



Newsletter

June 2017

As I write this, our 2017 National Conference is just a week or two away. With an excellent programme of keynote speakers and workshops focusing on the theme of [Working with the Whole: Mind, Body and Brain](#), the event promises to ensure that time away from school is well spent. There are just a few residential and day delegate places left so if you've not yet booked yours, take a look at our website - www.engageintheirfuture.org - for further information.

On the day before the Conference, we will be celebrating with the short-listed nominees of the 2017 National Awards. This inspirational event is the culmination of the National Awards scheme that encourages staff from the network of member schools to nominate those students that they think have made outstanding progress or achieved the amazing. The calibre of nominations was as high as ever this year and the judges certainly had a tough job on their hands. We look forward to welcoming the short-listed nominees and their family and friends to Newcastle.

The last few weeks have been busy ones as we also confirmed the winners of the 2017 National Creative Awards. This year's theme - Dreaming - proved incredibly popular as we received more entries than ever across all three categories: poetry, photography and short story writing. We are enormously grateful to The School Bus for their sponsorship of this event, and to the judges for tirelessly assessing all the entries.

One of the pillars of *engage in their future* is to provide peer to peer networked support. There are numerous examples of this happening locally, regionally and nationally and I am grateful to have benefitted from it on multiple occasions. We recently held a meeting in the London region to ensure that SEMH provisions in the area are part of the invaluable network and voice that membership of *engage in their future* offers, and I hope to catch up with many of you at the National Conference in Newcastle to help us all benefit from each other's experience and knowledge.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ann Bailey'.



Chair, *engage in their future*

engage in their future
2017 National Conference

Thursday 6th and Friday 7th July, Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne

Keynote speakers: Karen Ferguson, Zoe Lodrick, Bernard Allen, Andrew Curran

Workshops: What Makes an 'Outstanding' SEMH' School? : What Goes Around Comes Around: Leading in a Culture of Change : Rules, Ripples and Regulations: Therapeutic Strategies in Practice : Through The Eyes of Chaos Kid

Visit www.engageintheirfuture.org for further information.

Last few remaining day and residential delegate places available.

Peer Review Process

Across the country schools are becoming increasingly involved with the 'peer review' process. As these are predominantly coordinated by Local Authorities it is very much the case that our SEMH schools are overwhelmingly partnered with mainstream schools or more generic LA Special Schools. Whilst the peer review can still be a productive and useful exercise it is often the case that our SEMH colleagues feel as though they could have benefited more by having senior leaders from other SEMH provisions involved in the programme.

To address this shortfall in current practice the Midlands SEMH School Network is leading its own peer review programme currently involving 5 local SEMH schools, which includes 3 residential schools. Facilitated by a group funded OFSTED inspector, the schools identify key areas that they feel require development or rigorous moderation.

Once the review team is identified the coordinator receives some basic information about the school to be reviewed and secures logistical arrangements with the Head Teacher, which may include interviews with staff, data trawls etc. The format of the day essentially resembles a 'short inspection', although it is made clear at the outset that the process is a supportive tool and is not an OFSTED inspection.

To date, the group are extremely positive about the process for both delivering and receiving the review. The advantages of having knowledgeable practitioners in the schools has been phenomenal with every school feeling as though the process has contributed effectively to school improvement and development.

The work currently undertaken has been shared at the Networks meetings and others are now signing up for the next round of reviews.

If you would like to know how to set up a 'peer review' in your area please contact Neil Toplass at Shenstone Lodge School via email at: neil.toplass@shenstonelodge.co.uk.

Child Friendly Safeguarding Policy

Following an S175 safeguarding audit visit undertaken by Warrington LA to one of our member schools, one of the actions / recommendations shared was to consider creating a child friendly version of the school's safeguarding policy. Given all schools need to be confident that their safeguarding policies are comprehensive, if anyone has any examples that they would be prepared to share, we would be delighted to pass them on to the school concerned and to a wider audience if requested.

Please email us at contactus@engageinthefuture.org if you're able to help.

Our thanks in anticipation

SOAP BOX DERBY

The annual Soap Box Derby will take place at Warley Woods, Brades Lodge School in the West Midlands on Friday 23rd June 2017.

