



David Triggs
CEO of the AET

This edition, *connect* with...

Message from the CEO

As we move towards the end of our third year of operation I should like to thank all staff for their hard work and dedication in helping so many of our students to achieve outstanding results. Year on year our external examination results have improved but we have also seen more of our young people involved and engaged in an incredible number of extra-curricular activities.

As colleagues are all too aware these activities take time to organise and lead and again the AET Board offers its thanks for this additional commitment. I should like to take this opportunity to offer a special thanks and best wishes to any colleagues moving on to pastures new and to wish you every success in your future careers and ambitions.

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2010 -11 has not been without its challenges and disappointingly, due to falling student roles, we have needed to make a small number of compulsory redundancies. This has been the situation in a number of schools across the country and, whilst pupil numbers in many primary schools are starting to increase, that is no consolation to those colleagues who will be leaving at the end of this term. Redundancy will always be our last resort and I can assure all colleagues that we are constantly seeking to identify methods of reducing costs across our academies in an effort to protect employment.

As we move into the 2011-12 academic year we will be welcoming a number of schools to the AET family. Subject to the signing of the Funding Agreements by the Secretary of State the following schools will be joining us:

Ashingdon Primary School
Hockley, Essex

Bexleyheath School
Bexley

Brockworth Enterprise School
Gloucester

Columbus Special School and College
Chelmsford, Essex

Deben High School
Felixstowe, Suffolk *(Orwell and Deben will join together to create the Felixstowe Academy)*

Eston Park School
Redcar, Cleveland

Everest Community College
Basingstoke

Gillbrook College
Redcar, Cleveland

Hounslow Manor
London

Kirkley High School
Lowestoft, Suffolk

Miltoncross School
Portsmouth

Orwell High School
Felixstowe, Suffolk

Plumberow Primary School
Hockley, Essex

Ryde High School
Isle of Wight

Sandown High School
Isle of Wight

Tendring Technology College
Essex

Westerings Primary School
Hockley Essex

We hope that representatives of each of these schools will be able to join us at our Annual Leadership Conference in July. The AET is delighted that so many schools and Local Authorities have chosen to work with the AET and I am certain that the expansion of our family of schools to include Primary and Special Schools will only add to the richness of our work and enable us to share and learn with colleagues from different sectors. This expansion will also undoubtedly enable us to offer even greater career opportunities to colleagues across the family of academies.

As we expand it will be crucial that we do not dilute our mission, vision and values throughout the next academic year and that our single aim of 'A place in a good school for every child' is realised. The AET Central Services staff will continue to challenge, support and monitor the performance of our academies and throughout they will seek to share and develop best practice with a view to ensuring that AET Academies increasingly are viewed as the 'education provider of choice for pupils and students', the 'employer of choice for staff' and the 'investment of choice for parents'.

I hope you have a restful, enjoyable and safe vacation this summer and I look forward to working with you next year.





Beverley Dowsett

Director of Finance

Finance System

The new finance system has been tested for BACS payments and the AET accounts will soon be making payments through this method. In the longer term this will save money by reducing the cost of cheques, postage and stationery. In addition, once these are set up all invoices and orders can be emailed direct to companies saving postage or fax costs.

Value for Money

The consortium deal is working well and all Academies are receiving a discount for all purchases. This deal will soon be up for renewal and any feedback about the service you have received from them would be appreciated. Further deals are in the pipeline, which include arranging corporate licences for recording and playing music/programmes in lessons, along with looking at larger services such as utilities and reprographics to obtain group savings.

Value Added Tax

From September all Academies will be VAT registered. Please ensure that any purchases made, particularly through petty cash, have the vat numbers on them.

I have been invited to participate in a working party to consider simplifying the 16-19 funding. If you have any ideas that you wish me to take to the meetings please let me know.

The Cost Reduction Company is working with the AET to reduce our costs. If you have an area that you feel we could make savings please let me know and I will arrange for it to be considered.





Leigh Shelley

Director of Human Resources

HR Policies

Family Friendly Policy

Please note that this policy has now been updated to take account of the new paternity legislation and all Academies have been alerted to the new updated policy which is available on the portal.

Redundancy

As staff will be aware, due to falling student numbers, we have had redundancies at some of our Academies. In such situations the AET will make every effort to support staff and we have found that there are training grants available as follows:

Every person who is being made redundant, including voluntary redundancies, is entitled to up to £500 for a training course from the government. This is a genuine scheme that can be used to assist people in gaining further employment – for example gaining a teaching qualification or improving ICT capability. Training does not, however, always have to be work related and could be used to extend wider skills such as photography, scuba diving etc.

