and long established operator specialising in challenging and adventurous expeditions for groups of young people, usually in remote and demanding parts of the world.

The three-way partnership has developed a unique opportunity for schools in the United Kingdom to become partners with schools in Ghana, using a structured programme of partnership activities and education, and after a period of partnership, which may include reciprocal teacher visits in preparation, a group visit to Ghana by students from the UK school. ASCL's role is to find the schools and be a channel of communication with them, as well as endorsing the 'product'. ASCL is also able to provide some limited financial support through its own charitable fundraising – for example, the proceeds of a new published guide to Ofsted, written by an ASCL member, have been generously donated to supporting the project. World Challenge's role is to arrange the expedition, and Sabre's to find the Ghanaian schools and manage the contribution to them, as well as being the 'on the ground' source of local knowledge. ASCL has a history of supporting outreach and charitable projects of this kind – the last one was in response to the Asian tsunami and focussed support on Sri Lanka.

As chair of ASCL's International Committee, I was privileged to visit Ghana in February 2010 to see for myself the work of Sabre and learn more about the possibilities of the project.

The programme for my visit was carefully planned from the start, and commenced with a briefing meeting at the Sabre HQ. I realised by the end of the week that progression was built in – an easy first morning looking at the slave fort which dominates Elmina, the town on the coast in Western Ghana where Sabre is based, followed by brief accompanied visits to a range of schools, some in a poor state of repair, then a day alone with a Ghanaian aspiring teacher in his home village, and finally participation in the inauguration of the brand new kindergarten built by Sabre.

Accommodation and food were in a lodge sandwiched between two resort hotels directly on the coast. It was simple but adequate for the ...✦

purpose, and the way in which it was set up and run helped to reinforce Sabre's commitment to environmentally sensitive development, using local materials – the contrast between it and the resort hotels either side was marked.

Sabre is completely committed to working with local communities, is aware of the danger of imposing alien solutions on communities, and of the risk of creating long term dependency models. The extent of local networks it has was clear to me, as was the level of trust which clearly exists between local leaders and communities and Sabre. There is an emphasis in terms of new school provision on kindergartens, and Sabre staff were aware of the importance of good early years education in laying the foundations for progression later.



They also work within a strong ethical framework, for example they are careful to evaluate requests for expenditure and support against their agreed aims and objectives, and are careful not to make rash promises or to be swayed by emotional pressure, which they are exposed to on an almost daily basis.

Conditions in the rural communities Sabre works in are demanding. There is an obvious difference between schools where Sabre has been able to

have a material impact, and those where it has not yet been able to do so. In such schools there are very few resources indeed, and classrooms are rough, with unsuitable or even dangerous furniture, and almost no facilities. By contrast, the schools in which Sabre has had an impact, including the Dwabor kindergarten which it has actually built from scratch, are pleasant environments with much better resourcing.



The quality of teaching and learning emerged for me as a significant issue. Sabre are absolutely right that a basic decent level of accommodation needs to be in place, and networks need to be built up to allow trust to exist between the charity and those responsible for education locally. However, to ensure that the full potential for improvement

in educational outcomes is reached, some work now needs to be done on teaching methodology, which is generally grindingly didactic with a lot of partially understood copying. There is very little imaginative or creative work and scant regard to special needs or differentiation. Some of this is due to lack of resources, but some progress could be made without heavy resource investment. The Ghanaian national curriculum documents are much more progressive than the teaching seen in classrooms. There is a real issue with language, in my perception: there is a national policy that all teaching is in English, and sometimes quite advanced English. However, English is not the first language of any student in rural areas, and many have very weak English even after several years at school. What students copy into their books is in the

...❖



kind of English that they often cannot understand orally. Many I spoke to said maths was their favourite subject – the two points may not be unconnected.

