



Newsletter

February 2018

Every other month, the members of the *engage in their future* National Committee meet to discuss the direction and management of the organisation. The agenda for these meetings is always full and even though we have regular communication between them, there is always much to talk about.

Whilst I don't dispute the value of meetings, I'm sure I'm not alone in having attended many that have been endured more than enjoyed! So it may sound a little odd when I admit to looking forward to the National Committee meetings, and hopefully I'm not alone in finding them enjoyable and incredibly inspirational!? Not only that, but I travel home genuinely enthused and reinvigorated by those few hours spent round the table.

But before you judge, please let me explain myself! I think my enthusiasm is due to two main factors. The first is my colleagues on the National Committee. The experience, knowledge and commitment evident across the membership of *engage in their future* is typified by the people that gather for these meetings. The fundamental principles of the organisation are at the heart of everything they do and I am always impressed at how the different ideas and views around the table mix together to deliver relevant and valuable membership benefits, work to maintain the stability of the organisation, provide a cohesive voice to represent those affected by SEMH challenges and those working with them, and drive *engage in their future* forward.

The second factor is having the opportunity (even just for a few hours) for everyone's attention to be focused on all things *engage in their future*. Of course, there is a significant amount of thought and work that goes on from one meeting to the next, but reviewing the accomplishments of the organisation, seeing the progress that has been made and identifying new opportunities for development, all within the context of the ever changing climate of education, really does instil a sense of shared positivity.

Given this, I'm sure you can understand why I find it a great privilege to be part of the National Committee and have the opportunity to attend these meetings. Whilst my colleagues and I do not take the responsibility of our positions lightly and what is best for *engage in their future* and our members is always front of mind, on a selfish note I have benefitted massively from my involvement at this level. Making sure we live up to the expectations of our members and continue to improve the standards and welfare of the students with whom we work can be challenging but it is also incredibly rewarding.

I hope that some of you will join us on the National Committee in the near future. We currently have a couple of vacant Regional Representative positions and will soon be contacting member schools in those areas about the selection process.

I also encourage you to contact me about anything to do with *engage in their future*, whether it's about the benefits of membership, ideas for new initiatives, or just a general query about the organisation your thoughts and feedback are always welcome.

Antonio Munoz-Bailey, Chair, *engage in their future*

engage in their future Professional Learning Development Day

As a result of Sharon Gray, Co-Opted member of the National Committee, working with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD), members of the *engage in their future* National Committee were invited to facilitate a Professional Learning Development Day - 'Learning Forwards Together' - with Head Teachers and senior school leaders from the borough.

Sharon has been working with the local authority developing their SEMH guidance, an audit tool and supporting as a link inclusion adviser. The local authority has a number of SEMH provisions, additionally resourced provisions in mainstream settings (ARP's), is about to open a new SEMH special school, and has an independent special school - Hopewell (a member of *engage in their future*).

The day was planned to draw highly skilled practitioners together to talk through experiences, curriculum development, recruitment, CPD, therapies and much more. The collaborative, solution focused approach ensured that the event was interesting and beneficial for all those that attended.

The outline from LBBD was:

"It is with great pleasure that we invite colleagues from the national association *engage in their future* (*eitf*) to facilitate LBBD's first PLD. *eitf* is an effective national association for school leaders facilitating peer to peer support for leaders and learners in educational settings for students experiencing SEMH. The key aim of *eitf* is to improve life chances for children experiencing SEMH. They have an extensive network of National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and a network of outstanding schools leading peer to peer support and learning across the country.

The network of support is there for all settings that support students experiencing SEMH at every point of their development journey. Whether it is support in school improvement, maintaining outstanding provision, leadership or peer to-peer support through Headship.



The focus of this day will be on combining our own shared experiences, expertise and resources around schools and educational settings for students experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties with colleagues from *eitf*. Whilst there is a lead facilitator for each area and these colleagues will be sharing their experiences this will be an opportunity for us to bring along resources, ideas, suggestions that work and pro-actively join in the discussion sharing experiences, what works well, examples, resources, thoughts, ideas and potential barriers.

The opportunity for peer to peer learning on this day is phenomenal. This is not a conference, it is not a 'how to run an SEMH school' day. It is a collaboration of extremely experienced and highly skilled professionals sharing experiences, taking a solution focused approach to developing a shared vision and outline as to what the provision, pedagogy, expected outcomes for students experiencing SEMH, their parents / carers and colleagues working in these settings will look like across LBBD."

