

Teaching Wales



Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru
General Teaching Council for Wales

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Special Edition: Closing the Gap

Wales Education Lecture 2012



Dear Colleague

“Thankfully, teachers are very clear about why they do the job – at its centre is the great satisfaction we gain from seeing a pupil learn. All the more satisfying is it, if that pupil is from a challenging background and we have played a part in opening them to a world of learning.”

With reviews of various aspects of education emanating from the Welsh Government at a rate of knots, we could be forgiven if we lost sight of why we were in the teaching profession or what education was for.

Thankfully, teachers are very clear about why they do the job – at its centre is the great satisfaction we gain from seeing a pupil learn. All the more satisfying is it, if that pupil is from a challenging background and we have played a part in opening them to a world of learning. That is why this edition features “narrowing the gap between poverty and educational attainment” as one of its themes. The good practice and case studies highlighted in Estyn’s *Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools* (see p9) are an excellent starting point. At our *Wales Education Lecture 2012*, Camila Batmanghelidjh summarised the challenges which she faces with her work with street children and, judging by the post-lecture reaction, this resonated strongly with our teacher audience at the National Museum (see p8).

More generally, gone should be the days when teachers were unable to justify or evidence their teaching approaches. The Sutton Trust’s Teaching & Learning Toolkit summarises in very easy-to-read single page summaries



the evidence, applicability and potential pupil gain of 21 different approaches to teaching - from early years intervention to phonics, metacognition and feedback. **Download it at: <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/teaching-and-learning-toolkit-july-2012/> or find it on the Learning Wales website.**

In 2012, our Olympic *Gamesmakers* volunteers hit the headlines. In 2013, GTCW is asking you to volunteer. We are looking for a registered teacher in each school to become a ‘GTCW School Contact Person’ to help us with our communications to your teacher colleagues. There is more information about this opposite. Please give this some thought and volunteer if you can help.

Lastly, some may have missed the Welsh Government consultation in the autumn about the operation, functions and role of the GTCW which will, in two years’ time, be reconfigured and renamed to take on the professional regulation of teaching assistants, FE teachers and work-based learning staff. Watch out for further announcements about important changes to registration.

Best wishes,

Gary Brace
Chief Executive

Your GTCW needs you!

We are launching a new scheme and are inviting you to consider volunteering to become your school’s GTCW Contact Person.

The GTCW is now well established as the professional regulatory body for teaching in Wales. We communicate regularly with you through our website www.gtcw.org.uk, through *Teaching Wales*, through the social network site, *Twitter*, and, directly with you - but there is always more we can do to improve our communications with teachers about key aspects of professionalism, such as the *Code of Professional Conduct & Practice*, upholding standards within the profession, CPD or the GTCW’s roles more generally.

We all know that face-to-face meetings are the most productive method of communication. Over the last two years, we have addressed many local authority headteacher meetings and have been invited to several schools to present to whole staff meetings. Ideally, we would like to be able to speak with all registered teachers in all schools – but this is impractical.

We hope this new GTCW School Contact Persons scheme will help the Council to get closer to direct contact with all registered teachers in their places of work.

We are looking for a registered teacher in every school in Wales to volunteer to be their school’s GTCW School Contact Person.

Some questions:

What are we NOT asking you to do?

We are not asking you to be a school representative for GTCW. We will not expect you to answer questions relating to GTCW policy or positions. You will have a school contact persons email address where you can pass on queries directly to GTCW staff.

Will it take up much time?

No. Essentially the role is to pass on information. As almost all communication will be via email, in most cases you will be forwarding a monthly email to your colleagues or printing it out for display on your staff room notice board.

Can anyone volunteer?

Yes. You could be an experienced teacher, a NQT or a headteacher. So long as you are registered with the GTCW, you can volunteer for this role.

Why is GTCW launching this scheme now?

We are always trying to improve our communications and this was a planned step based on a successful scheme which our sister body in Ireland is running.

What is a GTCW School Contact Person?

We are asking you to be a **conduit of information** between GTCW and teachers in your school:

- to forward GTCW emails containing news items or important information;
- to display GTCW information on staff notice boards;
- to promote awareness of GTCW in your school;
- to assist your colleagues by forwarding any relevant queries to GTCW.

You will be able to attend an annual regional meeting of Contact Persons, providing an opportunity:

- for GTCW officers and members to answer your questions / to explain the work of the Council;
- to network and share ideas with other Contact Persons.

These will be held locally and travel expenses will be paid.

How do I volunteer?

Go to www.gtcw.org.uk/gtcw/schoolcontact and fill in a simple e-form (we will only ask you for your name, school name and email address) and to click on the ‘Volunteer’ button. We will respond to you straight away.