A basic tenet of the Project is that in school-to-school partnerships the learning and benefits must be two-way, and it is really important to guard against the Ghanaian school coming to see the UK school as a 'cash cow'. Having seen the conditions at first hand, I would

emphatically endorse this view. Clearly, there are resource needs in Ghanaian schools, and it would be perverse to say that the UK school could not try to assist with these. But there must be other dimensions of the partnership which are strong enough to balance out the resource issues. UK schools can learn about a range of issues: local languages, history (especially non-colonial history – the latter, including slavery, is important, but on its own may contribute to the 'problematism' of Africa in the minds of UK students), the customs and traditions of the local Fante people, textiles, climate, flora and fauna, food and so on. We hope that the teaching resources being prepared to support the partnerships will contribute to this.

Teacher development is another area which it may be interesting to develop in due course. As a teacher and head teacher, I found the visit

a very powerful learning experience. I could not help thinking of some of our teachers back at school who have never experienced educational reality in a radically different context to Western Europe, and reflecting on how valuable it would be to bring UK teachers to Ghana for short residential, both to learn about Ghanaian education on the ground, and perhaps to contribute to the professional development of Ghanaian teachers. When one reflects that we get little change out of £500 for a one day course in the UK, and that a return flight to Ghana costs about this, it doesn't seem quite as impossible as it might at first sight. More research and development would need to be done.



My own visit to Ghana was an incredible learning experience, and energising and exciting for me as a school leader. I am excited at the prospect of more schools partnering Ghanaian schools in the UK, and very much hope that this can contribute in a small way to improving understanding between Africa and Europe. ◀

Celebrating ten years of the EOA — driving the profession forward!

The Examinations Officers' Association (EOA) held their annual conference this year on 6/7th July at Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre, near Bedford. Members and stakeholders from all over the UK and abroad came together to celebrate ten years of the organisation and its major contribution to the safe delivery of our examination system.

The two day conference opened with an emotionally charged Question Time session, chaired by former TES journalist Warwick Mansell. On the panel was Isabel Nisbet (Ofqual), Dr Jim Sinclair (JCQ), John Fairhurst (ASCL) and Alan Waymont, chair of the EOA Board of Trustees. A range of issues such as the future of the diploma, QCDA's demise, rising exam fees and the impact of controlled assessments on centres were all hotly debated.



Dame Kelly Holmes CBE opened the second day with a very uplifting presentation on the importance of this role and linked her experiences of overcoming many difficulties in her own personal life, as she pursued her dream of Olympic Gold. Dame Kelly stated that the exams office community is facing change yet again in the education system but without the invaluable support of the EOA their role will become intolerable.

But there is hope for the exam office community with the recent public acknowledgement of Jan Martin who was awarded a MBE for her services to the EOA exams office community. Jan has been in education for over thirty years, as a teacher, exams officer, chair of the EOA and is now overseeing the Continual Professional Development programme for the EOA, ensuring that this community will have a more professional sustainable workforce.



Over 200 delegates and guests attended talks, workshops and clinics on various aspects associated with this role. The EOA conference provided both new and experienced members of the exams office community with an opportunity to share and experience valuable training from a variety of professionals to help them manage their role more effectively and successfully within their centres. Andrew Harland, Chief Executive of

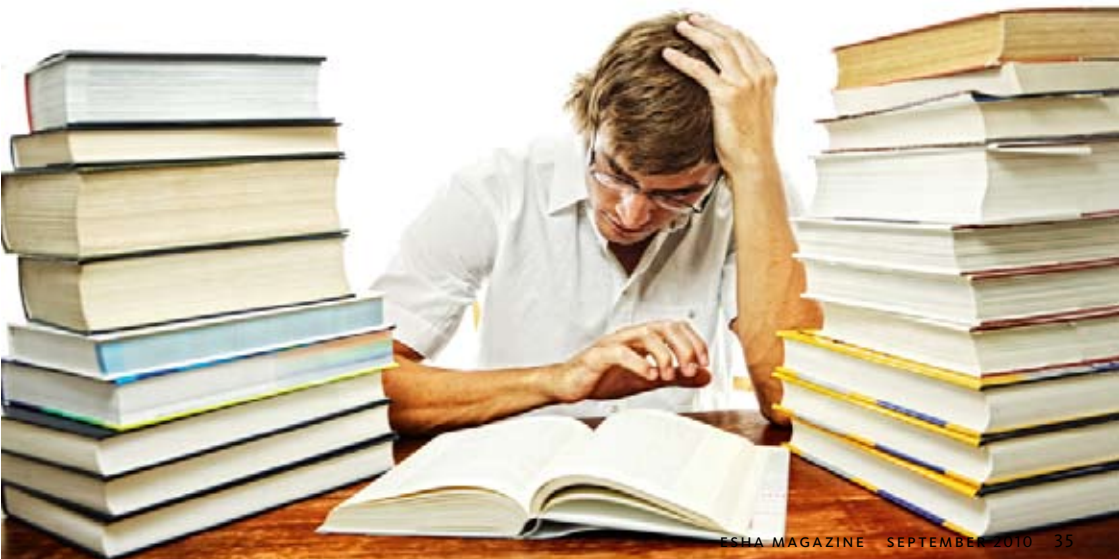
EOA and founder member of the EOA closed the conference with a challenging statement – “we have much to celebrate... but forget the last ten year; its the next ten years that count”.

