

# impact

*NFER's research news for schools* .....

## Building resilience to extremism

**Governance models in schools**

**The Food for Life Partnership programme**

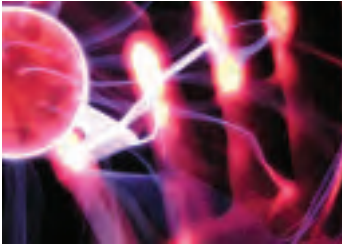
**KS3 Science teachers' views on APP**

**Global School Partnerships**



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### Impact

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**W**elcome to *Impact: NFER's research news for schools*. The aim of *Impact* has always been to bring to your attention the outcome of work we have been carrying out which is relevant and interesting to those working with children and young people.

I hope that this edition will certainly achieve this. Articles include one which is particularly pertinent following the tragic events in Norway over the summer. David Kerr describes a number of factors which can assist teachers and others working with young people in building resilience to extremism. The benefits of global citizenship teaching in promoting understanding and tolerance are discussed in Juliet Sismur's article on the evaluation of the Global Schools Partnerships Programme.

In other articles our researchers discuss work they have been carrying out in areas such as effective school governance, key stage 3 science teaching and gathering views from teachers on improving teaching practice.

*Impact* is available online as a free download from the NFER website, [www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk), where you can also find more details on the reports mentioned in this and previous issues, as well as other past and current projects.

I hope you'll find the articles in *Impact* interesting and informative; if you have any comments or suggestions for future editions please get in touch.

Allison Chownsmith, Editor  
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# Financial education in schools