Maintaining professional standards

Technology is ever-present in our lives and increasingly an essential tool in the classroom. A teacher can be vulnerable to unintended uses of technology as email, texting and other media can give rise to casual dialogue, with innocent actions being misconstrued or manipulated. Also, electronic messages are not anonymous, can be tracked and may live forever on the internet.

An area which teachers and schools often ask for more information about is the use of electronic communication and social media. This article gives useful tips and guidance for teachers. In order to help teachers to better understand what actions and behaviours are and are not appropriate, it also gives examples of (anonymised) cases considered by GTCW where registered teachers have been dismissed by schools for reasons involving the misuse of electronic / social media.

Case examples

Texting

The registered teacher was dismissed from her school following matters which included inappropriate contact with pupils by text and mobile telephone. This included over 1100 texts and 40 mobile telephone calls to one pupil in a 10-week period and

over 200 texts and three calls to another over a three-week period, including one long call on Christmas Day. The texts included language such as "I love you", "You are one of the best things that ever happened to me" and "Couldn't wait to see you. I was so excited".

The Professional Conduct Committee considered the registered teacher's conduct to be unacceptable and imposed a Prohibition Order, which removed the teacher from the Register of Qualified Teachers.

Facebook

The registered teacher was dismissed from her post and referred to GTCW having made inappropriate comments to existing and former pupils using Facebook over a number of months. These comments included references to drinking, partying and matters of a sexual nature.

The Professional Conduct Committee considered the registered teacher's conduct to be unacceptable. However, in deciding what disciplinary order to impose, the Committee took account of the fact that the registered teacher had a good record as a teacher over a 20-year period and had shown both insight and remorse about the incidents. The Committee imposed a **Reprimand**, which will remain on the registered teacher's record for two years.

ebay

The registered teacher was dismissed from her school, having spent hours of lesson time on internet sites such as ebay and Facebook. This usage was identified by the school during an investigation into a usually high printing bill. The school had an internet usage policy in place and this had been provided to all members of staff.

The Professional Conduct Committee found the teacher guilty of unacceptable professional conduct and imposed restrictions on her future employment as a teacher in that she was required to (a) notify her head teacher of the terms of the GTCW disciplinary order before taking up employment as a registered teacher; (b) only access the internet when using a computer owned by or located at a school for the purpose of fulfilling her duties as a teacher, and (c) provide GTCW with termly evidence of her compliance with the school's ICT policy.

Use of I.T equipment

A registered secondary teacher school resigned from his post following an incident where he used his own laptop to show a DVD to a class of 11 and 12 years olds. Rather than educational information, images of a sexual nature appeared on the screen.



The Professional Conduct Committee found the teacher's conduct to be unacceptable. However, the Committee noted that the incident was an isolated one and the teacher showed insight and remorse. It therefore imposed a Reprimand, which would stand for a two-year period.

Hints and tips

While not being a definitive list, the following tips will help you to stay safe:

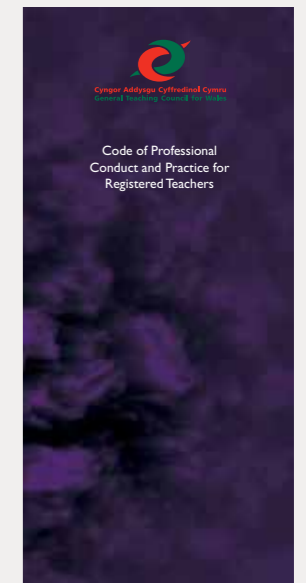
1. Adhere to school / local authority / Welsh Government policies, procedures and guidelines.
2. Adhere to GTCW Code of Professional Conduct and Practice.
3. Make use of existing guidance about e-safety and the use of electronic / social media. As well as the policies, procedures and guidelines referred to above there is a lot of good advice available, for example from teacher unions and the Teacher Support Network.
4. Maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone with pupils and ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.
5. Do not exchange private phone numbers, email, text, photos with pupils.
6. Decline pupil initiated friend requests from pupils and do not instigate any. Use discretion with parents.
7. Act online in a way that does not call into question your position as a professional.
8. Realise that pupils will be curious about your personal life.
9. Manage your privacy settings, especially for photos.
10. Ask others to remove any undesirable content about you.
11. Audit and re-evaluate information about you regularly.
12. Note that potential employers, pupils, parents and others may google you.
13. Remember that online conversations may not be private, for example a post on a forum.
14. Do not discuss pupils, parents or colleagues online or criticise your employer.
15. Use strong passwords and change them regularly.
16. Bring any concern to the attention of your employer.
17. Be mindful of how you present yourself online e.g. when writing a profile about yourself.

GTCW's responsibility

GTCW is required by law to investigate and hear cases which involve allegations of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence or where a teacher has committed a relevant criminal offence. This is an important role in maintaining the trust and confidence of parents, pupils and the general public in the teaching profession.

