

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2013/14



M.P.A
MUSLIM PARENTS ASSOCIATION
HIGH WYCOMBE

Helping to raise standards in education



**A Tribute to
Nelson
Mandela**

Page 3



Monica Austin on the left with Rafiq
Raja and Shade Adoh –
BMEC Conference Page 10



**CRESSEX
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL**

**At Westminster
Page 6**

Happy New Year



First of all The Muslim Parents Association offers a very Hearty Happy New Year to all its readers.

Christmas has come and gone with some unseasonal weather, which could have been snow had the temperature been low enough or if we had cold northern winds, as we did a couple of years ago. Hopefully, the schools will open with refreshed pupils and staff and it is hoped that each and every child will realise his or her full potential and will go on to do what they and their parents expect in the future.

The Muslim community will be celebrating the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) in the middle of January, as 12 Rabiul Awal, the date of his birth according to the Islamic calendar, falls on 14 January this year. So a Happy 'Jushan Eid Milad Ul Nabi' to all our readers. The 'Milad' celebrations will be marked in the Jubilee Road Mosque in High Wycombe, on Sunday, 19 January starting with a march through the streets of the town, which will leave the Jubilee Road Mosque at 11.45AM and after the marchers return to the Mosque, a line of speakers will deliver their message about the Prophet's life and times, after the Zhur (afternoon) prayers.

Continued on page 2.

Do you have something to write about?

If you wish to write about something then please e-mail your contribution as soon as possible. Articles should be about 500 words; however, if there is something of a more serious nature then please limit it to one page of this Newsletter and e-mail it as soon as possible.

Contact the MPA:

Post: 34 Perth Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 6XX

E-mail: rafigraja@hotmail.co.uk | **Tel:** 07956 622 469 | visit our website www.mpawycombe.co.uk

Unfortunately, some students and their families were not in party mood over Christmas, as about half a dozen 6th formers at Highcrest academy were abruptly told a week before Christmas that they could no longer carry on with their studies at the Academy.

The Academy may have had good reasons to give such bad news to the 6th formers, but the manner in which the decisions were relayed to some of the parents left them confused, frustrated and helpless, especially as it seemed that the Academy had not adhered to any policy procedures or appropriate process.

Highcrest may be an Academy but it must act 'reasonably' and within equalities legislation. Did these students receive any guidance or counselling about their courses or were their parents informed of their failure to achieve a level of attainment which was necessary for the students to continue with their studies. But none of the students or their parents realised that the students would be asked to leave so soon after an unfavourable Ofsted inspection.

The MPA was able to offer help and advice to the students and parents in lodging formal complaints with the Academy about the lack of any process and it is pleasing to note that at the time of writing it is reported that most of the students who were asked to leave the Highcrest Academy have been given conditional reinstatements. Let us hope that the Academy and students can work together so that the students can realise their full potential and do themselves and Highcrest proud.

Bucks County Council is to be commended for undertaking a 'Narrowing the Gap' consultation by the Education Select Committee to ascertain why the gap between its high and low achievers is wider than many other Local Authorities. We hope that the Select Committee will not only unearth the reason behind the disparity in levels of attainment of different pockets of school pupils in Buckinghamshire, but will also focus attention on how this shameful gap can be reduced in the next 5 years. The MPA, along with many other interested groups, is looking forward to positive outcomes from the consultation.

December saw the sad demise of Nelson Mandela an iconic figure in recent world history, who helped to bring South Africa out of the brutality of Apartheid, where what you could aspire to do depended upon the colour of your skin, to a democratic and free nation state, which could play its part on the world stage. See tribute to Nelson Mandela on page 3.

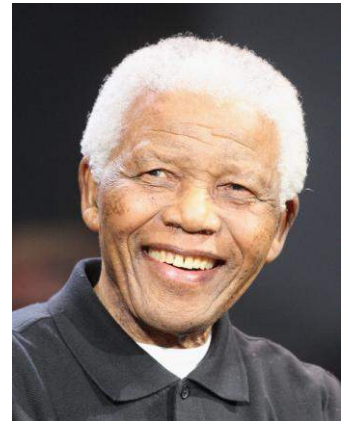
The Bucks Minority Education Concern, (a platform created by the MPA and colleagues from the African and Caribbean Community) organised its third annual conference, which proved to be a huge success; see report on page 10.

You may have heard of the PISA tests according to which the UK is falling behind global rivals in international tests taken by 15 year olds, where the English & Welsh teenagers have failed to make the top 20 in Maths, English and Science. PISA stands for the Programme for International Student Assessment, run by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (PISA). The last tests were taken by half a million teenagers in 65 countries. The strongest performers were in Singapore, South Korea and China. However, the children in the Far East may be hard workers and high achievers but they are not the happiest children in the world. Are we prepared to 'force' our children to undergo formal study sessions for most of their waking life? Perhaps we need to encourage our children to do a little more study each day rather than become bookworms or 'gadget geeks'.

Finally, the local community Radio in High Wycombe, called Awaaz celebrated having reached 1,000 days of 24/7 broadcasting. Awaaz is really a community resource and of tremendous benefit in reaching the local community for all sorts of topics. Hearty congratulations to all who have contributed in making it a success.