I understand that all relevant Academies will be arranging for a representative from The Consultancy Home Counties Ltd (TCHC) to visit and talk to interested individuals in a confidential meeting in order that assistance can be given to investigate suitable training opportunities, CV writing, interview training etc.

If this is of interest to you, please see your HR Manager in the first instance.

Code of Conduct

I should like to bring to your attention the fact that the Code of Conduct Policy, Part 1, section 5.2 and 5.3 has been amended to take account of the use of mobile phones as follows:

“Since 1 December 2003 the use by drivers of hand-held mobiles has been illegal. Anyone found to be using such devices whilst driving will face a fine and, from 27 February 2007, three penalty points on their licence. The use of a properly installed hands-free kit is allowed, but drivers will continue to risk prosecution if using a mobile phone in this way they are found not to have proper control of their vehicle (the penalty for this offence is 3 points plus £60 fixed penalty notice).

The company expects any employee driving for business reasons, for which they are claiming a mileage allowance, to act within the law. The company therefore expects all employees not to receive or to make calls on a mobile phone whilst driving (this includes whilst stationary in traffic jams). To make and receive calls safely the vehicle must be properly parked and the engine switched off.”

I am sure you will appreciate that this has been included to ensure the safety of all AET staff (as well as other road users/pedestrians) whilst driving on company business.



Rowena Simmons

Leader of Literacy

Energising English!

As you know, we are keen to provide innovative intervention activities for our students with regards to their preparation for GCSE English Language. We have therefore been investigating ways in which we can link physical activity with study in English to invigorate the revision process.

For example, we have compiled a series of revision activities entitled 'Energising English' to be used during orienteering activities around Lee Valley Park in Enfield, the site of the 2012 Olympic White Water Centre. To pilot the activities we enlisted the help of some willing year 11 volunteers from New Rickstones Academy in Witham, pictured here. Despite an encounter with an overly enthusiastic swan, the students really enjoyed the opportunity to take their study of English into the natural world. If you are interested in taking part in these activities, the park authority now have full details on their website: http://www.leevalleypark.org.uk/en/content/cms/education/secondary_school/secondary_school.aspx or you can of course email us on the address over the page.

We have also been exploring the activities presently offered to support students' study in English by the UK Sailing Association (UKSA) and suggesting the ways in which these activities can be tailored to enhance GCSE revision. We are anticipating that there will be opportunities to pilot our ideas at the start of the next academic year. Watch this space for further details!



CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

Leading in Reading

We are delighted to announce that our English and Literacy pages are now live and can be accessed from the AET website under the 'Teaching and Learning' tab.

Alternatively, you can access the pages via this link:

<http://aetweb.publishpath.com/Default.aspx?shortcut=english-and-literacy> .

The pages contain information about our activities in English and Literacy and our Accelerated Reader successes. You will also find photos of AET staff and some sporting celebrities indulging in their favourite pastime, reading. We believe that we are truly 'Leading in Reading' so if you would like to send in a photo of yourself with your favourite book, or recommend a book, please email us on the address below.

Forthcoming events:

- Sarah Martin and Lorna Lafford (Clacton Coastal Academy) are leading a cross academy video conference between 15 - 17 June. This is the first of its kind across the AET academies and promises to be an exciting and inspirational event.
- The date for the Summer cross academy English conference will be confirmed this week but will take place in Kilnfield House in July. Richard Bassett, our Managing Director of Academies and Schools, will be in attendance and we will be exploring the ways in which we can extend our innovative practice in raising achievement in English.

If you require any further information in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us:

rsimmons@academiesenterprisetrust.org
smartin@academiesenterprisetrust.org





Ian Taylor

Leader of Mathematics and Numeracy

We are at the business end of the academic year with mathematics linear and terminal modular exams and the modular re-sit. With massive levels of work-load, high pressure from students, parents, colleagues and ourselves, staff could be forgiven for focussing only on the GCSE exams at this time. However this is not the case, there have been many exciting projects taking place within our Essex maths departments.