In any year, the number of registered teachers referred to GTCW by employers, the police or any individual complainant for investigation continues to be very small, with only around 50 out of over 38,000 registered teachers referred annually.

Concerned about the standards expected of you as a registered teacher?



All registered teachers need to be aware of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice. This will help ensure that you understand what is expected of you as a professional.

You can read about forthcoming hearings or the results of recent cases using the link on the front page of our website www.gtcw.org.uk.

Setting the Record straight

Gareth Ffowc Roberts, Emeritus Professor in Education, Bangor University

We all need our heroes, both to admire and to emulate. As a youngster, my cricketing hero was the spin bowler Tony Lock who played for England in the 1950s and 60s. Like me, he bowled with his left hand but batted with his right. He was also a fabulous fielder, particularly at leg slip, and I would spend hours in the backyard at home practising catching skills in a (vain) attempt to emulate Lock's brilliance.

Following a career in mathematics education I naturally looked for heroes there as well. My clear favourite is Robert Recorde (1512–1558), the Welshman from Tenby best known for having invented the equals sign. He's a hero, not just for that, but because he was the first person in these islands who explored ways in which to make mathematical knowledge and skills available to a wide population. He was the first to write texts in English setting out the principles of arithmetic and algebra, and the first to interpret the classical geometry of Euclid for ordinary people. The first person in Britain to think seriously about the challenges of learning and teaching mathematics, he was, in essence, our first maths teacher.

In the tradition of tragic heroes, Recorde died defending his

principles. Mathematics does not deceive and Recorde himself was unwilling to be party to any form of deception. He paid the ultimate price for taking such a stand.

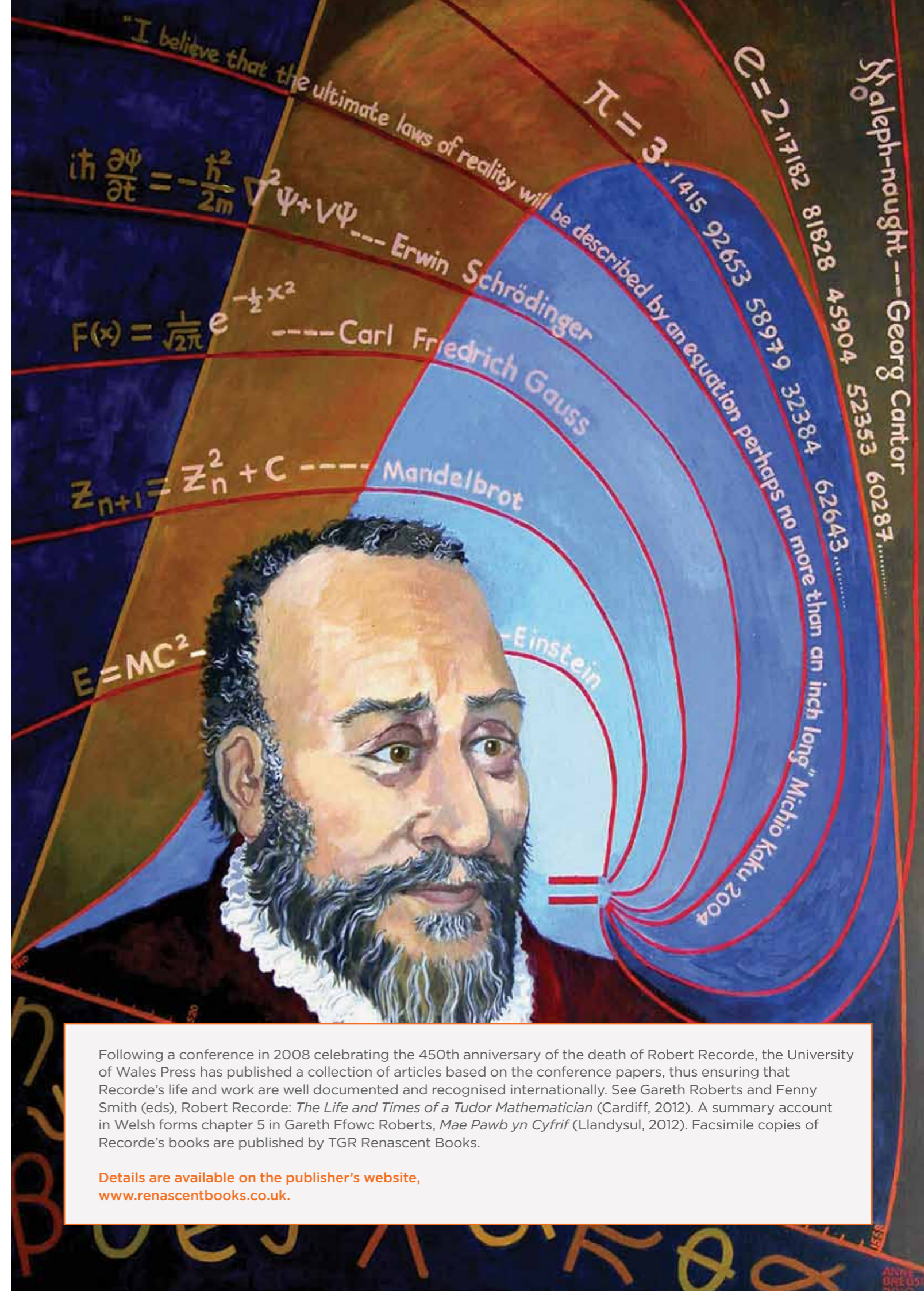
The Recorde family was well established in Tenby, Robert's merchant grandfather having moved there from Kent, and Robert's mother hailing from Machynlleth. Little is known of his early education but he was clearly influenced by the comings and goings in the busy port of Tenby and the extensive mathematical skills used by the tradesmen and craftsmen of the town. He secured a place at Oxford and, after graduating, went on to Cambridge where he qualified as a doctor. He became known at Court and was appointed to oversee the Royal mints at Bristol, London and Dublin. He augmented his salary by continuing to undertake some medical work and to give private lessons on mathematics. He was a conscientious worker but became embroiled with the Earl of Pembroke, his line-manager, whom he accused of siphoning off part of the profits made by the mints, thus depriving the Crown of its due income. Pembroke sued Recorde for libel and claimed damages. Being a member of the Privy Council, Pembroke had the upper hand and Recorde was unable to secure a fair trial. He was found guilty and sentenced to pay