A Tribute to Nelson Mandela

At the time of writing the world is remembering Nelson Mandela, who passed away on 5 December. The World has not only lost a great dignified statesman figure but a person who was an inspiration for the liberation movement in South Africa; he was steadfast and resolute in the face of overwhelming odds. His legacy is his dignity and humanity and the selfless way he sacrificed his own freedom for decades and then showed no bitterness towards his detractors but embraced them to start the process of reconciliation. He also showed that you do not have to cling to power to serve your people and one should remember his advice to the students, who had gathered outside his residence upon his release from 27 years of imprisonment, to go back to their studies.



I became aware of Nelson Mandela whilst at University but he was not as well-known as he later became. Nevertheless, any campus worth its salt had an anti-apartheid group to educate the undergraduates about the brutality of apartheid, by holding talks and showing films from South Africa, about people who officially did not exist as they were 'banned'.

The anti-apartheid movement was very active from the mid-1970s and especially at the time of the riots in Soweto (South Western Township) outside Johannesburg in 1976, when the African school students opposed the teaching of Afrikaans language (the language of the oppressors) to them. The movement in the end did "Isolate Apartheid South Africa" by shaming western investors and governments to stop having any economic, social, cultural or sporting contacts with a regime which had entrenched racial discrimination through law and there were hideous examples of black people being forced to travel for hours every day to come out of their designated 'homeland' areas and carry a passbook or be taken to jail for the crime of being in a "white" area without it.

Although the Apartheid regime was unable to break Nelson Mandela's spirit, to many supporters it looked as if he was destined die in prison. Luckily, the pressure from the rest of the world and lack of co-operation from the black majority did bring a change. The credit goes to the great man for becoming the first elected president of the whole of South Africa and displaying charm and political skill to roll out reconciliation and tolerance, which no doubt saved South Africa from bloodshed.

I never met Nelson Mandela, so on the day of his demise, I joined hundreds of other people outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square to witness groups of people of all colours and nationalities singing old ANC songs and celebrating the life of Nelson Mandela. There were South Africans of all colours draped in the Rainbow flag of South Africa paying their respects to a great man of our times. With his passing an era has indeed come to an end and trust that the South Africans will make the necessary progress in a peaceful manner. I was one of the last people that Friday, who managed to go inside the embassy to record messages of condolences.

It is a funny thing but it only seems yesterday that we were attending meetings against Apartheid, but did not know how long it would take to get rid of the system altogether. It is befitting that with the presence of Nelson Mandela peaceful transition was achieved and let us hope the future generations of South Africans can remember Nelson Mandela's legacy.

But let us fight injustice and discrimination where we find it.

Would you like to get involved with the MPA?

Do you have an article you would like to submit?

Then please get in touch via our website mpawycombe.co.uk

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AMINAH SHAFIQ, A YEAR 12 STUDENT, WRITES ABOUT THE ABC INITIATIVE AT HOLMER GREEN SENIOR SCHOOL.

Holmer Green Senior School does not tolerate bullying in any form and has set up the ABC; the Anti-Bullying Committee, which makes sure that even minor bullying in the school, is stopped immediately. We have a drop-in centre which is located near the medical room and students at Holmer Green can walk in whenever they want to discuss any issue of bullying.

The ABC is soon to receive training for a whole day. The ABC has a certain way to approach bullying and it is hoped the training will make us better at approaching a situation where people are identified as bullies and to assess the signs of the victims of bullying. Not only do we have a drop in centre but we have an email address. Some people are too shy to actually physically come and see us and this way of communication is excellent for people to come forward.

The ABC has also acknowledged the fact that it can be a bit daunting and scary as a Yr7 student to approach us. This is why we will be going into Yr7 classes from time to time to show the newcomers that we are friendly and easy to approach. This hasn't yet been put into action but is in the process as we are making a timetable for who goes into which form.

The ABC has also led an assembly for all the years in the school. Our main aim of this assembly was to define bullying, as not all the victims know if they are being bullied until it escalates further. We also wanted the Yr7 especially to know who we are and how and when to approach us. The drop in centre is in the notices every Tuesday so people are aware that they can come to us at lunch time. All the year 12 sixth formers who have recently joined are also being made aware of the school's anti-bullying drive. Hopefully, this gives a little insight into what we are currently doing and we wish to do much more to help more people who might be bullied. We meet up on a regular basis to come up with new ideas about stopping bullying and making people come forward to get help.

Lastly we have been working on a project beautiful. This has been designed by a year 8 pupil. This is a heart shape where people can write their thoughts on bullying. We thought it was an excellent idea and seeing as one of the

Listen to 'The World of Education' - Taleem Ki Dunya Every Sunday, on High Wycombe's Awaaz Radio (107.4FM) between 10AM & 12 NOON.

World of Education tries to inform the members of the Asian community in general and the Pakistani community in particular, about the importance of education with a particular emphasis on informing the 'hard to reach' community.

If you are interested in taking part in a future programme or have some topics or ideas about raising educational achievement levels then get in touch with Rafiq Raja: raja@awaazradio.com



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Suma Din tells us about being a ‘Back to school mum’

After several years of toying with the idea, I found myself on the train one afternoon in October 2012, on route to London University for the MA Social Justice and Education open evening at the Institute of Education. This program of study appealed to me because of the experience of working with parents as a Family Learning tutor for Bucks County Council. Some of the parents over the eight years were facing particular disadvantages, so I was interested in the effects of deprivation and marginalisation on their children, if any. The modules on this course covered areas such as gender, race, inclusion, citizenship, education policy, educational research methods – which I was particularly keen on and some social theory related to all these.