## NFER's omnibus survey highlights scant provision



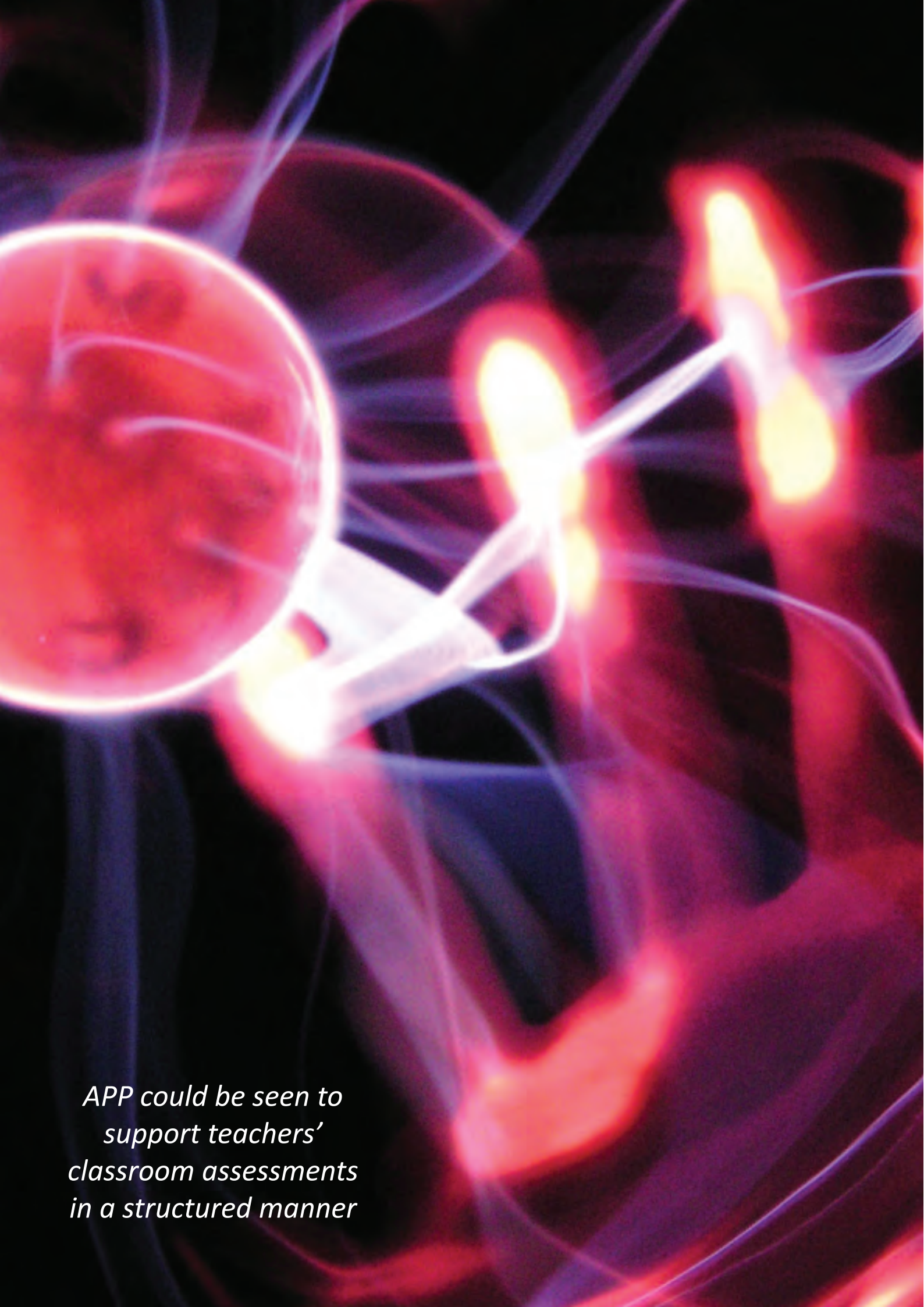
**Karen Lewis**

**M**omentum is building to make financial education a compulsory part of the school curriculum both within Parliament and in the country at large. To date 70,000 signatures have been gathered on an e-petition to have this issue debated by MPs. NFER's omnibus surveys reveal a potential scarcity of existing provision across schools in England with only 29 per cent of a representative sample of secondary pupils surveyed in NFER's Pupil Voice omnibus survey in June 2011 stating that their school had taught them to look after money.

The survey of over 1,000 secondary pupils also identified regional differences. Provision of financial education was most evident in the East Midlands where 37 per cent of pupils had received lessons about how to look after money and least evident in Yorkshire and Humberside where only 21 per cent of pupils said their school had taught them about looking after money. Some interesting differences also emerged when the results were analysed by family income. Only 26 per cent of pupils from families with incomes of less than £30,000 said they had been taught about money at

school compared with 31 per cent of pupils from families where income was above £30,000 per annum.

These figures suggest some improvement in provision of some financial education compared to that available when the parents of today's pupils were at school. NFER's parallel omnibus survey of 1,000 parents of school aged children revealed that 70 per cent felt they had not been taught about managing money although it should be noted that a further 13 per cent said that they could not remember.



*APP could be seen to  
support teachers'  
classroom assessments  
in a structured manner*

# Key stage 3 science teachers give their views of Assessing Pupils Progress (APP)



Naomi Rowe

**A**PP in key stage 3 science does have the potential both to aid teacher assessment in a structured manner and to support teaching and learning in science in other ways such as promoting 'How Science Works'. While APP is no longer being promoted by the current government, where it has been fully embedded into practice it has proved to be a useful tool for key stage 3 science teachers, according to research carried out by NFER.

The previous Labour government planned to invest £150 million over three years (2008–2011) to help schools in England take a strategic approach to teacher assessment, with the aim of securing consistent good practice. They saw Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) as a way of reliably linking National Curriculum levels to effective teacher assessment.

APP is a structured approach, designed to strengthen teacher assessment, resulting in a clear profile of pupils' achievements across a whole subject to inform and shape future planning and target setting.

The National Strategies launched APP in science at key stage 3 in January 2009 and by September 2009 those schools that had opted to introduce it were expected to have thoroughly embedded it into their year 7 science curriculum, with the view that by 2011 all teachers of science in key stage 3 will be using APP.