£1000 costs, a sum far beyond his means. Consequently, Recorde was sent to serve time as a debtor in the King's Bench Prison at Southwark, south London, where, in his late forties, he contracted a fatal disease and died in tragic circumstances.

It is quite remarkable that, under these pressures, Recorde was also able to write his series of books, not only on mathematics, but also on medicine and astronomy. His mathematical texts laid the foundations for the teaching of mathematics in English. His example set the standard for generations to come and the principles of good teaching exemplified by Recorde still hold today. Adopting a dialogue style between Master and Scholar he emphasised the importance of discussion, of teaching for understanding, and of motivating the mathematics by reference to practical examples:

I have wrytten in the fourme of a dyaloge, bycause I iudge that to be the easyest waye of enstruction, when the scholer may aske euery doute orderly, and the mayster may answere to his question playnly.

Over 470 years later, all these principles retain their importance. Recorde remains a hero, indeed, for all of today's teachers of mathematics!



Following a conference in 2008 celebrating the 450th anniversary of the death of Robert Recorde, the University of Wales Press has published a collection of articles based on the conference papers, thus ensuring that Recorde's life and work are well documented and recognised internationally. See Gareth Roberts and Fenny Smith (eds), *Robert Recorde: The Life and Times of a Tudor Mathematician* (Cardiff, 2012). A summary account in Welsh forms chapter 5 in Gareth Ffowc Roberts, *Mae Pawb yn Cyfrif* (Llandysul, 2012). Facsimile copies of Recorde's books are published by TGR Renascent Books.

Details are available on the publisher's website, www.renascentbooks.co.uk.

Wales Education Lecture 2012

The 'biology of terror' in the brains of youngsters from traumatised backgrounds makes learning almost impossible for them unless it's tackled effectively, top children's campaigner, Camila Batmanghelidjh, told senior educationalists at the ninth Wales Education Lecture in October.

Delivering the annual Lecture, entitled 'Neurosis, Numeracy and Neurons: the challenges of delivering education to vulnerable children and young people.' Ms Batmanghelidjh, an experienced psychotherapist, said there is now greater knowledge available about the impact of abuse on the development of children's brains and this, in turn, should lead to better handling of extreme behaviour.

"Too often they are presented in the media as vermin and we dismiss their behaviour as a manifestation of flawed morality. By doing that, we are losing the opportunity to find out what is really happening," said the charity chief whose support organisations Kids Company and The Place 2 Be have helped more than 70,000 disturbed children across the UK.



She explained how the 'banking of multiple traumatic episodes' in an abused child's brain creates a loop between the brain and the adrenal gland that leads to constant restlessness and shuts down the ability to learn.

"Their biology is so adapted to an extreme way of life that they struggle to calm down, they find it so difficult to sit still in our classrooms, their capacity for memory is altered and they develop learning difficulties."

"We need to help children get out of this fright loop. The biology of terror has to be addressed before any learning or aspirations for the future are addressed," she added.



She argued that teachers need to work more closely with other children's support professionals in a holistic package of care to reverse the damage done by the traumatic lives experienced by these children. She said: "If you put a holistic package of care together you can achieve success. These young people are not hard to reach. It is the services that are hard to reach. We need a new type of key worker who understands these neurological issues."