Having gone over the logistics of the application process and with support from my family, I started with the core ‘sociology of education module’ as a full time student a couple of weeks later. My husband’s encouragement came with logistical help, while initial enthusiasm from my teen children waned a little as the realities of pulling their weight domestically, materialised over the course of the year. The first term began with weekly seminars which were superb – with some of the best professors in this country engaging us in their specialisms. The reading requirements were demanding, as was the standard of course work expected. Fitting this into a full family life with community commitments was an ongoing challenge right up to the hour I handed my dissertation in. The second and third terms required me to go in twice a week, with long stints in the library on those days.

My final research project looked at the identity formation and educational aspirations of Pakistani teens, as I had been closely involved with teaching parents from this background. I was, and am always interested in giving voice to the primary source – particularly when a group are discussed and written about as much as these youth are. So it was interesting to hear the views and

thoughts of a small group who agreed to be research participants. I thoroughly enjoyed the ethical considerations of doing research as well as the data collection and analysis. The participants gave their candid perspective on how they defined themselves and what affected their aspirations. It was a lot to ask of young 14 year olds, but what they voiced was the complex ways their family, school expectations, peer group, community ‘spaces’ and the presence (or lack of) role models intersect to either motivate them, or not as the case may be. This was an opportunity for these particular students to explore these issues.

Whilst there were several more issues that arose from the focus group discussions, three main points stood out:

- i) The need for students not to be culturally stereotyped regardless of their background. (Everyone is unique).
- ii) The dire need for far more positive role models who are not CEOs of companies that students can’t always identify with, but mentors who are five to seven years older, who have made a success of their school education and are now building their futures.
- iii) The necessity to have more bridges built between schools and families for continuity between home and school regarding a student’s educational achievement.

Having only just completed the degree, I would highly recommend returning to education, with the cautionary note to weigh up the physical, emotional, financial and ‘time’ factors realistically before making a commitment. In order to cope, the euphemism of ‘juggling’ is only the beginning....

Cressex School at Westminster

It's not often a local school takes centre stage in a Westminster debate - but that's what happened on Wednesday 23 October, in a remarkable adjournment debate in Westminster Hall, in London. The debate focussed on co-operative education and received unanimous cross party support, an unusual experience in a Parliamentary setting.

The debate was secured by Steve Baker, Conservative MP for High Wycombe. Steve has been a great supporter of Cressex School, a Co-operative Trust, and through that has become interested in the wider application of the co-operative model.

The debate provided an opportunity not only to highlight the progress Cressex School and other cooperative schools nationally have made, but the potential benefit of co-operative and mutual approaches to other parts of the education sector.

Steve Baker spoke with enthusiasm about the recent achievements at Cressex, and the way that the cooperative approach has enabled the school to reach out and engage the whole community.

He spoke about the underpinning co-operative values adopted by the school:

“Those values are being used by the Cressex school to engage with the community around it, and they are values transforming the lives and prospects of individuals whom we cannot allow to fall into neglect.”

Steve went on to speak about the partnerships that are a key part of the Cooperative Trust, in particular the school's links with Johnson and Johnson and with Wycombe Abbey School:

“Wycombe Abbey school is one of the finest independent girls’ schools in the country, and its engagement with Cressex has been not only crucial but mutual, because it is in those sixth-form pupils’ interests that they engage with the school and help with literacy and numeracy.”

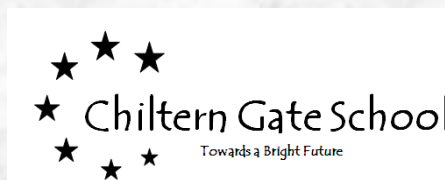
As the debate continued, other MPs from all parts of the political spectrum joined in with a remarkable degree of agreement and mutual support, agreeing that the Cooperative approach to education embodies a set of principles and a vision that goes beyond political differences. As Steve Baker pointed out, there seemed on occasion to be a 'danger of fierce agreement' across the Chamber.

Summing up for the government, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education, Edward Timpson, congratulated Steve Baker on securing an excellent and important debate. He assured MPs that the government fully supports the work of co-operative schools:

“Politics is not always as black and white as people think it is. Shared values can surface, and this is one such occasion.”

For the governors and friends who attended the debate, the whole experience was a remarkable and encouraging one. We are immensely grateful to Steve Baker for securing the debate and for speaking with such commitment and enthusiasm about the work going on at Cressex. We are proud to be one of the growing number of schools nationally who have adopted co-operative values and we remain committed to working with our community to improve opportunities for local young people.

Katy Simmons
Chair of Governors, Cressex Community School



Bradley Taylor, Head of Chiltern Gate School tells us about this special school

Chiltern Gate School is a special school for children with learning difficulties aged 4-11, situated in the Cressex area of High Wycombe. Pupils come to our school from quite a wide area, from Stoke Poges through to Beaconsfield, Chesham and of course many from High Wycombe itself. The children who attend this school have a variety of learning needs, from those who have speech, communication and language difficulties, to those with more complex autism and associated behavioural difficulties. We pride ourselves on being an inclusive school, and accept all pupils, no matter their difficulties or backgrounds.