AET officers, along with two colleagues from Clacton Coastal Academy, Sophie Bell and Annabelle Rodriguez, collaborated with four other Clacton schools to develop and deliver a four day event for 200 students called Shooting for Success. The Shooting for Success project at Colchester United Football Club inspired young people to view maths as an exciting and creative subject. Maths was truly alive during the four days and huge credit must go to Executive Principal, Stephen Chamberlain, for bringing the schools together and Sophie and Annabelle for their tremendous standard of delivery over the four days.

Also at Clacton Coastal, Laura Holby, aspiring AST, has continued to lead key stage three projects across the department. All students within key stage three participate in engaging and exciting mini projects at the end of every half-term, which is helping to change the way students view maths. Year 7 students have developed musical maths; year 8s designed a classroom for the future and year 9 students constructed egg tangrams.

Following on from the excellent mathematics results at New Rickstones Academy earlier in the year in which students achieved 46% A*-C, equal to that achieved in June last year, a carefully selected group of Year 11 students have been working extremely hard to follow on from this success and gain that all important C grade in the summer mathematics exam. They have been attending holiday school, to help improve their confidence with the subject, along with attending after school lessons, where the focus has been looking at key areas of weakness and addressing these in a less formal, more hands-on manner. To encourage students to participate in the extra sessions a reward was promised for students who took part in 75% of these sessions.

It was this reward that found Mr Brewster, Mrs Bamigbele and Miss Inkersole at Thorpe Park on a breezy Saturday in May. A group of hard core Mathematicians spent the day being thrown around various white knuckle rides along with being soaked, all in the name of enjoyment. It was one of these rides, "The Samurai", that took its toll on the Staff. They had to spend a large part of the afternoon recovering with coffee and cake.

A great day was had by all and the Mathematics Department would like to thank year 11 for all their extra hard work and wish them all the best for their exams.

Greensward Academy students have recently completed the maths challenge in which one student obtained a gold award, three students achieved silver awards and eighteen students achieve a bronze award. Max Coleman achieved the highest score within the whole academy.

Steve Williams has been working with year 9 students after school focussing on the Statistics GCSE. The students are thoroughly enjoying the lessons and find that achieving an additional GCSE within an after school class at such a young age is a great motivator to attend. Great work Steve!

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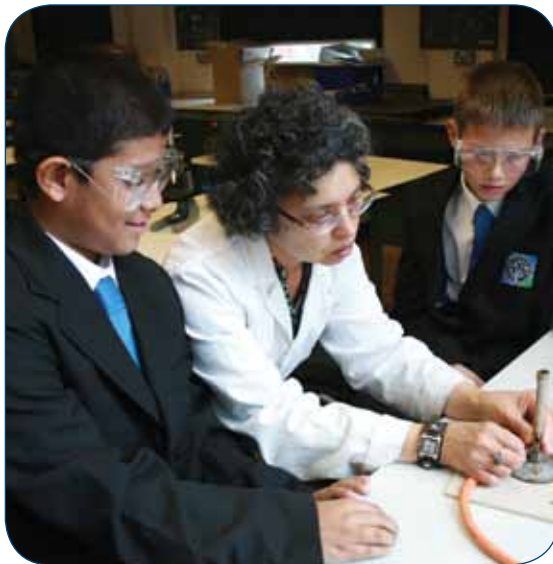
A massive well done and thank you to Jill Underwood at Maltings Academy for her truly inspiring dedication to support year 11 and year 10 students through their GCSE. In a recent mock exam with year 10 students, Jill's group gained a high number of Grade A's and B's which at this stage is fantastic. Jill has been working with students after school every Tuesday and Thursday and has even given up Saturdays to support the students. Ingrid Leatherdale has continued her support for primary schools and has completed another meeting with feeder primary school teachers focussing on financial

and economic well-being. This collaboration with primary school teachers to share ideas and resources is designed to build relationships and help increase numbers of students attending Maltings Academy.

Thank you to all maths teams for your continued hard work and support during this examination time. Thomas Jefferson famously stated that:

I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.

With the tremendous work that staff and students have put in especially over recent months we should have all the luck in the world.





Zoe Goodwin

Director of Leadership and Professional Development

AET now with added *Independent Thinking Ltd*

For nearly twenty years, *Independent Thinking* has been helping schools to be better at what they do. The organisation – a select association of educational mavericks led by Ian Gilbert - taps into some of the leading innovators and practitioners working in education today, who can support schools across many areas of school improvement in ways that genuinely do make a difference.