To watch a video recording of the Lecture, or to read the visual minutes of the event, please go to <http://www.gtcw.org.uk/gtcw/en/the-wales-education-lecture>

Meeting the challenges of disadvantage

Estyn's good practice guide

Ann Keane, Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

For many years, raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners has been one of the big challenges for schools and other providers in Wales.

It is good to be able to say that Estyn has seen many primary and secondary schools in Wales successfully tackle this challenge over the last few years.

The schools that make a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged learners do what other successful schools do and they also create an outstandingly positive ethos that targets disadvantaged learners. They employ strategies that are specifically designed to combat the barriers that face disadvantaged learners.

Estyn recently published a good practice guide on 'Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools'. The report showcased a number of case studies for teachers to use and replicate in their own schools.

Here are some tried and tested ways that have helped:

1. Take a whole-school strategic approach

Implement a structured, coherent and focused approach to raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners.

Invest in staff training and development. Foster a culture of sharing best practice. Provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other, and set specific performance management targets related to raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners.

2. Overcome obstacles

Offer staff training and development to motivate and support staff, and develop their skills and expertise.

3. Share good practice

Create and foster a strong culture of sharing good practice, both within the school and with other schools. Provide opportunities for teachers to learn from each other by discussing what works well for them.

4. Use performance management

Ensure that all staff are accountable by setting specific and measurable improvement targets for raising the achievement of disadvantaged learners.

5. Make links with the community

Strengthen links to, and work with, the local community to address issues like absenteeism, behaviour, and lack of parental engagement.

6. Use out-of-school-hours learning

Plan out-of-hours learning that is tailored to meet the needs of learners, increase their confidence, motivation and self-esteem and to complement the curriculum.

Adopt and co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to supporting particularly disadvantaged learners and ensure that the right protocols are in place, for instance, for setting up multi-agency panels.

7. Engage with parents

Involve parents because they are key to tackling the under-achievement of disadvantaged learners. Teachers find it helpful to develop their awareness of the range of problems facing the families of their learners so they can work with parents to help their children do better at school.

Finally, the payoff...

What the successful schools have achieved through hard work and careful planning has opened up opportunities for children and young people who might otherwise not have made the progress they were capable of.

So why not visit the Estyn website at www.estyn.gov.uk to read more about the case studies that describe how the schools in our good practice guide overcame the challenges of disadvantage?

Shattering the myths about aspiration

Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation, a Welsh think-tank, reflects on the latest thinking about the impact of people's attitudes and aspirations on educational achievement.

“The real difficulty for many children is knowing how to fulfil their ambitions, while for many parents the barrier is lack of knowledge, skills and confidence to help their children understand the choices they need to make.”

Barely a day goes by without an educationalist or Minister arguing that children from low income families have poorer educational achievement than better-off children because they and their parents don't 'aim high' enough. The answer, they claim, is to 'raise aspirations' – and for this reason a whole raft of educational policy and practice has focused on changing attitudes. Despite this, the attainment gap between the richest and poorest children remains large. It emerges by age three and gradually widens so that by age 16, children in receipt of Free School Meals are about half as likely to get five A*-C grades at GCSE than other children.

Recent research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of its work on education and poverty challenges the notion that aspirations lie at the root of children's low attainment and questions methods which aim to narrow the attainment gap by changing attitudes.

Most children and parents from low income households in fact attach great importance to education. They also have realistic hopes for the future that might include going to university or getting a professional job. The real difficulty for many children is knowing how to fulfil their ambitions, while for many parents the barrier is lack of knowledge, skills and confidence to help their children understand the choices they need to make. Significantly, help for children and parents to reach their goals is rarely provided by the many initiatives that aim to raise aspirations.

Many people are sceptical of this evidence. Even though many people can cite individual cases, this is not robust evidence and is certainly not a strong enough basis for educational policy. In fact, evidence from around the world shows that it is not possible to establish a 'clear causal relationship' between young people's attitudes, aspirations and behaviours and their educational outcomes. What the evidence does show is as follows.

“If children are to have the best chance of achieving their goals, they and their parents need to be helped to succeed and not simply encouraged to 'aim higher'.”

Firstly, initiatives focused on involving parents in their children's education have been conclusively shown to improve outcomes. If children are to have the best chance of achieving their goals, they and their parents need to be helped to succeed and not simply encouraged to 'aim higher'. This is particularly true where parents have come from poorer backgrounds and / or have not had positive experiences of education themselves.



Initiatives that are proven to have a positive impact on children's achievements include: improving at-home parenting; involving parents in school; engaging parents in children's learning and their own learning; and aligning school-home expectations. It is important to note also that any initiatives need to be introduced with care to meet local circumstances – they can't just be cut and pasted.