Our school has undergone considerable change in the past 12 months. We were seen by OFSTED in December 2012, when the school was put in special measures. Since then, staff have worked tirelessly to improve standards in every area of the school. I was appointed in September 2012 as Deputy Headteacher, but then progressed to Acting Headteacher in January 2013 and have been substantive Headteacher since the end of March. Our building has changed beyond all recognition during this time, with our planned refurbishment completed in May 2013. All classrooms are now equipped with new technology, look fresh and new, and are fit for the purpose of meeting the needs of our worthy pupils. We have a dedicated team of staff who are committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves his or her potential, whatever their starting point and challenges they face. Increasingly we are working with other schools, charities and organisations to make the community aware of the work we do, and the value that our pupils bring to society.

A key element of this work is engaging with the Muslim community. Approximately 50% of our pupils are Muslim, and it is our intention to make all parents welcome and involved in the education of their children. We aim to support all parents by sharing with them their children's academic work and equally importantly to help their behaviour, and develop their personal and social skills – including eating and drinking, getting dressed and using the toilet. Some parents find their children's difficulties hard to accept, and are keen for us as a school to 'cure' their son or daughter. We work hard to develop all the above mentioned skills, but for many pupils their 'developmental delay' is lifelong, and there is no quick fix. Equally, the pupils' needs are often far better met in a special school than in a mainstream setting, as we are proud to have small class sizes, specialist knowledge and children working at a similar level – so making friends is easier.

Over the spring 2014 Term, Chiltern Gate School will be running a number of workshops with parents with the aim of engaging all. We are very keen to know what we can do to particularly support Muslim parents, both with gaining a good understanding of their special children, and what we can all do together to ensure the pupils gain the best possible outcomes. I am especially grateful to those parents at the school who already play a meaningful role in developing good home – school links.

Bradley Taylor, Headteacher

PS: listen to Bradley Taylor in conversation with Rafiq Raja on the World of Education on Awaaz Radio (107.4FM) on Sunday 9 February, from 10AM to 12 Noon.



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Children and Young
People's Partnership
Working together to reach your goals

Wycombe (Terriers and Amersham Hill) Activity Timetable

**Sure Start
Children's Centres**

Activities for families with
children under 5

2 Hamilton Road, High Wycombe, HP13 5BW
Email: terriersamhillcc@buckscc.gov.uk

6/01/14 – 14/02/14

MONDAY AM	TUESDAY AM	WEDNESDAY AM	THURSDAY AM	FRIDAY AM	SATURDAY AM
Child Health Clinic 9:30–11:00 To ensure you are seen by the Health Visitor, please arrive before 10:45	Parents and Toddlers 9:00–10:30	Coffee and Chat 8:30 – 9:15 Can You? For children aged 12months+ 9:45–10:45	Little Treasures For babies under 12 months 10:00–11:00 New Beginnings Post-Natal Group BOOKINGS ONLY 11:15–12:30	Stories and Rhymes 10:30 – 11:30	For more information on Children's Centres and other activities please visit: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org or call Bucks Family Information Service on 0845 688 4944
PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
Are You Ready? For children aged 3+ 1:45–3:00 Coffee and a Chat 5:30 – 6:30	Fun with Language 1:30 – 2:30	Baby Massage At St Francis of Assisi Church Hall Bookings Only 3:30–4:30	Staff Training	Talking Toddlers For children over 2 years 2:00 – 3:00	We will give priority to families living within the Centre's reach area Please note: The Children's Centre is not able to provide parking facilities

Children's Centre No: 01494 510830
- Family Support Worker 07717 483977
- Family Support Worker 07824 451816

We would like to remind all parents/carers that their children are their sole responsibility whilst on the premises. Dates and times are subject to change

Updated August 2013

By coming along to the Children's Centre you are offering your child/ren the opportunity to learn and develop to reach their childhood milestones. Activities at the centre can help prepare children for school and pre school settings. The Centre gives you as parents/carers, the chance to meet other local families with similar aged children. Your Family Support Workers will be there to answer any questions you have or to signpost you to local agencies to seek advice, support or ideas.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development Are You Ready? Aimed at children 3+. There will be crafts, games with letters and numbers, puzzles and fun! The children can experience different activities ready for school. Parent & Toddler Group An opportunity for parents and children to meet new people and for everyone to play together. Little Treasures A lovely session for babies under 12 months. Come and explore our treasure baskets, messy play can be provided upon request! Can You? A session that combines sensory, messy, imaginative and creative play.	Communication & Language Coffee and a Chat The Children's Centre will be open for a brew and a chance to chat with staff. Fun with Language A wonderful course for people with English as an additional language. Please contact the Children's Centre on 01494 510830. Stories and Rhymes An interactive session for you to read with your child and share books together. We will also be singing and playing instruments. Talking Toddlers A fun-filled session focussing on language development for children aged 2 years and over. Please call the Children's Centre to book onto this brilliant NEW course!	Physical Development Child Health Clinic A drop-in baby weighing clinic lead by the Carrington House Health Visiting Service. Baby Massage A lovely course for parent and baby to learn together. Bookings only. If you are interested in attending this course, please contact the Centre (numbers overleaf). This course will be held at St Francis of Assisi Church Hall on Amersham Road HP13 5AB. New Beginnings This is a post-natal group providing information regarding minor ailments, play and development, weaning and much more! This will be run by the Health Visitors from Priory Surgery. Please contact your Health Visitor if you would like to attend.
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Centre open for information
Please feel free to drop in for a cup of coffee and a chat should you need any information, signposting or support
Mon–Thurs 9:00am–5:30pm
Friday 9:00am–5:00pm