Feedback included comments such as:

"Great day, one of the best I've had in a long time, thank you."

"Excellent insight into different approaches, made me think long and hard about what we are doing and why, what is working and what is not. I'm going back into school with fresh eyes, thank you."

Queens Honours Recognition



We are delighted to send our congratulations to Mandy Southwick from Marchbank Free School in Darlington, County Durham who received an MBE in the Queen's 2017 birthday honours list.

Mandy, a long-term supporter of *engage in their future*, received the honour in recognition of her services to education and collected her MBE award from HRH Prince William at Buckingham Palace.

She said she was shocked and humbled to receive an MBE. "For me it is recognition for the work of the whole school. I could not have realised our vision without all of our staff."

"I love my job. The children are so rewarding and such great fun and it is so lovely to see them settle in here, feel comfortable and start to learn."

We are delighted that her hard work and commitment has been recognised with such a prestigious award. Congratulations!

Charity Football Tournament

Staff at *engage in their future* member school Shenstone Lodge have been particularly moved by the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma in the British Virgin Islands.

As a result, staff on the Brades Lodge site have been working with their students to develop ways to raise money to support relief efforts. The most successful fund raiser to date has been a regional five a side football tournament held at Birmingham's Great King Street Arena.

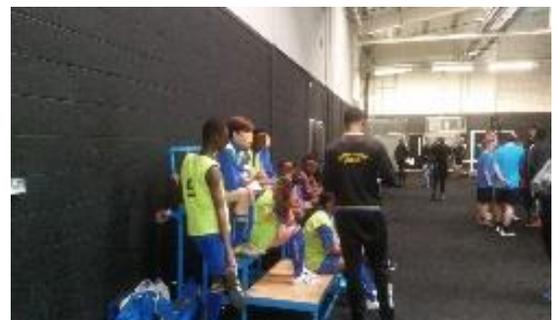


Fifteen teams from a range of SEMH schools, mainstreams, PRUs and other SEN provisions paid an entrance fee to take part in this well organised event. Alongside the fantastic football that was played, the Brades Lodge students and staff sold raffle tickets and refreshments to supplement the charity coffers.

The event organisers, Luke Cato and Scott Worton said "This was a great occasion. To have nearly 150 students from all sorts of different schools getting along to support

this cause was inspiring. To date, we have raised just over £400 and the money is still coming in."

The Brades Lodge football team came 4th overall, with the winners being a mixed team of mainstream girls and boys from Aston Manor.



2018 National Creative Awards

Students and staff from the network of member schools are invited to express their creativity and take a photo or write a short story or poem around the 2018 National Creative Awards theme of -

This Globe. My World.



There are five categories available (KS1&2, KS3, KS4, Post-16 and Staff) and individuals can submit one entry into each of the creative groups (i.e. one photo and one short story and one poem).

Every participant will be sent a certificate and prizes will be awarded to the first, second and third placed entries in the student categories, including having their entry framed for display at the National Conference in July.

Entries can be submitted until the closing date on Friday 27th April

either online at:

<https://eitf.wufoo.eu/forms/2018-national-creative-awards/>

or offline by sending the entry and completed entry form (available to download at www.engageintheirfuture.org) to:

engage in their future 2018 National Creative Awards, PO Box 451, Horley, RH6 6AW

We are delighted that Vision for Education have chosen to extend their relationship with *engage in their future* and sponsor the 2018 National Creative Awards. Many of you will already be aware that Vision for Education are one of the fastest growing recruitment agencies in the UK and provide a local and personal service to schools and teachers. *engage in their future* member schools are eligible for a range of benefits with Vision for Education including discounted rates.



So why not encourage the staff and students at your school to get creative and enter the 2018 National Creative Awards?

Midlands SEMH Schools Conference

Shenstone Lodge School in Lichfield organised the Midlands regional conference which took place in Walsall on Friday 10th November. Over 200 hundred delegates from across the Black Country and the Midlands gathered to share best practice, build network links and to receive some of the best professional development talks and workshops available in our sector.

engage in their future National Committee member and Executive Head Teacher, Neil Toplass hosted this fantastic event. Amongst the highlights of the day, members of staff from The Brades Lodge School, Stephen Allen and Luke Cato, delivered an informative workshop which showcased some of the work they have undertaken with KS3 and KS4 students to prevent them being drawn into gang culture and crime. 'Keep it Reel' had great reviews from the delegates attending, summarised with a statement made by an SEMH school learning mentor - "This is exactly what we should be doing ... it's hard hitting but I think it's the only way to get the message across to the kids that are most at risk."