Secondly, there are many interventions where the evidence of benefit is promising but not compelling. For example, there is some evidence that extra-curricular activities and peer mentoring improves attainment by increasing self-confidence but this is not conclusive – further research is needed before these programmes should be rolled out and claimed to raise attainment.

Thirdly, there are many interventions currently in use for which there is no evidence of proven benefit to attainment.

So, what does all this mean? Addressing the attainment gap is a long-term challenge and there is no easy fix. Everyone involved in education to move away from unproven though widely-held assumptions, and future educational initiatives should be based on the best evidence available and not simply because of politicians', officials', or (head) teachers' preferences or beliefs. If this does not happen, it would seem at best, very likely that the attainment gap will not be reduced and, at worst, will widen. The children of Wales deserve better.

This is an edited version of a summary of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's research written by Grahame Whitfield. For further information about the research please see <http://www.jrf.org.uk/work/workarea/education-and-poverty>

Making the most of the Pupil Deprivation Grant



Conor Ryan, Director of Communications & Research, the Sutton Trust, writes for us about the Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit.

Times are tough in schools. But since April 2012, Welsh schools have had access to a 'pupil premium' designed to narrow the attainment gap between the 70,000 pupils in receipt of free school meals and their schoolmates, and to encourage successful schools to take more disadvantaged pupils.

In Wales, the Pupil Deprivation Grant is worth £450 this year, a little less than the £600 pupil premium in England.¹ But, in both nations, the challenge for school leaders is in how to use that money where it will have most impact.

Although previous governments have provided extra resources for such pupils through extra funding to local authorities with high levels of poverty, this is the first grant paid to schools for each disadvantaged pupil, regardless of location.

The Welsh Government has not ring-fenced the grant, although ministers clearly expect it to contribute to their School Improvement Action Plan. But it may be tempting for school leaders to focus spending on simply maintaining or expanding staff numbers. In England, the National Foundation for Education Research surveyed 1,700 teachers in 1,200 schools for the Sutton Trust last year and showed that relatively little of the English pupil premium was likely to be spent on activities proven to be the best bets for boosting attainment.

Eight per cent of teachers said the money would offset other budget cuts. 28 per cent said it would either be used to employ new staff or cut class sizes. A further 28 per cent didn't know how the money would be used.²

A survey by English school inspectors found only one in 10 school leaders believed that the pupil premium had significantly changed how they supported disadvantaged pupils. School leaders commonly told inspectors that they were using the funding to maintain or enhance existing provision.³

The most common use was to pay for teaching assistants. Yet the evidence shows that simply employing more teachers or assistants, and deploying them as before, is a costly but relatively ineffective way of boosting attainment. Researchers at Durham University assessed 21 different interventions for both impact on attainment and relative cost and helped create a toolkit which a growing number of schools are using to inform their decision making. The Toolkit, initially produced for the Sutton Trust, has been developed by our sister charity, the Education Endowment Foundation since its launch in 2011 and has recently been updated and improved. Its lessons could prove valuable for teachers and middle leaders across Wales.

It can help teachers maximise impact at relatively low cost. Using evidence from the UK and abroad,

they calculate that its most effective strategies can provide the equivalent of between six and nine months extra learning, at a cost of around £170 per pupil. Of course, the figures they provide are averages, and it is assumed teachers will apply their professional judgement and knowledge of their own school before adopting its ideas.

The most cost-effective strategy identified is improving feedback from teachers to pupils. Research suggests that it should be specific, accurate and clear – in other words, provide an explanation as well as a judgement. Ensuring that feedback is consistently and effectively provided is not a cost-free exercise, but with regular professional development, it is estimated that it would cost £2,000-£5,000 a year per teacher, or as little as £170 per pupil.

The second most effective approach is what the academics call 'meta-cognition', or programmes that teach pupils strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. This is often referred to in schools as 'learning to learn'. The Toolkit recognises that this is not always easy. A teacher can support pupils' work too much, so that they do not learn to manage their own learning but rely too much on their teacher's prompts. The Toolkit suggests that a useful metaphor is scaffolding: you remove the support and dismantle the scaffolding to check that learners are managing their own learning well.

The third approach seen as having high impact at low cost is peer tutoring in Maths and English. This can be cross-age tutoring, where an older pupil tutors a younger schoolmate, or peer-assisted learning, a structured approach for mathematics and reading with session of 25-35 minutes two or three times a week. Reciprocal Peer Tutoring sees pupils tutor and be taught by their classmates. The common characteristic is that learners take responsibility for aspects of teaching and for evaluating their success.

These approaches, which on average have been highly effective, are worth considering by schools, perhaps as part of their overall teaching and learning strategies, as a way to make funding go further. By contrast, the evidence suggests that, as currently deployed, employing extra teaching assistants produces little impact, despite the cost, and that reducing class sizes to 15 pupils could produce learning gains equivalent to three months, but at a cost of £1,000-£1,200 per pupil on average.