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Rebellion amongst principals

BY EIRIK LINAKER BERGLUND, VG, NORWAY.

Norwegian principals suffer from way too many work tasks, and too little time to follow up teachers. This is one of the main factors behind Norway's disappointing school results, compared to several other countries over the past years. This is what The Norwegian Association of School Leaders, the principals' own labor union, claims. "Nationwide, there are many overworked principals. An increasing amount of different tasks leaves us less time to complete our main objective, following up the quality of learning in our school, that is", says the president of The Norwegian Association of School Leaders, Solveig Hvidsten Dahl.



In need of support

Countries such as UK and Finland have a significantly larger ratio of ancillary employees in their schools, compared to Norway. Here, non-pedagogic personnel constitute only 13 percent of the entire school workforce, while in Finland this ratio is 30 percent. In UK, the ratio is 44 percent, according to numbers gathered by The Norwegian Association of School Leaders. Finland and UK both beat Norway in the PISA-tests four years ago. Finland was ranked as the number one country result wise, while UK was ranked as number 13. Norway was listed as a mere number 23.

Now Norwegian principals demand resources to hire more administrative personnel. Especially the need for people competent on legal issues, economics, human resources and general administration is great. Alongside this, more janitors are needed. This will improve our school results, principals say.

Economic Pressures

President Hvidsten Dahl informs that the administrative part of the principals work day is essential to the quality of learning in schools. “Budget responsibilities, human resources, infrastructural issues, governmental reporting and adapted teaching for single students have all been delegated from the cantons to each school, but the resources needed to compete these tasks has not at the same time been granted. Our cantons suffer from economic pressures, but the existing resources must be distributed differently, so that these tasks can be completed properly”, Hvidsten Dahl emphasizes.

« Nationwide, there are many overworked principals »



She underlines that the teacher's staff should not be affected by this. Last year, The Department of Knowledge's committee on time spending in schools showed that a Norwegian principal only has time to spend one third of his or her work day on following up the schools pedagogic program.

In a survey by OECD in 2008, Norwegian principals ranked as number six from the bottom of 22 countries when it comes to spending time on teacher follow-up. Four out of ten principals answered that they do not have time for such, while only one out of ten principals in Turkey and Poland answered the same.



I am Mr. “Fix-It-All”

Kjell Olav Mentzoni at Sommerlyst upper elementary school has worked as a principal at several small and larger schools for 25 years. “There is always something looming over me, things that should have been done. Luckily I am experienced, so I know what to prioritize”, Mentzoni says.

Mentzoni calls for more supportive personnel in his school.

“My desire is to follow up each and everyone of the teachers’ job, and make an effort on class level. This is really the main task for school leaders. Unfortunately I don’t have time for this, it just doesn’t add up”, Mentzoni points out.

Specifically, Mentzoni needs an employee with responsibilities in human resources and economy. He’s well drilled in non-principal work tasks.

“I work as both therapist and technical staff. If something happens, say computer crashes, failure in the fusion cabinet, or if our copy machine breaks down, I’m the one to fix it. I am mister “Fix-it-all”, really”.