Updated August 2013



Buckinghamshire
Children and Young
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Wycombe (West) Activity Timetable

Millbrook School, Mill End Road, High Wycombe HP12 4BA
Lane End Primary School, Edmonds Road, Lane End HP14 3EJ
Email: wycombewestcc@buckscc.gov.uk

**Sure Start
Children's Centres**

Activities for families with
children under 5

6th January – 4th April 2014

MONDAY AM	TUESDAY AM	WEDNESDAY AM	THURSDAY AM	FRIDAY AM	SATURDAY AM
Stay and Play 10:00-11:30 0-5 years	Child Health Clinic 9:15-11:00	Cooking on a Budget 9.45-11.45 BOOKING ONLY	Baby Massage 10.30-11.30 BOOKING ONLY Starts 16 th January	Incredible Years Parenting Programme 12 week course Starts 31 st January Free crèche BOOKING REQUIRED	For more information on Children's Centres and other activities please visit: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org or call Bucks Family Information Service on 0845 688 4044
	Parent and Toddler Group 9:30-11:00 (Lane End)	What's my next move? Starts 8 th January 2014 BOOKING ESSENTIAL 15/1, 22/1, 29/1, 5/2, 12/2, 26/2, 5/3, 12/3, 19/3 9:30-11:30 Crèche available			
Child Health Clinic & Baby Club 9:15-11:00 (Lane End)	Relate Family Support BY APPOINTMENT ONLY	Family Swim BOOKING ONLY £1 per person 1 adult : 1 Child ratio	Little Kickers 10:45-11:30 BOOKING ONLY 2-3 years £1 per session (Lane End)	PACEY 9:30-11:30 17/1, 14/2, 21/3 All childminders & nannies welcome (Lane End)	
PM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
Community Outreach	Music & Movement 2:30-3:15	Tiny Toes 1:30 – 3:00	Staff Training	Centre open for information	We will give priority to families living within the Wycombe West Centre reach area
	Family Support Drop-in 1:00-4:00				

Children's Centre No: 01494 447110
- Family Support Worker 07826 892202
- Family Support Worker 07717 630746

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are their sole responsibility whilst on the premises. Dates
and times are subject to change

Updated October 2013

By coming along to the Children's Centre you are offering your child/ren the opportunity to learn and develop to reach their childhood milestones. Activities at the centre can help prepare children for school and pre school settings. The Centre gives you as parents/carers, the chance to meet other local families with similar aged children. Your Family Support Workers will be there to answer any questions you have or to signpost you to local agencies to seek advice, support or ideas.

**Personal, Social and
Emotional Development**

Stay and Play / Parent & Toddler Group
A structured group with activities supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage and preparing your child for school. With guest speakers attending regularly. Suitable for children 0-5 years

Baby Club
A variety of ways for children to explore the world around them.

What's my next move?
A 9 week course looking at interview skills and CV writing. This course has a certificate at the end and crèche is available.
Booking Essential

Incredible Years Parenting Course
A 12 week parenting course to explore and understand children's behaviour. Free crèche available

Tiny Toes
A structured drop-in session for young parents aged 21 years and under to socialise with other parents of a similar age.

Relate
Relationships aren't always perfect; talk to RELATE. Offers advice, relationship counselling, mediation, consultation and support. We can help make things better. Please call the Centre for an appointment

**Communication &
Language**

PACEY
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years
A group for childminders and nannies to discuss queries and questions with Sarah Fisher, Quality Improvement Partner

Music & Movement
All children under 5 welcome to join in this fun session to help develop coordination and enjoy favourite rhymes

Family Support Drop-in
An opportunity to discover what your Children's Centre can offer you and your child. Opportunity to ask advice/support from the Family Support Worker.

Centre open for information
Please feel free to drop in for a cup of coffee and a chat should you need any information, signposting or support
Mon-Thurs 9:00am-5:30pm
Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

Speech & Language Therapy
There is a SALT clinic for all pre-school children and all children with speech sound difficulties at the Oakridge Health Centre on Mondays 9:30-11:00am. **Appointments must be booked in advance**, please call 01296 565048 to make your booking
Oakridge Health Centre, 240 Desborough Rd, HP11 2QR

**Physical
Development**

Child Health Clinic
Have your baby weighed and talk to a health visitor about any concerns or questions you may have at this drop-in clinic.