In June–July 2010, NFER conducted research into key stage 3 science teachers' perceptions of the introduction of APP, and how it had been embedded into practice during the first 12 – 18 months.

## Key findings

Online questionnaires were completed by 286 science teachers. Of these, 233 (81 per cent) were using APP to assess pupils.

Overall, the picture was very mixed. Where teachers and schools had adopted and successfully embedded APP, the findings were positive, and it was clearly seen as making a positive contribution to science teaching and learning. However, some confusion remained over issues such as how APP could effectively support teacher

assessment and how to incorporate some of the assessment focuses into their teaching.

The key stage 3 science Programme of Study, introduced in 2008, streamlined the science National Curriculum

in England and focused more on developing pupils' skills through 'How Science Works' (HSW). Not only did teacher responses to the questionnaire suggest that use of APP was aiding the development of HSW at key stage 3 but the 'skills-based nature of APP' was also seen as a positive, as was its potential to allow greater creativity in how science is taught.

The questionnaire responses also highlighted a number of positives concerning APP in relation to assessment. Most notable was the way APP could be seen to support teachers' classroom assessments in a structured manner. This contributes to the re-professionalisation of teachers, in terms of putting the trust back into their professional judgement, and increasing their confidence.

The manageability of APP was the area of most concern highlighted by teachers in

the questionnaire. It would seem that the more support there was in schools from Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) the easier it was to implement APP. If SLTs were on board with the principles, sufficient time was made available for training teachers and for teachers to develop resources. In those schools where this was not the case, the introduction of APP had the potential to be seen as an increase in teacher workload.

Concerns regarding recording and monitoring of pupils' progress were also highlighted, with teachers citing a 'lack of quality guidance on how to record achievement efficiently' as the major problem.

Although most teachers said they had been involved in inter-department moderation of pupils' work using APP, relatively few had been involved in moderation with other schools in their Local Authority (LA), a method that was promoted by many LAs. It was possible that the main reason these network groups had not been successful was that teachers did not have the time to attend meetings.

## Further information

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/TAPP01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/TAPP01)





# Governance models in schools

Tami McCrone, Clare Southcott and Nalia George

*The personal attributes of governors such as interest, commitment and skills were more influential than 'models' of governance on the effectiveness of school governance.*

In light of increased autonomy for schools, the Local Government Group commissioned the NFER to review current school governance models, to examine effective governance and schools' accountability, and to explore governors' views on governor support services. The research took place between August 2010 and February 2011, and included a rapid review of literature, online surveys of over

1500 governors and over 60 coordinators of governor services, and telephone interviews with co-ordinators of governor services, chairs of governors and governors in nine case-study areas.

## Models of governance

The literature review identified two overarching models of school governance in England: the stakeholder model widely used across maintained primary and secondary

schools, and the business model, commonly used in Academies. Nearly half of all case-study interviewees said the stakeholder model could be used across all types of school. The research also found that the personal attributes of governors such as interest, commitment and skills were more influential than 'models' of governance on the effectiveness of school governance.

## Governor responsibilities and statutory duties

The majority of governors and co-ordinators surveyed reported that **governing bodies (GBs) principally fulfilled their monitoring and supporting roles**. However, fewer (42 per cent) reported that their GBs often challenge the decisions of the headteacher or senior leadership team (SLT) or often provide strategic direction alongside the SLT (56 per cent). Only 13 per cent of coordinators reported that most GBs provide strategic direction to the SLT, highlighting **a need for GBs to provide further strategic challenge**.

### Impact and effectiveness of GBs

Governors were confident about the impact of the GB on school improvement, however, co-ordinators felt impact was variable across schools.

Survey data revealed that **approximately three quarters of governors agreed that their GBs responded to the needs of the local area and take into account how the school can help to support all children and young people in the local community.** In contrast, just over half of coordinators reported that they were unsure whether schools responded to the needs of the local area.