Sharon Gray Delivers Keynote Presentation in China

Sharon Gray, co-opted member of the *engage in their future* National Committee was asked to speak at the Education Forum International Conference of the 19th West Lake International Expo, in Hangzhou, Shanghai, China which took place in November 2017.

Before flying to the conference in Shanghai, Sharon flew into Beijing where she visited a number of schools and gave a lecture to students in Beijing University on 'wholehearted approaches - meeting the social, emotional and mental health needs of our students to enable best outcomes'.



Once at the conference in Shanghai, Sharon gave a keynote address to Head Teachers and leaders of schools from across China and ministers of education from a number of other countries including Sweden, Hong Kong, Japan, Germany and the USA.

Sharon also taught a lesson to 45 upper primary aged students - the given focus was to 'inspire the students to want to speak English'. Whilst Sharon knew the lesson was going to be observed, she didn't realise until entering the classroom that 80 of the conference delegates would also be crowded in the classroom to watch, whilst a camera crew filmed the session for live streaming into the main conference. Sharon had been asked to model 'personalisation of learning' with a view to moving away from the rote learning model more often than not in place across schools in China.

Sharon outlines:

It was an interesting situation, I didn't know the students at all, and I was asking a lot of them. We moved the furniture and sat in groups of 6. It was a tight squeeze, particularly having so many adults observing too. Anxiety levels were high (mine included!) and so that had to be my starting point, as quickly as possible creating an enabling safe environment where these students could take risks and access learning in a way that wasn't their norm. I took a multi-sensory approach, using all the skills, knowledge and strategies that I have gained from teaching in specials schools (and watching fabulous staff teams). We got to know a little about each other - I danced and sang, and slowly, initially somewhat bemused, they joined in. We started to laugh though some students found the 'unleashing' approach challenging. This was fabulous as it created opportunities to model how this could be managed pre-emptively, preventing disruption to learning but using this energy to channel and infect others to truly engage with the tasks and activities. This created much discussion later as colleagues talked at the end of the session that frequently staff label the child as 'naughty' or 'bad' and how safer they feel when leading rote learning, sitting students at lone desks in rows.



In pairs the students felt natural objects in 'feely bags' and tried to describe what they were touching, how it felt, sensations etc in Mandarin and English to each other. We looked at some woodland pictures with paths leading into the depths of quite magical woods, listening to contrasting pieces of music to evoke emotional responses. The final woodland picture had a tree with little lights shining from windows. As we used play dough to model the possible creatures that might live in the environment, students explored ways to describe the setting, using all of the vocabulary and language they had gathered during each activity, wrapping language around each experience.

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The observers fed back that they were overwhelmed by what they had seen. The class teacher and Head of the school were impressed with the poems created by the students working together, the range of vocabulary used and how they had contextualised their knowledge and understanding of the English language in such a creative way.

The feedback Sharon received was incredible with many noting her passion for education and expressing their thanks for her demonstration of a wholehearted approach, the benefits it can achieve, and that they were given ideas and inspiration to take back to the classroom.

My students and I really appreciated your outstanding lectures which I can feel the passion, the vision, and the call for teaching of an excellent teacher. The most impressive thing that I learnt from Sharon is passion in education. Loving students encourage us to be the very best teacher possible, the most important job of the world; loving students is the origin of the calling. Education and learning is not just about cognition and brain, but also about emotion and heart. Teachers do not just build the brain, they also build the heart.

Song Huan, Associate Professor Vice Director of Institute of Teacher Education, Beijing University, 2017

I was so honored to listen to your lecture today at Beijing University, it made a deep impression on me. I felt your great passion of being a headteacher and your love of this devoted profession. Also, your patient and special teaching methods broadened my eyesight. In fact, now, we do not have enough possibility and chances to know more about foreign language teaching style which is different from our China's traditional methods and also deserved our deeper attention. I was touched by your acceptance to all kinds of students, especially those vulnerable students. Meanwhile, I was deeply interested in your school's interesting activities and your endeavour to excite and engage all of your students and their parents in life long learning. I will make efforts in my teaching profession with the passion and love that I saw in you. Thank you for having us and giving us a great lecture. I am looking forward to your return.

Yiyun Zheng, trainee teacher, Beijing University, 2017

Thank you Sharon, your words encourage me to be the brave teacher I want to be, just like you, a passionate and student-centered teacher who really cares about and helps students to find their potential; what's more, to never give up on these students who are vulnerable, sensitive and unconfident. The wholehearted approach, it is not easy to put into practice. With your inspiration, I am confident to carry it into my teaching practice, even though there are some challenges. Thank you again, Sharon, best wishes to you! You are the most inspirational woman I have ever met. Thank you.