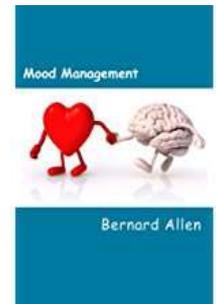
Visit the website for further information or email Jack Benson at jack.benson@shenstonelodge.sandwell.sch.uk

Planning Liberty Safeguards in Children's Services

Co-opted member of the National Committee, Bernard Allen has produced a document with the above title to support liberty safeguards planning. This area is often open to confusion and conflicting advice but Bernard's document clarifies the legal terminology and complexities.

It can be found on our website – www.engageinthefuture.org

We're also delighted to introduce Bernard's latest publication – Mood Management. Available on Amazon for just £9.99 it has received 5 out of 5 stars across all its reviews.



Membership Subscriptions

Membership subscription renewals for 2017/2018 will be mailed to all current member schools imminently. Please do endeavour to ensure that these are paid promptly as the annual fee is a cornerstone of the financial stability of the organisation, enabling us to continue to represent young people facing SEMH challenges and those working with them.

National Creative Awards



The 2017 National Creative Awards attracted a record-breaking number of entries across all three of the categories – poetry, photography and short story writing. The standard was, as always, exceptionally high with incredible depth and diversity in the interpretation of the theme 'Dreaming' being demonstrated across all 'age' groups.

All participants have been sent a certificate, and those awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze place also received an amazing trophy.

We are delighted that these winning entries will also be displayed at the National Awards Ceremony and National Conference from Wednesday 5th to Friday 7th July before being sent to the winning students as a memento of their efforts and success.

Our thanks go to The School Bus for their sponsorship of this event whose support and involvement has been invaluable.



Details of the 2018 National Creative Awards will be revealed very soon. In doing so we hope to give member schools as much time as possible to incorporate the theme into lesson plans or extra-curricular activities, and plenty of opportunity for those wishing to take part to consider how best to interpret and express what it means to them.

Watch this space

Review of Tom Bennett's Review

In a recent discussion in the Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties¹ some serious and experienced experts have a crack at understanding the disparate aetiological underpinnings of young people's behaviours in educational settings. Haunting the whole issue is that we have been tackling behaviour in schools since Socrates and we still can't get it right for everyone and in particular those whose behaviour in atomised forms never conforms to prevailing educational or learning settings. Perhaps it's got nothing to do with schools.

To that end Tom Bennett's, "Creating a Culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour. Independent Review of Behaviour in Schools." (March 2017) DfE, does what it says and rounds up all that is sensible, obvious (to you and me of course) and insightful, about establishing optimal learning cultures. Most importantly it is a review, an essay of what is good, out in the educational world and importantly a searchlight into what works. If any of the exemplar schools or services are near you and you are regularly locking and unlocking the school toilets, then make a visit to your local karma culture. In particular as he is a member of *engage in their future*, but also a good person (the most important factor in getting your culture right!) go and visit John d'Abbro's New Rush Hall and he will let you have all of his secrets -

<http://www.newrushhallschool.co.uk/page/?title=Home&pid=1>

Having read the review there wasn't a single thing I disagreed with and indeed most of what Tom Bennett has produced I would thoroughly endorse. Within school communities and learning cultures Mr Bennett has carefully, sensitively and with clear evidence provided a very good handbook for leaders to use in the face of 'anti learning behaviour'.

"Thus the task is not so much to see what no one has yet seen, but to think what nobody yet has thought about that which everybody sees" Schopenhauer

Mr. Bennett is rightly sceptical of the perception that our schools are overrun with hordes of uncivilised louts but sanguine enough to know that disruption to learning is also anti-social and (should be) anti-the culture set by leaders of schools. In particular sections on 'commonly found features of the most successful schools' and the core of the review 'recommendations for school leaders', is a valuable and clear lead on to culture building, with evidenced based scaffolding and some pertinent drawings and diagrams by Oliver Caviglioli.

Tom Bennett has to write about behaviour as the new DfE behaviour 'guru', 'Czar', 'Tsar', or whatever and having seen him in public and in print he doesn't seem the autocrat he is declaimed. This current review supports what we would all agree is good practice, not least in emphasising staff wellbeing and staff training, but overall about building relationships and leaders modelling a positive learning culture.

Richard Boyle, Muntham House School, www.muntham.org.uk

¹ Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Volume 20. No 1. MARCH 2015