Governors and co-ordinators highlighted the following key elements of an effective GB:

- a productive working relationship between the GB and the SLT
- an effective chair of governors and clerk to support the GB
- governors having a clear understanding of their role and its limits.

The two elements considered least important were:

- the size of the governing body
- governors being representative of the local community.

### Governor support

Governors welcomed further accessible training and support, particularly in relation to interpretation of school performance data, new developments in education, governance self-evaluation and the statutory requirements and legal responsibilities of governing bodies.

Coordinators suggested that particular elements of training should be compulsory, such as induction training and training for clerks and chairs. **The evidence suggests that further training to ensure that all partners, including headteachers, understand the strategic responsibilities of governing bodies is needed.**

### Conclusions

- Governors who are committed and have the relevant skills, or willingness to develop new skills were considered as more important than 'models' of governance.



- GBs are currently most often fulfilling their monitoring and support roles; however, there is scope for GBs to be more strategic and to further challenge the SLT.
- GBs can have an important impact on school improvement and governors consider that they ensure schools respond

to the needs of local communities and all children and young people, although coordinators are more circumspect about this.

- The most important elements of effective governance are a productive working relationship between the GB and SLT, an effective chair of governors and clerk, and governors having a clear understanding of their role and its limits.
- Further accessible training to equip GBs to support and challenge more autonomous schools will help to ensure GBs have the skills to fulfil their statutory duties and provide a strategic focus for schools.

### Further information

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGMS01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LGMS01)



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# What's in progress at NFER?

Allison Chownsmith

## Outcomes of food growing activities in schools

The Learning Outside the Classroom (LOT) Manifesto emphasised the benefits of learning in areas including school grounds and gardens, for raising pupils' academic achievement, improving attitudes to learning, and increasing motivation. A number of programmes and activities involving growing food in schools have supported this Manifesto.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) established a Fruit and Vegetable Taskforce in 2010, which endorsed efforts to ensure that gardening is embedded within schools and used as a tool to deliver the curriculum and as a strategy for increasing the domestic consumption of fruit and vegetables. To support the taskforce recommendations, Defra have commissioned a literature review to explore the impact of food growing in schools on such areas as:

- Health outcomes (including healthy eating and longer-term physiological and psychological benefits for pupils)



- Pupils' educational attainment and broader learning outcomes
- Pupils' practical skills and knowledge about food (including horticultural techniques and progression to relevant careers/sectors)
- Environmental behaviours and participation (including out-of school participation in gardening, better understanding of food sustainability and of environmental responsibility)
- Community engagement (including enterprise activity, awareness cultural food growing diversity, and better community cohesion)
- Other broader issues, such as family eating habits.

The review will also consider the cost-benefits associated with food in schools programmes as well as factors that challenge and enable success.

### The first NFER podcast out soon!

NFER are preparing to publish our review of police work with schools. Look out for a podcast on the key findings, a free to join webinar where the report will be presented to interested parties, and an online report, available in mid October.

## Citizens in transition: civic engagement among young people 2001-2015

Building on a previous NFER study, the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study, will be following the cohort of young people, who have been tracked from age 11 to 18/19, for a further two years to the age of 20/21. This study will examine how these young people are educated and prepared for their roles and responsibilities as adult citizens, and how their views of those roles and responsibilities may be changing over time.

# Preparation for PISA Main Survey



Schools across the UK will soon be receiving invitations to participate in PISA 2012. Schools in Scotland will be invited to participate from September 2011 and schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from January 2012.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is the world's biggest international education survey, involving schools and students in over 60 countries. It is developed jointly by member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA assesses knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in maths, reading and science. PISA 2012 will

particularly focus on maths skills and attitudes towards maths.

To ensure good quality data is collected, strict international quality standards are applied at all stages of the PISA survey. For instance, we are unable to invite schools other than those sampled to take part and we require high participation rates from schools so that the data we collect can be used to make comparisons with other countries.