The *Academies Enterprise Trust* are developing a partnership with ITL to support Learning and Teaching across their academies. The aim is for ITL to support CPD provision within each academy on a bespoke basis, focusing on the needs of the Academy Improvement Plan as well as individual and team Performance Management objectives.

As an introduction to this partnership we arranged for **Jim Smith**, one of ITL's outstanding associates, to deliver a day's inset at Kilnfield House.

Jim believes that there are two things that will transform the nature of teaching and learning in this country – brave heads and lazy teachers. So, when it comes to helping teachers to teach less (and the children learn more) there's one person who can really show schools how it's done. After all, Jim Smith is one of the laziest, most delegation-happy teachers you will ever meet. He is the original Lazy Teacher. And before



you confuse lazy with being unprofessional, his pedagogical approaches saw The National Teaching Awards award Jim a Distinction in the category of Secondary School Teacher of the year 2010.

If you want your students to learn more and you to work less, then Jim's Lazy Way provides you with all the arguments and evidence you need to become a lazy, but outstanding teacher. Gathered over 10 years (and counting) in the classroom the Lazy Way is based on tried-and-tested techniques that shift the emphasis away from the teaching and onto the learning, help you hit your PLTS, content or skills based curriculum buttons and make your life so much easier in the process.

Outstanding Learning without the Spoon Fed Culture

The training day was a resounding success with all academies being represented - all delegates came away from the session with an arsenal of teaching strategies, techniques and a never ending list of resources to use not only in their own classroom, but also to share with their colleagues both at departmental and whole academy level. Feedback shows clearly that use of these strategies and

approaches is already having an impact in the classroom with students being more engaged and independent, and all academies are planning times to cascade all of this learning with a wider range of staff.

For further information please contact your CPD leader or Zoe Goodwin via:
zgoodwin@academiesenterprisetrust.org





Nicky Donaldson

*Facilities Co-ordinator &
Health & Safety Manager*

Living is a Risky Business?

The *Academies Enterprise Trust* recognises that health and safety is an essential function of the welfare of its students, employees, contractors and visitors and as such strives to ensure that all risks are managed in a 'common sense' approach.

So what is a risk?

Risk is defined as the probability, or threat of damage, injury, liability, loss or another negative occurrence that will result in an undesirable outcome. Every day of our lives we are exposed to risks; what is important is how we manage those risks and ensure a common sense approach is used in order for people to live their lives and carry out their roles in an efficient and effective manner.

*Life is a risk. You either
embrace it or live in fear and
people do one or the other.*

*Neal Stone
Director Policy and Research
www.britsafe.org*

Individual perceptions and health and safety attitudes

As individuals we consider a variety of factors when determining risks, such as the environment; background to our expectations and motivations; passed experiences and the potential consequences, however, the culture of an organisation greatly impacts on our rationale. Different organisations have very different attitudes to health and safety. For example, the University of Leeds over the past few years, in partnership with campus trade unions, launched a revitalisation programme for health and safety. The programme was started after the University had received two improvement notices from the HSE and statistical information showed that one in ten University staff had reported an accident at work. Raising awareness of health and safety was a key issue for the university as well as getting staff on board. The three campus trade unions, along with the management, became equal partners in achieving health and safety standards and resolving issues. At the heart of the partnership is a declaration that health and safety is one of the university's top priorities.

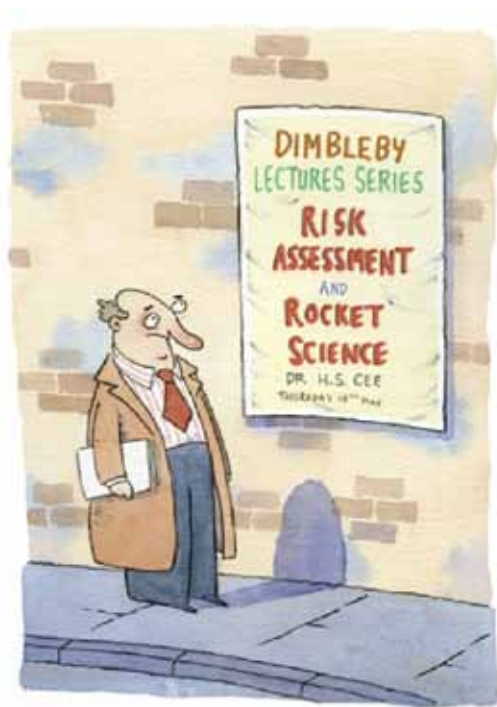
"The revitalising agreement has been crucial to the success of the work – it has enabled us to develop a strong partnership and work together for change". www.hse.gov.uk

The University's continued work in raising awareness via such tools as DVDs which were created by staff and looked at real-life case studies that occurred within the campus. Their continued innovation, diligence and good practice of health and safety were recognised in 2010 as Leeds University became winners of the Vice-Chancellor's Award.