Zhu Hongrong, trainee teacher, Beijing University, 2017

Thanks for your lecture. I really learn a lot from your lecture. For example, I realize the importance of parents' role in children's education. Nowadays in China, many parents are unaware of it, which produces a negative effect on children's development. I will pay more attention to it and try my best to encourage parents to participate in children's learning process when I become a teacher in the future. And your love for children and passion for teaching really inspire me a lot. Thank you!

Xie Hui

2018 National Awards

The *engage in their future* National Awards is an amazing scheme that celebrates and applauds the progress and achievements of students from the network of member schools and staff are invited to submit their nominations for the 2018 scheme until the closing date on Friday 20th April 2018.

With nine categories available from Outstanding Personal Progress to Team of the Year and the Good Citizen Award to Innovation and Creativity every achievement can be recognised. Not only that but the circumstances and context of each nomination are taken into account so that each one is judged on its own merits not against the achievements or expectations of others.



All nominees will be sent a certificate and short-listed nominees will be invited to attend the National Awards Ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 4th July at the Coldra Court Hotel in Newport. Attendance isn't compulsory and will not affect the decisions of the judges, but we would love to see as many winners there as possible to receive their trophy and have their accomplishments applauded by friends, family, staff and peers.

Nominations can be submitted online at

<https://eitf.wufoo.com/forms/engage-in-their-future-2018-national-awards/>

or offline by sending the completed nomination form (available to download at www.engageintheirfuture.org) to:

engage in their future 2018 National Awards, PO Box 451,
Horley, RH6 6AW

Supporting documents or evidence are welcome.

The closing date for nominations is Friday 20th April 2018.

Full details, including the nomination form and terms and conditions, have been sent to all member schools and are also available on our website (www.engageintheirfuture.org).



So whatever the scale or impact of the progress and achievements of your students, please do consider nominating them for a National Award.

Soap Box Derby

The annual Shenstone Lodge School Soap Box Derby will take place on Friday 15th June this year at Warley Woods in the West Midlands. We've no doubt that everyone who has participated in it in the past would recommend getting involved: it's fun, engaging and enjoyable and well worth participating in.

Further details are available from Simon Hobbs at Shenstone Lodge School (The Brades Lodge site) - simon.hobbs@shenstonelodgelodge.co.uk

Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

The Secretary of State has announced the appointment of Sharon Gray, one of the Co-Opted members of the National Committee, to join the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

Sharon will be joined by Ben Byrne, Gillian Fairfield, Keith Fraser, Neal Hazel, Mairead Healy, Neil Rhodes, Bryan Tytherleigh and Alan Wood who have all been appointed as members, as well as Keith Towler who has been appointed as member with experience of the youth justice system in Wales, of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to England and Wales. The appointments are effective from 1st January 2018 for tenures of 3 and 4 years.

Appointments to the YJB are made under the Act by the Secretary of State for Justice and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA).

Charlie Taylor, Chair of the Youth Justice Board said:

"I am delighted at the appointment of such a talented group of people to the YJB's board, who bring with them a wealth of experience of working with children across a range of organisations.

I would like to thank the outgoing board members for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to working closely with my new colleagues on reform which has a positive and meaningful impact on children in the youth justice system."

We are very proud of all that Sharon has achieved and I'm sure you will join us in congratulating her on the appointment.

Parliament Week 2017

engage in their future were delighted to receive a Certificate of Achievement for our participation in the 2017 Parliament Week. This annual festival is aimed at engaging people from across the UK with Parliament, exploring what it means to them and empowering them to get involved. It provides something for everyone, whether they wish to attend or organise an event.



Registration for the Parliament Week 2018, which will be taking place between 12th and 18th November, opened earlier this month. Further details are available at www.ukparliamentweek.org, including the opportunity to request a Parliament Week kit which this year will include support for activities that explore equality and the campaign that led to votes for women.

2018 National Conference

Bookings for the 2018 National Conference are now being taken. Taking place on Thursday 5th and Friday 6th July at the Coldra Court Hotel in Newport the theme of the conference is "SEMH: From Theory Into Practice". We are delighted to have teamed up with SEBDA to deliver this joint event, and to welcome Vision for Education as sponsors.

Further details are available on our website (www.engageintheirfuture.org) or online bookings can be made at www.engageinsebda.org.