To find out more about the survey and also see the DfE Research Bite, visit our PISA webpages at [www.nfer.ac.uk](http://www.nfer.ac.uk).

# The evaluation of 'Starting Out' pilot

'Starting Out' was a two-year pilot scheme, funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), concerned with mentoring and supporting early career science and mathematics teachers. The pilot has been delivered by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) in three regions – London, East of England and the West Midlands. The evaluation is exploring the quality and effectiveness of the models of mentoring support that was piloted, and the impact they have had on mentees' personal, professional and career development.



NFER hosts two key international information projects: **Eurydice at NFER** and **INCA**.

**Eurydice at NFER** is the unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the European Commission's Eurydice information network on education. It provides reliable, comparative information on education systems and policies in Europe.

The Eurydice at NFER website is available at:

[www.nfer.ac.uk/eurydice](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/eurydice).

The Eurydice network website is available at:

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/>.

**INCA** provides descriptions of the curriculum, assessment and initial teacher training frameworks in several countries in Europe and Asia, plus the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The **INCA** website covers pre-school, primary and secondary education and is available at: [www.inca.org.uk](http://www.inca.org.uk).

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# Teaching approaches can help young people build their resilience to extremism

David Kerr, NFER Research Associate

*Well-designed and skilfully facilitated interventions will provide a space for dialogue about sensitive issues and will help to build resilience to and understanding of extremist ideologies among young people.*

The tragic shootings on Utoya Island in Norway this summer are another reminder that sadly extremist violence is a feature of modern society. That the perpetrator, Anders Breivik, was a 'home grown' extremist makes it even more disturbing. The aftermath of this and other events has led to a growing recognition of the need to combat extremism and develop young people's resilience to potentially harmful ideologies to prevent them from being radicalised. Teachers and others working with young people have been identified as having a key role in providing a safe environment and opportunities for young people to build up their resilience to extremism. The challenge for those in education is how to successfully fulfil this responsibility in their everyday practice.



A new report from NFER and the Office for Public Management (OPM), carried out on behalf of the DfE, helps those in schools and other education settings to meet this challenge with growing confidence. It highlights the factors that can help to either 'push or pull' young people towards extremism and/or violent extremism, such as a sense of injustice or feelings of exclusion. The report goes on to identify, from an in-depth study of ten case studies of effective practice, a number of key ingredients which are important for resilience-building teaching approaches and interventions, as well as support factors in schools and other settings that help to maximise the impact and benefits of such interventions.

#### Key findings:

- Interventions work best where they are young person centred and young person led.
- To create a dialogue conducive to building resilience, facilitators, whether teachers or other practitioners, need to be able to create a 'safe space' for all young people in a group to be able to take part in discussion, which may (and in fact often should) cover controversial issues.



- A key aspect of building resilience is supporting young people to explore, understand and celebrate their personal identity. Particularly effective seems to be enabling young people to reflect on the multiple facets of their identity, discuss the possible tensions and celebrate multiplicity as something which creates balance and 'uniqueness'.
- The importance of equipping people with appropriate critical thinking skills. Such skills are crucial for encouraging and helping young people to interrogate and challenge extremist ideologies head on.

#### Factors that help to support a successful intervention

Three sets of broader factors are important in schools and other education settings in enabling a successful intervention:



- Effective partnership working with local agencies
- Supportive school leaders
- Good integration with the wider curriculum.

The over-arching message in the report is that whatever the setting and resources available, the principles of good design and facilitation are crucial and non-negotiable. Well-designed and skilfully facilitated interventions will provide a space for dialogue about sensitive issues and will help to build resilience to and understanding of extremist ideologies among young people. Teachers and other practitioners need to use their professional judgment in adapting, building on and applying these key ingredients and support factors to their particular contexts.

To be more confident of longer-term,

sustainable resilience, it is vital that there is an additional focus, over and above good design and facilitation, on building the 'harder' skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness, including practical tools and techniques for personal resilience among young people both in and beyond schools.