August 1. Mentzoni begins his new job as principal in high school. At that level, the problem is a bit less urgent.

“At least I’ll have a more limited area of responsibility. The tasks are the same, but there will be more persons to complete them”. ◀

No Place for Bullying



BY JAMES DILLON

After a tragic event, suicide, or violent act of revenge that occurs as a result of frequent bullying, the public is outraged at school employees who they think did nothing to prevent it. The public asks the obvious questions: How come nobody cared enough to do something to stop it? How could the staff be so heartless and callous? Where were the administrators?

I have worked in education for more than 30 years and know that teachers and principals care very much about keeping children safe. But I have a few questions of my own: How is it that people who care act as if they don't? Why should it take a tragedy to get a school to finally act? How many other tragedies need to happen before all schools decide to do something to prevent bullying? And finally, is there something about the structure and culture of schools that makes it difficult for people to see the problem and address it? Perhaps the hardest task of leadership is having the courage to ask these questions and begin looking for answers.

Current research and common sense tell us that schools need to be places that are physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe for students to learn to their fullest potential. Given these criteria, one would surmise that preventing bullying would be paramount on any principal's list of priorities. Unfortunately, this is often not the case.

Whose Job Is It, Anyway?

As a certified Olweus bullying-prevention trainer and an elementary principal who has attended many conferences and workshops on bullying and its impact on school safety and climate, I have been struck by how few principals are in attendance. Social workers, counsellors, and teachers who attend such conferences express concern about returning to their schools and not getting the support necessary from their school's principal. They are right to be concerned. Without the support and leadership from the principal, there is little chance that significant progress can be made in preventing and reducing bullying.

« Principals must take the lead in creating an atmosphere where bullying prevention is a school and community goal »

In training sessions that I conduct, I ask participants to choose the single group they feel is most responsible for addressing school violence and bullying. In each session, responses always vary widely between parents, students, school, and community. While it is OK to have such differences, one reason problems often go unaddressed is that people think bullying prevention is someone else's responsibility. The reality is that no one is to blame, yet everyone is responsible. Who can better get all stakeholders to realize that working together is not

just preferable but absolutely essential? Principal leadership is crucial because they can create conditions where everyone assumes 2010 responsibility. The principal cannot do this alone, but must take the first step in reframing the problem and accepting responsibility for it.

Not Seeing Is Not Believing

One reason why it is often difficult to get faculty and staff to commit to addressing bullying is that so much of it happens under the radar. Statistics indicate that most bullying goes undetected by school staff, and students report that it occurs in the classroom even when a teacher is present. If staff don't have an understanding of what bullying is, they won't identify it even when they see it.

Another obstacle is the belief that bullying prevention is solely a discipline issue, that it only concerns the perpetrator and target of the bullying. An environment with frequent bullying infects an entire school community. Even if they never become a victim, many bystanders are frightened and intimidated by the thought that they could be next. When a case of bullying is verified, then the traditional discipline system of determining the perpetrator and applying an appropriate consequence appears to be sufficient to most staff. However, bullying requires ongoing monitoring, proactive efforts, and culture change — tasks that are easier said than done.

« An environment with frequent bullying infects an entire school community »

Culture change is the only truly effective way to address this problem. But culture change is difficult because the people who live in the culture can't see it; for them it's just the way things are. My leadership in addressing bullying in our school began long before I was consciously aware that I was specifically addressing it. What I was doing was



creating the conditions that would motivate staff to respond to the problem. Here are four conditions for positive change.

- **A Moral Obligation.** The safety and well-being of children is our most important responsibility, and the first and most important step a school leader can take is to see bullying prevention and reduction as a moral obligation. A large part of my success as a principal in addressing bullying stems from the fact that students, parents, and staff know that I am passionate and committed to doing something about it. Once I could help the staff find the will, we ultimately found the way to make a real difference in bullying prevention.