Behind all these approaches is the recognition that at the heart of school improvement lies good teaching – how teachers do their job in the classroom, and how they enable pupils to learn effectively. Strategies focused on improving teaching feature much more highly in the Toolkit than structural changes like block scheduling or ability

grouping. Nobody would argue that this is a novel insight. But it now has the benefit of being backed up by all the best international evidence.

For middle leaders there is an in-school challenge as much as one between schools, as variations are often greater within schools. A strong focus across all teachers on proven teaching and learning strategies could pay real dividends.

Traditionally in Britain there has been too little connection between research and the classroom. The Teaching and Learning Toolkit makes research accessible as never before, and provides leaders with the tools to make the most of limited resources. Employing its insights could ensure that the Pupil Deprivation Grant pays real dividends in the classroom – and for your less advantaged pupils.

Conor Ryan is Director of Research and Communications at the Sutton Trust. To see the Toolkit, visit <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-18183842>
2. <http://www.suttontrust.com/news/news/pupil-premium-limited-impact-on-poorer-pupils-teacher-survey/>
3. <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupil-premium>

Stamping out homophobia in school

By Luke Young, Education Officer,
Stonewall Cymru

Do you hear the word “gay” used a lot in school? Often used to describe someone or something in a negative way? Teachers tell us that they regularly hear the word gay thrown around as a term of abuse. Pupils tell us it’s affecting the quality of their education.

For anyone who is bullied, life at home, school or work can be miserable. Welsh Government statistics tell us that the level of truancy is up, but for many young people who are bullied, truancy is the only escape they have. Our research with young gay people confirms this, with two in five of those who experience homophobic bullying skipping school at least once, and one in seven skipping school more than six times.

The Welsh Government has given clear direction to schools and local authorities, through its Respecting Others anti-bullying guidance on the culture of respect it hopes to achieve. So with the policy in place and the evidence on our side, it is time for all to step up.

Stonewall Cymru wants to work with schools on how to effectively tackle bullying and create positive learning environments. Through our Schools Champions programme we are benchmarking anti-bullying action and charting success and areas for improvement with the aim of helping schools develop their own, lasting, solutions. When schools explicitly state that homophobic

bullying is wrong, pupils get the message. When they go further to demonstrate that equality and diversity is essential in education, the culture starts to change. When this happens the results are tangible: better attainment, lower truancy and improved mental health. An increasing number of schools in Wales are contacting us to see how we can assist their work.

We know it’s important to talk about these issues in a way that works and is age appropriate, so for children of primary school age, we have developed our Different Families resources. Lots of gay people have families. Stonewall research, conducted with the University of Cambridge, found that children with two mums or two dads think their family is perfectly ordinary and has lots in common with their friends’ families. They realise, however, that other children use the word ‘gay’ to mean rubbish. This can make them feel excluded and invisible if their families are never talked about. At the beginning of the new term, each primary school in Wales will receive a pack complete with stickers, posters and guidance on how to discuss the issue in class. It also includes helpful recommendations for your schools to consider in order to create a positive learning culture.

For secondary schools in Wales, we know there are a number of challenges when it comes to homophobic bullying. The issues of derogatory language and peer pressure combined with the self-realisation of their sexual orientation



puts a huge amount of pressure on young lesbian gay bisexual people. Our research tells us that almost all gay young people hear the phrases ‘that’s so gay’ or ‘you’re so gay’ in school and 96% of gay pupils hear homophobic language such as ‘poof’ or ‘lezza’. Three in five gay pupils who experience homophobic bullying say that teachers who witness the bullying never intervene and only half of gay pupils report that their schools say homophobic bullying is wrong.

Tackling homophobia and homophobic bullying isn’t easy. It takes leadership from schools and local councils and it takes courage from teachers and pupils. However, you are not alone. We can help run training with members of staff at your school to assist in the way you talk to pupils about sexual orientation. We can come and deliver assemblies, lessons and workshops to your classes in order to open up their minds to the world around them. With the increasing popularity of social media and the fact that often, regardless of school rules, pupils will have access to Smart Phones meaning they have near-constant access to a world that teachers cannot see. That makes it more important that we create an inclusive culture of tolerance and respect inside the school gates, the effect of which spreads far beyond.

If you would like more information on School Champions or the work of Stonewall Cymru please visit www.stonewallcymru.org.uk or email education@stonewallcymru.org.uk

Consultation on changes to Estyn inspections

This month, Estyn, the education and training inspectorate for Wales, and the Welsh Government have launched a joint public consultation on proposed changes to the frequency of inspections and the notice period given to schools and other providers.

