

EDUCATOR SECTOR NEWS – JUNE 2016

SEC ED

Lack of CAMHS capacity is biggest barrier to tackling mental health, teachers warn – A study run by the Anna Freud Centre (a children’s mental health charity) involving 341 schools has reported “dramatic increases” in mental health issues among students. Concern has been raised that because of the lack of capacity within CAMHS, some schools are only referring students if they are at immediate risk of harm. The Anna Freud Centre is calling for a change in mental health provision for young people, seeing a greater integration between education and services, with at least one member of staff at every school being trained in mental health issues.

Running effective residential trips – Lindsey Simpson (Business manager at TeamCamp) discusses ways to ensure that a residential is a true learning experience for all students, including strong curriculum links between classroom and outdoor learning, getting parents onboard as ‘raving fans’, getting teachers involved in activities to build relationships, letting pupils lead sessions to build confidence, and making memories to take back to school through photography, blogging and videos.

TES

New NHS pilot aims to combat online body-shaming and negative self-image – Nick Morrison discusses the current issues surrounding young girls and body-image, and the knock-on effects on their self-esteem and confidence. The NHS trial (dubbed the Happy Being Me programme) worked with schools in south-east London, using videos, role play and discussions to explore body image. The students were encouraged to become “body-image buddies”, helping to boost each other’s self-esteem. The initial research showed that participation can lead to improved body satisfaction and eating behaviour. The trial was very small, and further research needs to be conducted.

Why school leaders must protect the residential – Richard Bullard discusses the memories of his first residential, and why they are an important part of school life. He focuses on the ability for young people to go out on their own, away from parents and interference, to explore the world. He also highlights the development of greater independence, positive risk taking, as well as improvements in social skills - a “crucial part of children’s learning”.

Progress 8 – There remains a constant discussion throughout the magazine revolving around the new Progress 8 measures which go into effect this year. There is increasing concern that the measures put high, and sometimes unrealistic, expectations onto our young people. Those who begin secondary school with high grades will not have to over achieve to reach the Progress 8 target, compared to previous targets. However, some teachers are welcoming the change, hopeful that it will ensure all young people are challenged, and not just those on the C/D borderline as in previous years. (6 Page feature available in TES 20 May 2016)

‘Full of tripwires, boring and unfair’ – the new Sats – Experts and government advisers have again expressed concerns over the content of the new Sats exams, with the release of the contents for maths, grammar and reading at the end of May. Many stated that the content approached GCSE level and that schools were not being given the time needed to prepare for the new style tests.

The brain, my teenage son and managing behaviour in secondary school – John Stanier addresses his interest in neurobiology, and how it has helped both at home and at school. The article outlines the changes which young people undergo during their lifetime, and how this affects behavioural changes. He explains that the biggest surprise for him, was that the teenage brain particularly struggles with empathy, as well as identifying the correct emotions in adults. This highlights the need for awareness of our own non-verbal messages.

INSTITUTE OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: 2015-2016 The office of National Statistics has released the results of for the seventh year of the MENE survey, which provides data on how people use the natural environment in England. <https://goo.gl/nfsKtP>

COUNCIL FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

New Campaign Coordinator joins Learning away to ensure many more young people enjoy Brilliant Residentials Kim Somerville has joined the CLOtC as the new Learning Away Campaign Coordinator. The post forms part of a further 2 years of 'legacy' funding provided by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Kim has had a varied career in marketing and communications within the education sector. <https://goo.gl/WvMBCF>

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Funding boost for schools helping pupils develop character The Government has announced a £6 million boost for schools. The grant is aimed at schools which use activities such as sports, debating or music to provide a rounded learning experience for children. This year's grants also include up to £2 million earmarked for projects with a military ethos, following the success of initiatives like Commando Joe's and Challenger Troop, which use the expertise of former armed services personnel to instill resilience in children. <https://goo.gl/cbZl7S>

Next steps to spread educational excellence everywhere announced The government has announce the next steps for implementing its white paper. The press release highlights the development of the academy programme putting 'control of running schools in the hands of teachers and school leaders – the people who know best how to run their schools'. However, after discussions with the public and school leaders, it has been announced that while the Government is still determined to see all schools become academies in the next 6 years, that "it is not necessary to bring legislation to bring about blanket conversion of all schools to achieve this goal". There is a still a big drive towards multi-academy trusts, with strong sponsors being vital to support 'good' schools. The new legislation will trigger a conversion to academy status if: it is clear that the local authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools as the critical mass have already been converted, and, where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools. £300 million has been allocated to help support schools convert. A further £300 million will support strong and effective multi-academy trusts to grown and improve. <https://goo.gl/1OeERC>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

New plan for National Parks gives every school child a chance to visit – The Environment secretary Elizabeth Truss announced plans to promote our National Parks, stating that every school child in England will have the chance to visit our National Parks at each stage of their education. The program aims to safeguard these landscapes through engagement of young people throughout their education, with the key goals of bringing over 80,000 primary school children to the National Parks and putting National Parks into the curriculum, doubling the number of youth volunteers in National Parks as part of the National Citizen Service, as well as developing new apprenticeship standards and doubling apprenticeships in National Parks by 2020. Well-being was also high on the agenda, with a focus on improving national health through 'green care' – using nature-based activities to reduce anxiety, stress, depression and other mental health concerns. <https://goo.gl/VNzmKg>

Provision for Outdoor Play in the EYFS – Report Learning through Landscapes have released a new report suggesting that many nurseries, schools and playgroups are struggling with inadequate outdoor spaces. The report calls for the Government and Ofsted to strengthen the requirement for children in the EYFS, providing better guidelines and information for parents. <http://goo.gl/irhn4b>

How can outdoor learning boost pupil development and well-being? Live chat On the 4th May, the Guardian held a live chat via twitter to discuss the positive links between outdoor learning and young people. The event provided a platform for a host of experts and professionals to share their experiences. There was overwhelming agreement that outdoor learning can boost pupil development and well-being, and that it should be an essential part of school and home life.

The impact of Children's connection to nature The University of Derby (College of Life and Natural Science) has released a report for the RSPB, outlining the impact of Children's connection to nature. In summary, the report highlights the importance of a connection to nature, and that it should be part of every child's life. The report states that both the child, and the natural world, will benefit from development of this connection. The report surveyed 775 children and found that children who were more connected to nature had significantly higher English attainment, although this was not the case for Mathematics. It was also suggested that these children had significantly higher health, life satisfaction, pro-environmental behaviours and pro-nature behaviours. <http://goo.gl/aUYARJ>

Sport England Towards an Active Nation Sport England have published their new strategy for 2016-2021. They have announced 7 main investment areas; tackling inactivity, children and young people, volunteering, taking sport and activity into the mass market, supporting sport's core market, local delivery, facilities. Their plans involve a dedicated fund of £120 million to tackle inactivity, with at least 25% of total investment directly benefiting inactive people – for local delivery, children and young people, and facilities. £40 million has been pledged to new projects for families and children to get active and play sport together. A further £130 million is to be invested in local delivery in 10 places within England, to implement local strategies for physical activity and sport. There will also be a Community Asset Fund to provide grants for the development of facilities, enabling projects to remain viable for the long term.

<https://goo.gl/BRORdi>