Little Kickers
Using football in a fun way to develop confidence and control. For children aged 2-3 years

Cooking on a Budget
Come along to learn fun, simple home cooked recipes on a budget and improve your English skills too

Family Swim
An opportunity for you and your child to enjoy swimming at our onsite pool.
Booking is Essential. For families in the Wycombe West reach area

Baby Massage
A 4 week course for babies up to 5 months. The 6 week check must be completed before attending the course

Updated October 2013

Bucks Minority Education Concern - 3rd Annual Conference



The BMEC organised its 3rd Annual conference at Cressex community School in the middle of September, with Monica Austin as the Keynote speaker. Monica is currently the headteacher at Ashcroft High School, a mixed comprehensive in Luton, with just under 1,000 students. The school was in special measures when Monica joined in summer 2004 as a temporary associate deputy.

Despite her determination to never be a Headteacher, she was appointed to the headship in January 2005. Since then she has taken the school out of special measures and it was judged as outstanding by Ofsted in March 2011. Monica's gentleness with a steely determination came through her address, which was well received.

There was a lot to get through on the day with a Q & A panel consisting of Monica, Roz Burch (Widmer End Primary school head), Mark Mayne (Head Sir William Ramsay School) Dr Katy Simmons (Chair of Governors at Cressex school) and Jennifer Trumpet (BMEC Executive Committee member & a recognised Youth Development Coach and Life Skills Specialist), who answered from parents ranging from:

- 1 How do you get Staff observations up? To which Monica replied that she got her teachers to go in to each other's lessons. Gave clear guidance about how a lesson is written and conducted. Got the teachers to work together – partnering them up with stronger teachers. Mark Mayne mentioned that Recruiting Staff is the most important thing that you do and it is critical to the success of the school.
- 2 As to how parents can help their children, Roz Burch made reference to having held classes for parents to help them understand the topic and how they could support the learning. Parents were also encouraged to go in and speak to the school – will never close the door on any parent. If there is a need, the school will support it.
- 3 On a question about making parents feel more confident about going in and speaking to the school, Jennifer Trumpet felt that there was no need to be afraid if you wished to raise a valid question.
- 4 On how to engage children, it was felt that for that to happen parents need to know what goes on in schools and to ask the children about their targets, how they are going to meet those targets and how do they get to the next level. If the child is not able to give you an answer, you need to approach the school. You need to have specific answers to the above questions ; work harder – is not good enough.
- 5 A question was asked about raising the aspiration of schools. The replies ranged from “convince your parents and your staff that they need to believe in this” (Monica), who also felt targets should be broken down into manageable, achievable steps and to make them see that they are succeeding in small steps, success breeds success – continue to up the anti

In another segment Sharon Cromie (Wycombe High School Head) gave advice about supporting children at school. She felt that the school is a community, which should have a set of shared rules and aims. She felt that it was essential that parents know who their child's form tutor is, who the different subject teachers are.

She also advised that it was important to keep asking questions such as how their day was, how was English, what did you do at lunch? This becomes even more essential during the critical years. Support the message that exams, assessments, involvement is important. This will help beyond the school years.

She emphasised that the Experience of education is most important and wanted parents to encourage their children to take part in extra-curricular activities – which increase confidence, a healthy life balance, regular breaks, time management. What they do outside the classroom is very important for Higher Education and can be from a range of music, art, textiles, computers, sport – there is something for everyone and it is worthwhile.

She also advised that young people needed the responsibility of chores. The increased responsibility will help manage time in schools.

Elaine Skinner (Vice Principal St Michaels) and Julia Carey (School governor) also made a presentation. A number of young professionals Farzana Ali, Charlotte Pope-Williams and Jordon Hoyte shared their own experience of being educated in local schools and at higher education institutions, which has made them successful professionals in their own fields.

However, the most enjoyable and successful part of the conference concerned the recognition of certain contributions made by some children in the life of their respective schools. The following were given an award:

Tanzeela Yasin (for always giving her best in every aspect of school life) and **Kiaesha Profitt-Mann** (who made an excellent start to secondary school) from Cressex.

Larib Khan (who had leukaemia in Year 3, despite this she returned to school in Year 4 and has made good progress) and **Karolina Kemeziat** (who joined the school in Year 4 from Lithuania, with no English at all. She has made fantastic progress. She is now at Highcrest Academy) from Highworth Combined School.

Niki Tang (who was nominated for excelling in Music and for having recently passed her Grade 4 violin. She works very well in all areas of the curriculum and was now at Dr Challoners High School) and **Umair Ali** (who is hearing impaired but has not let this hold him back. He was described by his teachers as being positive about all aspects of school and a pleasure to teach. Umair has also made excellent progress) at Holmer Green Junior school.

St Michael's Catholic School nominated **Razia Quashie** (for outstanding commitment to the school, sporting and academic success) and **Phillipa Gonera** (for academic success, consistent hard work and generosity of spirit. Both girls are excellent role models for younger pupils and worthy nominees).

Representing Sir William Ramsay School were **Ibraheim Kamran** (for consistent hard work in lessons; and acting as a fantastic role model for other students) and **Rochelle Jack** (for high achievement, Gifted and Talented in Dance, Geography, PE and Drama).

Whilst **Danyaal Nawaz** (for being smart in appearance, attending school regularly and having completed homework, despite housing problems. Danyaal was recognised for working really hard and for being a friendly, articulate boy and a pleasure to teach) and **Samantha Chan** (for being a delightful girl who has excelled in all areas of the curriculum last year. She is hardworking, polite and friendly to others. Her attendance at school is outstanding) represented Widmer End Primary school.