#### Further Details

A Practitioners Guide, with a summary of the key ingredients and support factors that are effective in building resilience to extremism among young people is available to download at:

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ02](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ02)

The full research report with supporting case studies, *Teaching Methods that Help to Build Resilience to Extremism*, is available via the NFER website at:

[www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/OPXZ01)

*'The strength of this research comes from the fact that it casts a light on the direct experiences of teachers and young people. It shows that excellent teaching delivered by sensitively attuned and well prepared teaching practitioners has the potential to help young people resist the pull of violent extremism.'*

**Phil Copestake**  
Head of Research at OPM

# Improving teaching practice

## 10 key messages from teachers

Helen Poet



**R**esearch carried out by NFER in the summer of 2010 looked at how teachers improve their practice by exploring their experiences of sources of support, including Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, professional standards and performance management. The research involved a survey of over 4,000 teachers and interviews with 39 teachers from primary, secondary and special schools.

Ten key messages emerged:

**1** Teachers at all levels were committed to improving their teaching practice, but they felt that the time and support was not always available to do so.

**2** About two-thirds of teachers were also positive about the impact of professional development and learning activities on their teaching, and on the learning of their pupils.

**3** When thinking about how to improve their teaching, teachers tended to draw support from those closest to them, most commonly their colleagues, or used self-directed activities such as reflection or their own research.

**4** Teachers valued collaborative and peer-to-peer support activities (such as coaching, mentoring, and observation) in addition to more 'traditional' forms of CPD, such as attending courses. Self-reflection was seen as useful by almost all teachers.

**5** Some teachers felt that schools could do more to support and encourage their use of research and other self-improvement activities.

**6** Teachers newer to the profession were among those more positive about the role of professional development activities, and observation

and feedback in improving their teaching.

**7** CPD should be an ongoing process and available to all teachers, not just new teachers or those trying to progress in their career.

**8** Teachers held mixed views about how performance management and the professional standards helped them to improve their teaching. Most teachers said that working towards identified objectives was useful, although the performance management process as a whole was not viewed as a key factor in practice improvement.

**9** On the whole, differences in teacher views about improving their teaching were related to personal characteristics, such as gender, professional role and length of service. School-level factors (such as the proportions of pupils with English as an additional

language (EAL), pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), or overall achievement) generally had little or no effect on teacher attitudes.

**10** The interviews showed that when thinking about improving their practice, teachers particularly valued:

- a positive working relationship with their line manager and other colleagues within school
- time to reflect on their own practice
- performance management objectives that were relevant to their individual development, in addition to objectives related to school aims
- support, access and opportunity to be involved in 'formal' CPD (such as courses) to supplement the more informal means of development, such as self-led information gathering
- useful information and shared ideas from other teachers both online and within school.



Overall, teachers were motivated to improve their teaching and used a variety of different approaches to achieve this. Teachers clearly value informal support such as self reflection and working with colleagues. However, it is important that schools provide opportunities for teachers to engage in more formal approaches,

including training courses and performance management, to support them to improve and maintain high quality teaching.

**Further information**

[www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/STYZ01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/STYZ01)

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# Global School Partnerships - developing global citizens

Juliet Sizmur

*"Twinning schools helps promote education in the developing world and also helps British schools and students make a contribution about which they care deeply. It delivers excellent results and good value for money in areas of the world with which we have strong connections."*

**Andrew Mitchell**  
Secretary of State for  
International Development

Citizenship education, particularly global citizenship, is increasingly recognised as an important aspect of our children's education. Students of this generation, much more than their predecessors, are learning how global events and decisions made around the world can impact on societies, environments and economies across the globe, and how our every-day life and behaviours can affect, or be affected by, the wider world. Having direct contact with 'real people' in developing countries stimulates students' curiosity and active discussion of

the big global issues. Involvement with the developing countries has a significant, positive effect on pupils' attitudes and values and increases students' understanding of how they can contribute to the global community, now and in the future.

