



T&L Times

Edition 1

Welcome

Welcome to our new fortnightly Teaching and Learning newsletter. With a new newsletter comes a slightly new look in relation to our colour scheme. Hopefully, still the same high quality content though to keep you up to date and informed about all things Teaching and Learning. This week we start with a quote about having a new start to match with our new newsletter.



“People who cannot invent and reinvent themselves must be content with borrowed postures, second-hand ideas fitting in instead of standing out”

Warren Bennis

Cracking Christmas

This week in the build up to Christmas and the thoughts of what you can buy your favourite teacher, we bring you a selection of five top books

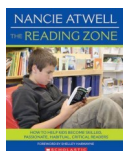
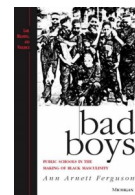


1. See Me After Class by Roxanne Elden

Why it's worth the read: Veteran teachers discuss their teaching experiences, which provide insight into successful classrooms work. The book also, however, allows teachers to laugh at all those crazy situations they find themselves in teaching the students they love

2. Bad Boys by Ann Arnette Ferguson

Why it's worth the read: Ferguson goes inside the classrooms of a group of 11-and 12-year-olds boys who have been labeled by the school's administration as "bound for jail." Ferguson interviews these boys in school, on the playground, at the movies, and at home in order to paint a better picture of the issues inside and outside of school that lead to boys being less successful than girls in school.

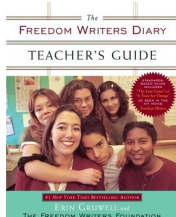


3. The Reading Zone by Nancie Atwell

Why it's worth reading: Atwell describes practical ways to make classrooms inviting to readers. The book includes information about assessments, goal setting, book lists, and sample parent letters.

4. Other People's Children by Lisa Delpit

Why it's worth the read: According to Lisa Delpit, teachers and students have to understand one other for classrooms to succeed. Delpit analyzes the cultural differences between teachers and students and provides some insight as to how teachers can leave cultural baggage at the door to really support students' needs.



5. Freedom Writers by Erin Gruwell

Why it's worth the read: English teacher Erin Gruwell tells of her experiences as a new teacher and reveals that most new teachers struggle with understanding their students' needs and backgrounds. *Freedom Writers* provides insights into how teachers can take back struggling classrooms and renew students' interest in learning



Top Teacher Tips

Want to improve your teaching? Not sure how? Well we bring you six super suggestions.

Watch others teach and let others watch you

You will get so much from the dialogue that comes out of this.

Break the Rules

The best way to see why and if what you do works is to break all your rules and watch

Film your lessons

Put a camera at the back of your room and then watch it back to see what you are really like.

Get to know your pupils

What is it that makes them tick and then use this to inspire and engage them

Imagine you host a party rather than teach a lesson

It will make you interact with pupils in a more natural way.

Let your lessons open up and go with the flow

Don't be rigid in what you teach and adapt it as it develops.

Identified Individuals

A really big thank you to all of our staff for all that you. You are all amazing but do you know an individual who has gone over and above during this calendar year?

If your answer to the question is yes then you may want to nominate someone for our upcoming 'WOW' award. These awards celebrate the achievements of both our teachers and support staff.

If you would like to nominate someone then please click the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QB6GH3Q>



Character Recognition

In our last newsletter we told you that recognising the importance of a strong character education, a new set of "benchmarks" for schools to rate their character education against has recently been published by the Department for Education.

In our last edition we shared the first three of the six key character benchmarks. This edition we give you the final three

The final three of the six key character benchmarks are:

D. How good is our co-curriculum provision?

Does it cover a wide range across artistic, creative, performance, sporting, debating, challenge, team and individual etc. so all pupils can both discover new interests and develop existing ones?

Do we make use of or promote local, national or international programmes or organisations? (e.g. uniformed organisations, Duke of Edinburgh, National Citizen Service etc.)

Is provision of high quality and does it challenge pupils and build expertise? Is participation sustained over time?

Are there ample opportunities for pupils to compete, perform etc., and is success acknowledged and celebrated?

E. How well do we promote the value of volunteering and service to others?

Are age-appropriate expectations of volunteering and service to others clearly established?

Are opportunities varied, meaningful, high-quality and sustained over time?

Do volunteering and service opportunities contribute to breaking down social barriers? Are they effective in making pupils civic-minded and ready to contribute to society?

F. How do we ensure that all our pupils benefit equally from what we offer?

Do we understand and reduce barriers to participation (e.g. cost, timing, location, logistics, confidence, parental support etc.)?

Do we enable young people from all backgrounds to feel as if they belong and are valued?

Is our provision, including our co-curricular provision, appropriately tailored both to suit and to challenge the pupils we serve?

Digestible Documents

This week we take some key ideas from a recent edition of **'The Teachers' Podcast'** in which Nicola James, the head teacher of a Primary School in Bishop Auckland shares her tips based on her school's recent Ofsted inspection under the new framework. Here are her top takeaways from the experience:

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Find little ways to be as prepared as you can for the inspection.