Wycombe High School was represented at the awards ceremony by **Hafsa Khan** (for achieving A grades in all 5 subjects at AS level. She was described as a highly motivated and committed student, as well as being delightful. She also integrates well with the whole school community and is frequently described as friendly and polite, she was also identified by her headteacher as a future leader) and **Nthanda Kasambala** (who achieved A grades in her 5 AS subjects. She is a highly motivated learner and has recently been elected to the Student Leadership Team).

And finally Akacia Supplementary School nominated **Rebecca Johnny** (for best overall ability, above peer level in Maths and for outstanding artistic flare) and **David Larbi** (for being the most improved in Maths & English - especially descriptive writing, hard working),

The BMEC conference organisers would like to thank all schools for nominating pupils from their schools for awards and apologised for the fact that due to the number of excellent candidates, it was a really hard job for the judges to restrict each school's nominations to two pupils.

Here's another trick of Doctor Dementia to test your skills ... Can you meet this challenge?

I've seen this with the letters out of order, but this is the first time I've seen it with numbers. Good example of a Brain Study: If you can read this OUT LOUD you have a strong mind. And better than that: Alzheimer's is a long, long, way down the road before it ever gets anywhere near you.

**7H15 M3554G3 53RV35 7O PR0V3 H0W 0UR M1ND5 C4N D0 4M4Z1NG 7H1NG5!
1MPR3551V3 7H1NG5!**

**1N 7H3 B3G1NN1NG 17 WA5 H4RD BU7 N0W, 0N 7H15 LIN3 Y0UR M1ND 1S
R34D1NG 17 4U70M471C4LLY W17H 0U7 3V3N 7H1NK1NG 4B0U7 17,
B3 PROUD! 0NLY C3R741N P30PL3 C4N R3AD 7H15.**

To my 'selected' strange-minded friends: If you can read the above paragraph, forward it on to your friends with 'yes' in the subject line. Only great minds can read this. This is weird, but interesting! If you can read this, you have a strange mind, too.

Can you read this? Only 55 people out of 100 can.

I couldn't believe that I could actually understand what I was reading. The phenomenal power of the human mind, according to a research at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are, the only important thing is that the first and last letter be in the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without a problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole. Amazing Or what?



Were you born on or after 1st September 1996?

The law has changed so if you were born on or after 1st September 1996 then you need to stay in learning longer. **The compulsory school leaving age has not changed.**

You have a number of options at 16 and can choose from the following:

- **Apprenticeship** – where you can earn and learn at the same time.
- **College** – where a wide range of courses are offered, related to career aims.
- **School Sixth Form** – either at your current school or move to another school.
- **Training** – Providers run a range of programmes at all levels.

Can you just take a job?

Only if the company employing you offers:

- Training towards gaining an accredited qualification as part of an Apprenticeship or
- Accredited learning alongside your work provided by the employer or the opportunity to enrol on an accredited programme for the equivalent of one day per week.

To find out more about your options ask your school about speaking to an independent Careers Adviser or visit www.connexionsbucks.org.uk/stayinlearning

Connexions

As well as helping you with your learning options, Connexions can help you when you are making choices about your career; finding you your ideal job and helping you write a CV. There is also help with bullying, exam stress, money and health and things to do in your free time that will develop your skills, giving you a better chance to get a job.

You are welcome to drop into one of our centres at any time – we are open five days a week, 1pm to 5pm. Alternatively if you would prefer, you can chat online with a Connexions Personal Adviser at www.connexionsbucks.org.uk or call 0845 313 3413.

Connexions centres

Aylesbury Connexions, 14-16 Temple Street, Aylesbury, HP20 2RQ. Tel: 0845 217 1366

Buckingham Connexions, Buckingham Youth Centre, London Road, Buckingham, MK18 1AT (part-time). Tel: 0845 217 1366

Chesham Connexions, c/o Way In Centre, Sills Yard, Chesham, HP5 1EP (part-time). Tel: 0845 217 1368

High Wycombe Connexions, Castle Street, High Wycombe, HP13 6RZ. Tel: 0845 217 1368

Working in partnership with





January 2014

Academy schools update

The deadline for filing your Accounts Return is 31 January.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT

The Education Services Grant (ESG) replaced Local Authority Block LACSEG for academies as part of the new 2013/14 funding arrangements.

It has been announced that ESG will be cut by around £200m in 2015, which is likely to result in an approximate reduction of 20% in per pupil funding.

With such a significant cut coming we recommend that if you have prepared Budget Forecasts for 2014/15, and any longer term forecasts, these should be revisited to take into account the reduced funding.

If your school finds itself in a deficit position the EFA will issue you with a Financial Notice to Improve (FNI) and will expect you to produce a recovery plan to meet their indicated requirements and to be agreed with them. In recent months, increasing numbers of academies have been served with an FNI, which is often followed by the EFA urging these academies into a sponsored set-up. In this type of set-up, a local top-performing school or multi-academy trust takes over the control of your finances, which would lead to the end of your school's independence.

ACADEMIES ACCOUNTS RETURN DEADLINE 31 JANUARY!

Please remember that your Accounts Return needs to be filed by **31 January**. The EFA have introduced a new method of submission; instead of submitting the accounts returns by email to the EFA, you should now upload the accounts returns to a new online facility.