The consultation also proposes to reduce the amount of time a school or provider has to prepare an action plan after inspection (currently, it can take up to 80 working days).

Ann Keane, Chief Inspector, said, “This is an important consultation which has the potential to change the way we inspect, minimise stress on

teachers and reduce the temptation for schools to over-prepare for inspection as there would be less predictability as to when an inspection will take place.”

“I want to encourage all learners and education and training providers to take part in the consultation.”

The consultation is available to download from <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/proposed-changes-estyn-inspection-regulations/?skip=1&lang=en>

For more information please visit the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

Teacher Statistics

We have updated our website with a range of topical data about registered teachers in Wales, including:

- The profile of Heads, Deputies and Assistant Heads in Wales
- The employment circumstances of teachers five years after gaining QTS
- Information about supply teachers

- The length of time it takes NQTs to complete their statutory Induction

- Numbers who complete the Graduate Teacher Programme in Wales annually

Further details at: www.gtcw.org.uk/gtcw/en/teacher-statistics



On 31 January, Ann Keane, Chief Inspector of Estyn published her Annual Report, highlighting both the achievements and areas for improvement for the education sector in Wales.

Highlights included the increasing wellbeing of children and young people in Wales and also, the

Learning Wales

On 24th September 2012 the Education and Skills Minister Leighton Andrews launched the new Learning Wales Website. Learning Wales is a resource for all learning practitioners, designed as a valuable resource of essential information crucial to your role.

The Learning Wales site pulls together all relevant Welsh Government and Estyn documents for teachers into one site. It also contains high-quality research documents to improve your teaching skills, and a news section with the latest announcements, Ministerial statements, consultations and events for teachers.

Leighton Andrews said: “Learning Wales marks yet another step forwards in our plan to improve standards in our schools. The site will help teachers stay informed and help them stay ahead of the game.”

“Wales has many excellent teachers, but we want to ensure they can share their best practice and develop their skills. With these tools we can make a real difference in our schools.”

In line with best practice for new websites, Learning Wales has been launched in beta. This allows the site to be adapted to reflect on your feedback. New content and your suggested improvements will be launched in stages throughout the next academic year.

You can visit Learning Wales at www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Annual Report

positive impact of the Foundation Phase. Literacy, variation in the quality of teaching and learning and local authority support are still a cause for concern.

The report is available to download from the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

New teachers and professional development

GTCW administers the funding of Induction and Early Professional Development (EPD) on behalf of the Welsh Government. It also has a role in tracking the progress of NQTs who started the new Welsh Government-funded Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) in January.

Don't forget that:

- Teachers undertaking Induction or the MEP can check and update their records from GTCW's website;
- Teachers and their schools who are intending to start Induction or the MEP must inform GTCW using the NQT Induction and MEP Notification form;
- At the end of each term, a school must confirm to GTCW the number of sessions any NQT has completed towards the Practising Teacher Standards so we can provide a school with the Welsh Government funding for this period;
- Supply teachers must log any sessions they complete and which can be counted towards the Practising Teacher Standards on GTCW's website. It is essential that supply teachers check Welsh Government guidance to make sure that a particular session completed can actually be counted towards the Standard. There have been cases where some supply teachers have been logging sessions where the supply work they have carried out does not meet any part of the Standard.
- Teachers who started Induction before September 2012 are still entitled to EPD funding. Some teachers still do not use all of the funding available. If you are entitled to this support, please don't waste the opportunity!

If you need more information, please contact the Induction and EPD funding team on 029 2046 0099, e-mail: inductionandepd@gtcw.org.uk

Employers of teachers – make sure it's not you that breaks the law

We have seen a number of recent occasions where schools have breached Welsh Government Regulations by appointing a teacher who was not GTCW registered. In each case, the teacher had committed one or more criminal offences or had been subject to disciplinary proceedings while working at another school. In one case, the person employed by the school was not even qualified to teach as he had not passed his teacher training programme and did not hold QTS.

On each of these occasions, the schools and their local authorities have needed to make difficult decisions about the teacher's continued employment while GTCW concluded its consideration of the teacher's suitability for registration.

We emphasise that all schools, local authorities and supply agencies have access to the GTCW Register of Teachers to check that a teacher is registered **before** they start work. If you do not know how to do this, contact the Qualifications and Registration team on 029 2046 0099. By failing to check a teacher's registration status, you may not only be breaking the law but also potentially putting pupils at risk.

Keep your registration record up to date

You can view and update your record on the Register of Qualified Teachers online at www.gtcw.org.uk. Prospective employers, parents, pupils and members of the public can also check that a person is a registered teacher.

We have recently made the Register easier to search. Please try it out and tell us what you think.

If you have any queries regarding your GTCW registration, contact the Registration team on 029 2046 0099 or e-mail: registration@gtcw.org.uk

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