You can anticipate when OFSTED might visit, but (as was the case for Nicola who thought they might come in November but they actually came in October) they may visit earlier or later than expected. Some of the best ways to prepare include: creating an action plan so that everybody knows their role for the day of the phone call and the days of the inspections; compiling a list of questions that OFSTED might ask on their initial phone call (some authorities may already have this) and jotting down answers to them before the inspection; having mock interviews with subject leads, including some of the questions they might ask, and making sure everybody is giving the same key messages about the school and its practices.

Use the 90 minute phone call to highlight to the inspector all the strengths and positives about your school, and arm yourself with information about the inspection.

The admin team will usually ring some time in the morning (for Nicola, it was 10:30) and this is followed up by a phone call with the lead inspector. After the admin call, you may want to talk to staff and inform them of the upcoming inspection and discuss what messages you are wanting to send to the inspection team about your school. On the phone call with the lead inspector, there is chance to negotiate the subjects for the deep dives, and to inform your staff of this. There is also chance for you to tell your inspector the context of your school and what makes you unique. As in Nicola's case, it may take more than 90 minutes due to the new framework being in place. It might be useful to take notes during this time so you can feedback to staff.

A lot of the guesswork has gone from the new OFSTED framework.

A key finding from the podcast is that a lot of the 'unknown' about the running of the inspection seems to have been eliminated from the new framework. You can negotiate the subject of deep dives (except reading and maths if you are in a primary) and a timetable is provided for the school of where the inspectors are going to be and at what time during the day. The inspectors also ensure that when a staff member is out of class to talk to one of the inspectors, the other one will not visit that class. This takes away some of the stress that comes from the 'not knowing' and expecting every visitor to your room to be the inspectors.

The new framework is as new for the inspectors as it is for schools.

Even if they have been inspectors for a long time, the new framework is new and will take some getting used to. This might mean that the inspectors are acutely aware of how little time they have to do everything they need to, especially if they are having to check things with HMI in order to ensure that the new procedures are being followed accurately. There are also transition arrangements in place for 'Good' schools for their curriculum intent and planning; the OFSTED inspector needs to be sure that the school has the capacity to have things in place in 2 years because the framework is so new.

Gone are the days of excessive paper and clipboards.

Everything under a new framework inspection is done digitally so there will be no more people coming in with clipboards! The inspectors cross reference their 'cards' (for things such as safeguarding) to ensure that they are not repeating questions. There is also less of a focus on data and paper-based evidence.

Deep dives can take different forms, but conversations with staff and children remain at the heart.

For the reading and maths deep dives, subject leaders were spoken to (as were children), classes were visited and books were looked at. The bottom 20% of Years 1, 2 and 6 read to the inspectors, although this may look different in your school. In reading, the inspectors wanted to check that reading books matched abilities and that the phonics scheme was secure; in maths, the inspectors wanted to know what the school were currently doing and what the plans for the future were. If a deep dive is happening in a subject that isn't being taught, the inspectors will probably choose to scrutinise the books in more detail, as well as talking to the subject lead and the children.

Consistency is key.

The inspectors in Nicola's school were adamant that they should not alter from their usual working week. This meant that even though the deep dive was in history, no history lessons were being taught, but this was ok. When the fire alarm went off, the inspectors reassured the staff to just 'do what you normally do'. The consistency will enable the staff, and children, to feel more secure in what they are doing.

Feedback from the inspectors doesn't look exactly the same as in the previous framework.

If you are having a 2-day inspection, the deputy and head will probably be asked to sit in on a meeting at the end of the first day, where the inspectors feed back to each other. You are not allowed to interject during this but can make notes to feedback to staff and can challenge anything that they have said at the end. The inspectors will feed back to the SLT and governors at the end of the inspection as usual and then this can be disseminated to staff once the inspector has left.

Give as much time as possible to your middle leaders.

Under the new framework, the scrutiny lies more with the middle leaders than with the headteacher so it's important that middle leaders are given the time to fully understand their subject and how it looks across school. They need to be able to understand what is happening across school and where the subject is going, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Giving staff time to understand this, allowing them to get into classes and liaise with other class teachers, as well as allocating staff meeting time to it and holding mock interviews, will increase confidence levels when it comes to answering whatever question might be asked of them during an inspection.

Expect the unexpected!

No matter how prepared you think you are for an inspection, there will always be something that crops up. Whether this be a 2-day inspection when you were expecting a 1-day inspection, the cooks setting off the fire alarm or a hamster in a lunchbox; the more you can pull together as a team, the easier it will be to deal with the unforeseen challenges!

The full podcast can be listened to by going to

<https://omny.fm/shows/the-teachers-podcast/nicola-james-headteacher-at-st-andrews-primary-sch>