If you are preparing the return yourself, it will need to be completed in good time to hand over to your auditors so that they can perform the necessary assurance checks. The auditors can then submit the return on your behalf, if desired.

VALUE FOR MONEY STATEMENTS

All Value for Money (VFM) statements should have been submitted to the EFA by 31 December 2013.

The VFM statement is now a separate free-standing

return that is not part of the annual report and accounts. The VFM statement does not need to be audited by academy trusts' external auditors and was required for the first time for the period ended 31 August 2013. All academy trusts that converted by 31 August 2013 should have completed the VFM statement.

We remind you that the VFM statement must also be published on the academy trust's website within one month of submission to the EFA.

PUPIL PREMIUM - ARE YOU CLAIMING ALL THE AVAILABLE FUNDING?

You will be well versed with the requirements of Pupil Premium, however, not many academies are aware of the two additional streams of income that can be available.

Pupil Premium Plus

From April 2014 schools in England can receive additional funding through Pupil Premium Plus in respect of adopted children. Schools will receive a Pupil Premium of £1,900 per child to provide additional help. Claims can be made for children adopted from care on or after 30 December 2005, or that left care under a Special Guardianship Order on or after the same date. Schools can also claim Pupil Premium Plus for children who left care under a Residence Order on or after 14 October 1991.

For schools to qualify for funding in 2014/15 parents and guardians must self-declare before **16 January 2014 – this coming Thursday!**

Service Pupil Premium

The service premium will continue to be extended so that in 2014/15 any pupil in years Reception to 11, who has been flagged as a service child since 2011, will continue to receive the premium. The service child premium will be paid to schools at the rate of £300 per pupil. Please note that:

- children of military personnel who have died in service will be eligible to access the Service Pupil Premium; and
- children of military personnel will continue to qualify after their parents have left the Armed Forces, up to a maximum of six years.

“The closing date for ACMF funding applications is 31 January.”

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ACADEMIES CAPITAL MAINTENANCE FUND

The Academies Capital Maintenance Fund (ACMF) is available for academies to improve the condition of their school buildings and expand their facilities.

Many more of the academies we work with successfully applied for ACMF funding in the 2012/13 academic year than in the previous year, and the current application portal for ACMF 2014/15 round one is now open. To be eligible to apply, your academy must be open as at 1 December 2013. If you have an academy order signed on or before 1 December 2013 you are also eligible to apply.

Funding has been allocated to local authorities according to infant pupil populations and a portion, calculated on the same basis, has been allocated to ACMF. The ACMF element is approximately £21million and eligible academies can apply to access this funding through the usual ACMF arrangements, making a specific case for upgrades to equipment and facilities to allow them to deliver the universal entitlement from September 2014 for all infant pupils to receive a free school meal.

For details of how to apply, please refer to the ACMF round one information on the DfE's website or contact us. The closing date for applications is **31 January 2014** and funding allocations will be announced in April 2014.

ACMF round two funding will be available to new academies that open after 1 December 2013 and to schools with an academy order signed on or before 1 June 2014.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACADEMIES FINANCIAL HANDBOOK

Your academy's Trustees and Accounting Officers should be comfortable that the academy is fully compliant with the Academies Financial Handbook (AFH). There are a large number of requirements set out in the AFH. From our experience in this sector, we have seen that some of the more common issues include:

- failure to obtain prior approval from the Secretary of State before the payment of compensation of severance payments in excess of £50,000;
- failure to obtain prior approval for operating lease contracts exceeding three years in length;
- academy trusts not establishing an Audit Committee, where required (for trusts of a certain size), or failing to amend the terms of reference to another appropriate Committee to ensure this Committee fulfils the functions of an Audit Committee; and

- a lack of suitable financial plans to secure long-term financial health (for example three year budget forecasts).

We have developed a checklist which you can use as a self-assessment of compliance with the key areas of the AFH; a particularly useful document if you are newly converted. To request a copy of this checklist, please contact us. We can also perform a detailed review for you and make recommendations on areas where you can improve.

PENSIONS UPDATE

Pooling

A consultation was opened on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pooling towards the end of 2013 by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The consultation asked for responses on whether pooling should be offered to academies or made compulsory for all academies; how the pooling would work; and whether the pooling would include just academies or also maintained schools and the wider local councils. The full consultation document can be found at www.gov.uk.

Pooling itself covers a variety of different arrangements, from a common contribution rate for the pool to simply the pooling of risks. The main advantage of pooling is to share pension risks and/or help keep employer contributions stable across a pool, rather like insurance where premiums reflect the likelihood of a claim being made.

At the moment, Local Authority schools become a separate employer in the LGPS when they become an academy and a separate employer contribution rate is calculated. In some cases this rate can be higher or lower than was being charged to the predecessor school, for example, because of the age and pay profile of the transferring staff.

Valuation of LGPS

A full actuarial revaluation of the LGPS is carried out every three years, at which point the contribution levels for the coming three years are set. The results are expected shortly, so you should soon know the rate of contributions you will be paying from April 2014. If you, as an academy, are paying above the rates paid by LA schools you may well see a small reduction in the level of your contribution rates.

THE NEXT STEP

For further information on the above topics or to arrange a meeting to discuss your specific circumstances, please contact Gregory Chong in our London office at g.chong@uhy-uk.com.