The **Global School Partnerships (GSP)** programme aims to motivate young people's commitment to a fairer, more sustainable world by providing support and guidance for teachers to develop partnerships with schools in the developing world. The programme encourages teachers in different countries to work together on

curriculum projects based on global themes. NFER was commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of these partnerships in terms of their impact on pupils' learning about major global issues including *interdependence; sustainable development; peace and conflict; diversity; human rights and social justice*. The results showed a significant, positive effect.

Over 8,500 pupils and 284 teachers throughout the UK took part in the study. The research found that pupils in GSP schools, who were directly involved with school partnerships in the developing world (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean or Latin America), showed significantly more awareness and understanding of global issues, displayed more positive attitudes and, moreover, felt more able to 'make a difference' than their counterparts in other (non GSP) schools.

We observed examples of excellent global learning throughout the UK, in both GSP and comparison schools, particularly where community cohesion was a whole school focus and diversity was consciously celebrated. However, GSP schools were more likely to place a high priority on global learning and both pupils and teachers stressed the value of first hand contact with 'real people' in bringing home a deeper understanding of the issues.

The GSP programme is strongly focused on partner schools working together on shared curriculum projects, with participants free to develop any theme relevant to both partners. We saw a wide range of examples, covering broad, cross-curricular themes and various subject areas from art to science, literacy to economics, PE to business studies. For example, pupils might exchange pictures of 'the view from my window', or exchange craftwork, poetry or letters – from which lively discussions about similarities and differences naturally flowed, raising questions that led to further pro-active, enquiry-based learning. In some cases, teachers with similar interests had

been inspired to co-create new schemes of work. In other cases, the exchange required each school to complete one part of the same project; for example, as part of a project on seed growth, one school was required to make the compost, the other to make the fertiliser.

Other themes around which schools developed their joint projects included: water, food, climate and environment; health; religion; eco gardens; enterprise (exchange of crafts to sell); developing school farms; buildings (materials and structures for different climates); families; marriage; diaries and photographs (old and new).

The positive impact was particularly evident in well established partnerships where the principles and values of the programme had become fully embedded in whole-school policy. Working and learning together rather than simply

providing 'charitable support' was, perhaps, the most important difference between GSP and other schools. The sharing of ideas was clearly stimulating for pupils and teachers alike, the engagement was palpable, and many schools reported wider impact on local communities.

The evidence from our research indicates that the Global School Partnerships (GSP) programme successfully supports schools in developing UK pupils' understanding of the big global issues and what they, as individuals, can do about them.

#### Further information

[www.nfer.ac.uk/GSP1](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/GSP1)

For more information about the Global School Partnerships programme go to [www.dfid.gov.uk/globalschools](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/globalschools).

Thank you to Egerton Primary School, Knutsford for supplying the image.



*Having direct contact with 'real people' in developing countries stimulates students' curiosity and active discussion of the big global issues*

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# Helping children to SHINE through creative learning

Helen Aston

*When you go to normal school you basically do maths, literacy, science and you don't go on many trips. But when you come here it's like they're teaching you something, but they turn it into fun.*

**N**FER's evaluation of a Saturday school programme designed by the SHINE Trust, showed that it is having a positive impact on students, teaching staff and schools

SHINE works with schools in disadvantaged areas of London to provide 150 additional hours of creative learning over the course of an academic year to under-achieving key stage 2 children. Its primary aim is to improve children's attainment.

Our evaluation, commissioned by the SHINE Trust, found that the programme is having a positive impact on the lives of students in terms of learning, social and emotional outcomes and there were clear examples of SHINE on Saturday



providing additional learning and enrichment opportunities for students.