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So what are the principles of sensible risk management?

- Ensuring that workers and the public are properly protected
- Balancing the benefits and risks, with a focus on reducing real risks
- Allowing innovation and learning
- Ensuring that those who create risks manage them responsibly and understand that failure to manage real risks responsibly is likely to lead to tough action
- Ensuring that individuals understand that, as well as the right to protection, they also have to exercise responsibility



Myth

Risk assessment is too complicated for me?

The reality

Carrying out a risk assessment should be straightforward. It's about focusing on real risks and hazards that cause real harm and, more importantly, taking action to control them.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/mar10.htm>

In summary

It is important as an organisation and as we grow that we do not become risk adverse but instead that we encourage innovative learning, self-sufficiency and responsibility to effectively manage risk. Equally important is our drive towards raising health and safety awareness and that all staff are instrumental in this process whether it be the Principal/Head, CEO or the classroom assistant.

For more advice on Risk Assessments or Risk Management please go to: www.hse.gov.uk or www.britsafe.org, or contact:

Nicky Donaldson on **0845 453 0080** or ndonaldson@academiesenterprisetrust.org



Neill Bannerman

ICT Infrastructure Manager

Wireless Networks and Safety in Education

Did you know that if you sat with your head next to one of the wireless access points in your classroom for a year, you would be exposed to the same amount of radiation as just one twenty minute mobile phone call?

Did you know that wireless technology uses the same frequencies as FM radio and TV stations?

Did you know that your microwave oven is 100,000 times more powerful than a typical wireless device?

With the push towards breaking ICT out of the traditional 'fixed' model (with a desktop for each student) now accelerating, the deployment of mobile devices such as laptops, netbooks and tablets is fast becoming the standard model in our academies.

Understandably this raises concerns about exposure to 'radiation', for both staff and students alike.



The AET follows Government guidelines for deployment of wireless systems, specifically that from the UK's Health Protection Agency. The latest guidance states the following;

- There is no consistent evidence to date that exposures to radio frequency (RF) signals from WiFi adversely affects the health of the general population
- The signals from WiFi are very low power and the resulting exposures should be well within internationally accepted guidelines
- On the basis of current scientific information, exposures from WiFi equipment satisfy international guidelines and there is no reason why schools should not use WiFi.

The implementation of wireless networks will continue to follow guidance of the HPA, who continue to conduct peer-reviewed studies and will update their guidance should the need arise.

Questions and concerns regarding wireless networks can be directed in the first instance to **Neill Bannerman** via email at:

nbannerman@academiesenterprisetrust.org



Andrew Simpson

Web Developer

AET Learning Platform

AET Learning Technologies are very pleased to be in the process of delivering our state-of-the-art learning platform solution to our open academies.

1 **What is a Learning Platform?**

Learning Platforms are computer-based solutions for the delivery of highly focused courses to individual learners and groups of students.

2 **What makes the AET solution stand out?**

The quality and cost of Learning Platforms varies widely. The AET solution is based on the world's leading software, with a long proven track record in many leading universities; it is far more reliable than many alternatives. The AET's rapid growth enables huge cost savings for schools through bulk purchasing power.

3 **What are the benefits for learners?**

Learners can expect courses and specific resources highly tailored to their needs. Subject to connectivity, they can learn at their own pace whenever and wherever they please, in manageable chunks. For many courses, swift feedback is available.

4 **What are the benefits for teachers?**

The Learning Platform can log a range of statistics on individual learner progress, and mark simple mini tests, freeing teacher time. The technology should aid teachers in building a profile of each individual's strengths, weaknesses, learning trajectory and pedagogical needs.

5 **What are the benefits for schools?**

Extreme cost-effectiveness and value is combined with near-zero maintenance and management overheads for the school. The AET service keeps the learning platform fully working and seamlessly integrated with the school's management information systems; teachers simply need to build their courses with AET support. No equipment needs to be installed in the school.