« The safety and well-being of children is our most important responsibility »

- **Practice What You Preach.** I challenge myself to resist the temptation of solely using my status as the primary lever for affecting change. (You cannot bully staff into stopping bullying.) Because my chief responsibility is to support and empower people to do their jobs better, I learned to listen before talking and reflect before acting. As Jim Collins explains in *Good to Great*, I consistently choose leadership over simply exercising power, with the result of teachers doing the same with their classes. When principals make schools safe places for teachers to make mistakes and take risks, teachers do the same for their students.

- **Getting the Right Mind-set.** If students perceive that a teacher disapproves of a student, as a person, the other students are more likely to feel justified in teasing and bullying that student. Conversely, if a teacher accepts and values a student despite problem behaviour, the student remains a member of the community and bullying behaviour will decrease. The value of accepting the individual—without condoning the behaviour—must come to permeate a school community and the principal must articulate it clearly and practice it consistently.

- **People Before Programs.** Schools are littered with initiatives and programs promising positive change. In some districts, veteran staff knows the fleeting nature of programs and learn to wait until they fall out of favour. The issue of preventing and reducing bullying, however, is not like other issues. The real task of leadership is to get staff to see and understand this difference.

After researching the various programs available, our school chose the Olweus Bully Prevention Program because it fit our philosophy. The program is research-based and designed to affect systemic change. It was also flexible enough to be tailored to our existing culture. In addition, the key components of the Olweus program matched many of our practices and procedures: Our staff was comfortable working with parents on shared decision-making committees and our teachers had skills in facilitating classroom meetings.

Even the best educational program is only a tool whose success lies in the hands of those who use it. A principal must assess the existing knowledge, skills, and attitude of the staff before selecting a program or resource. Including staff and parents in making this decision is essential for getting the rest of the community to buy into implementing it. One of a principal's most important leadership skills is the ability to reframe problems as opportunities to transform a school for the better. To say that bullying is a challenge is an understatement, but what is more important or essential for school leaders to tackle? What greater contribution can a principal make? ◀

James Dillon is principal of Lynnwood Elementary School in Schenectady, New York.

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BULLYING



HURTS
STOP IT!

Success With Anti-Bullying

Here are essential elements for getting your school community motivated to work together to address bullying.

Use data to inform, but put a human face on the problem. Principals can take the lead in gathering data to determine the amount of bullying that is occurring in a school and how students feel about it. However, numbers alone might often fail to galvanize a staff to confront this issue; principals need to put a face on the numbers. Getting students to tell their stories and relay their fears can often open the eyes and hearts of staff.

Empower bystanders; this means everybody! Let everyone know that they can make a difference and that positive change is only possible when everyone assumes responsibility for reporting bullying and supporting those who are vulnerable. If you ask students to help you in this important job, they will view the request as a sign of respect and confidence in them. If students have doubts about staff receptivity, they most likely will remain silent. Staff must emphasize that they care and want to know about all bullying situations. As more bystanders come forward, the cultural norm becomes reporting rather than withholding.

Build community, create empathy. When a strong community is developed in the classroom and throughout the entire school, bullying becomes harder to keep a secret. When parents call me to share a complaint, I thank them for helping me do my job because I need to know what is going on. Parents can tell by your tone of voice whether you are sincere. It is crucial to document all contacts, phone calls, and actions you take in order to prevent future bullying.



Words matter. Many principals shy away from using the word “bully” because they think it is too negative. Its meaning—aggressive behaviour that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength—must be understood by each member of the community. Confusing conflict and bullying can have dangerous consequences. Conflict is inevitable, but bullying should never be viewed as such. It should be understood as a form of abuse that cannot be accepted on any level. Make sure the rules are few, clear, and straightforward. They should also be posted in every room.

Little things can make a big difference. Simple and genuine measures, such as regularly greeting students, talking to students, and addressing students by name, help to make students feel connected and part of a school. Let staff know that significant progress can happen with even small steps.

Examine school practices, traditions, and structure. Almost any form of institutional bullying can override and negate all bullying prevention efforts. The principal must have the courage to ask: Do all students perceive themselves as being valued and cared for by all the adults in the school? In light of this question, each school must review its discipline plan, protocols, and any traditions that might inadvertently conflict with the values and beliefs that underlie a successful bullying prevention program.

JAMES DILLON