The research showed that:

- students are positive about the programme's impact on their learning and attainment data indicates that their progress is on a par with expected progress for children at key stage 2.
- students enjoy the creative learning model used at SHINE on Saturdays. 'When you go to normal school you basically do maths, literacy, science and you don't go on many trips. But when you come here it's like they're teaching you something, but they turn it into fun.'
- the programme is having a positive impact on teaching staff and schools. Teaching at SHINE on Saturday can renew staff enthusiasm for teaching, with curriculum and pedagogical innovation being transferred from SHINE on Saturday into Monday to Friday school in some instances.
- the programme is reported to have had a positive impact on encouraging closer links within communities and parental

engagement. One parent said that SHINE on Saturday had had a positive impact on her own confidence and involvement in her children's education: 'I never thought I'd send my kids to Saturday school...I've got a bit more confident and it's made me feel a bit more involved'.

#### Further information

[www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ESOS01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/ESOS01)

Further information on SHINE on Saturdays programme is available on the SHINE website [www.shinetrust.org.uk](http://www.shinetrust.org.uk).





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# The Food for Life Partnership Programme: an evaluation

Gill Featherstone

The Food for Life Partnership (FFLP)'s aim is to transform school food to encourage healthy eating and improve food awareness among children and young people. In July 2010, NFER undertook an evaluation of the FFLP programme which brings together four food-focused charities - The Soil Association, Focus on Food Campaign, Health Education Trust and Garden Organic. The programme encourages schools to serve fresh, seasonal and ethically sourced food and to deliver a programme of activities, such as food growing and cooking, to educate young people about nutrition and food provenance.

We found that FFLP has successfully enrolled over 3600 schools who each received a range of materials to promote practical food education. Each school is also encouraged to progress through a series of bronze, silver and gold level awards. Schools demonstrating an advanced level of awareness and commitment to food culture and education had been recruited as 'Flagship' schools and received additional support and funding to fast-track them towards the Gold award. For example, Flagship schools receive support from an FFLP advisor, are given cookery lessons on the 'cooking bus', take part in a gardening workshop with Garden Organic, send their school cook on a specialist course delivered by Jeanette Orrey, School Meals Policy Advisor to the Soil Association, and gain a link with a working farm. In return for this support, which was extremely well received, Flagship schools are expected to act as role models for other schools enrolled on the programme and disseminate their knowledge and experiences.

Our qualitative study found that the FFLP had been, to a large extent, effective

in meeting its overarching aim of enabling schools to transform their food culture and provide positive outcomes for children, families and communities. The FFLP provided focus and momentum and helped build and embed a sustainable whole-school approach to health-related activity within all the schools visited. One head-teacher in a Flagship school commented,

*'It's hard work, you have really got to be committed, you couldn't do it half-heartedly. But by getting everybody 'on board' it became easier. It is now something we don't think about, it is something we just do. It is just so much of what we are.'*

Interviewees reported that:

- making meal times more attractive by improving the food and the dining environment led to increased numbers of children taking school meals and improved social cohesion within schools
- there was raised awareness of food sourcing, production and healthy eating and evidence that the changes in food provision had resulted in pupils trying new foods and in some cases selecting more healthy options
- the experiential learning resulting from FFLP activity was considered effective in helping to engage or re-engage pupils with learning issues and challenges.
- a knock-on effect was a perceived improvement in pupil attainment and behaviour.

Interestingly, the non-Flagship schools we visited had managed to make as much progress as the Flagship schools due to their own enthusiasm and the links and



advice provided by the FFLP. In addition, the most successful schools had embedded the programme into the curriculum, thereby reducing the impact of two of the main challenges of the programme, time commitment and sustainable funding. However the implementation of the FFLP was not without its challenges; although the majority of the schools viewed the FFLP as sufficiently flexible to allow them to implement it in a variety of ways, some had found the award-related criteria daunting and unrealistic. This was particularly relevant in respect to the cost, availability and sourcing of both local and organic produce. Schools also reported that it is essential to have someone driving the programme forward in each school and that buy-in and support from the leadership team and other staff was also vital.

#### Further information

The full report can be found at [www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/BIN01/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/BIN01/)



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