

BULLETIN

BOARDING SCHOOLS' ASSOCIATION ISSUE 45 - JUNE 08



On the up!

Boarding numbers in independent schools in Britain in 2008 are up by 0.4% on 2007. There are now 67,046 boarders, 13.1% of pupils at ISC member schools.

The ISC Census, released to the public on Tuesday 29 April, revealed the highest rise in boarding numbers since 2003 - great news for all those involved in boarding schools. Rising numbers give confidence to prospective buyers and reassure current parents and pupils alike of the wisdom of their choice.

'Numbers up!' was particularly good news when one of the most recent headlines about boarding, shortly before the ISC Census results were published, was about steep rises in the cost of boarding in recent years. It wasn't news - the figures have always been public knowledge - but it masqueraded as such and looked, on the surface, alarmist. Nevertheless, it appears that despite such rises, parents are still convinced of the value of a boarding education and the numbers of such parents are increasing.

SBSA

Just a week before the ISC Census figures emerged, we were happy to announce that boarding numbers in state boarding schools were up by a hefty 3%, with almost 4,000 boarders in the 32 schools

which were polled. Paul Spencer Ellis, Chairman of SBSA, said, 'State boarding schools are a well-kept secret no more, demand is up, numbers are up and the only limit on growth at the moment is capacity.'

Why Now?

One of the big questions at the ISC Census press conference was, 'Why are boarding numbers going up now?'

No doubt the answer is not simple, quick or slick, but we could all list things which must be contributing to this heartening rise in the number of boarders

- constant improvements in care, staffing, accommodation and facilities on the part of schools
- wider choice and greater flexibility in boarding provision
- a change in attitudes to boarding in parents and pupils

Better all the time

In the last ten years, more than 1,000 boarding staff have qualified via the BSA courses so ably run by Tim Holgate and accredited by Roehampton University. Boarding staff

are increasingly professional and well supported by their schools and mentors, as is only appropriate for the twenty-first century. Parents and Heads recognise the vital importance of boarding staff in sustaining 'the whole package' which schools offer to today's discriminating parents.

And look at the good job they are doing - numbers are up!

The ISC census figures tell us that schools continue to recognise the need to invest in boarding. Capital spending on new or refurbished boarding accommodation was £1,514 per boarder, against £1,261 per boarder in 2007. The increase is a marker for the importance schools attach to the presentation of their boarding.

Similarly, the Government has invested heavily in state boarding schools in the last two years.

Staff in all boarding schools are aware that more and more parents and pupils are looking for the 'Wow!' factor when they visit schools. It used to be enough to show excellent sporting facilities, or a superb new theatre. Now more than ever prospective customers expect boarding accommodation to be of a very high standard - for older boarders, single or at most twin rooms with en suite facilities are becoming common, for instance.

Younger children are happy to share bedrooms, but they expect them to be light and airy, spacious and well appointed, with due regard paid to the need for privacy even in a shared bedroom. And the days of battered sofas in tired common rooms have gone: social space for children away from home is expected to be as comfortable as it would be in a good hotel, not bleak, or Spartan, not shabby or utilitarian.

Choices, choices

Greater choice for parents increases the likelihood that they will find the right school for their child within their reach in all senses - within budget, and within the kind of one-hour's-drive radius which so many parents now consider do-able if they want to see the play, hear every note of the concert and freeze on the touchline of the rugby match in support of their child. Many schools have added weekly or flexible boarding to their menu of options for parents. Many an occasional boarder stays for longer when they feel comfortable about being away from home and realise the alternatives school offers instead of dead time wasted travelling.

Equally, full boarding schools - and one Bursar from a full-boarding prep school recently spoke very persuasively of full-boarding being the salvation



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of boarding, generating a whole community for whole terms at a time which really sustained children - take their responsibilities for the whole life of their boarders very seriously and provide the kind of activities programmes for weekends which match their pupils' interests and energy levels in a way an exhausted parent might not.

Boarding ok!

Are parental and pupil attitudes to boarding changing? It is highly likely that another factor in the rise in boarding numbers is the growing acknowledgement that boarding is an excellent option for busy parents and busy, ambitious children. Even parents who would not have dreamt of choosing a

boarding school ten years ago are choosing one now. More flexibility in the market, with schools offering weekly or flexi-boarding as well as full boarding for pupils, means that more families are choosing boarding for their children in the clear recognition that parents and children can work hard in their respective worlds all week, then gather for a family weekend at the end of it.

Nor are parents and children as out of touch as they would once have been – mobile phones and e-mail mean daily contact which helps to keep parents and children happy. Particularly in the late teenage years - and 23,345 of the 67,000 boarders are aged 16 or 17 - both parents and pupils may see a degree of distance as

no bad thing, a perfect stepping stone to the full freedoms of university life. Particularly as more and more families have both parents in the work force, and in high powered jobs which neither partner wishes to leave, childcare which even younger teens need can be expensive and unpredictable. One caller to the office recently referred to boarding being a cost-effective option once she had dispensed with the central European au pair who had sole care of her son until she returned from her job in the film industry late in the evening.

Education in the round

It's better than cost-effective of course: it's an education in the round, to borrow the title of the Annual Heads' Conference in May, with opportunities

and expertise and facilities and friends to make evenings and weekends as vibrant as the school day, and to turn out rounded individuals with confidence and pride to face the modern world.

Let us look forward with confidence then, to rising numbers next year too. There will be more work to do, ensuring pupils and parents are happy with the education, the pastoral care, the accommodation, the facilities, the activities programmes and the food. I am sure all boarding schools will rise to the challenges in all these areas.

Meanwhile, from everyone at BSA,

Congratulations!

Dear Headmaster...

Headteachers attending the Annual Conference for Heads in York had the pleasure of hearing Tim Holgate read the following letter ascribed to Abraham Lincoln and sent originally to the Headmaster of the school which Abraham Lincoln's son attended.

Referring to his son, Abraham Lincoln wrote:

He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just; all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero; that for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader.

Teach him that for every enemy there is a friend. It will take time, I know, but teach him, if you can, that a dollar earned is of far more value than five found. Teach him to learn to lose and also to enjoy winning. Steer him away from envy, if you can. Teach him the secret

of quiet laughter. Let him learn early that the bullies are the easiest to lick. Teach him, if you can, the wonder of books, but also give him quiet time to ponder over the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and flowers on a green hill-side.

In school teach him it is far more honourable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong. Teach him to be gentle with gentle people and tough with the tough. Try to give my son the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone is

getting on the bandwagon. Teach him to listen to all men but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and take only the good that comes through.

Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him there is no shame in tears. Teach him to scoff at cynics and to beware of too much sweetness. Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidders; but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob, and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.

Treat him gently, but do not cuddle him because only the test of fire makes fine steel. Let him have the courage to be impatient; let him have the patience to be brave. Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself, because then he will always have sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order; but see what you can do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son!

Abraham Lincoln

These are words which remind us all of the huge responsibility we take upon ourselves when we work in boarding schools. We share them now with all readers as a reminder both of the President's words and of Tim Holgate who discovered them for us.

Tribute to Tim Holgate

Tribute to the role of Tim Holgate, the Boarding Schools' Association first Director of Training, 1997 to 2008

Given at the BSA's Annual Conference for Heads, Royal Hotel, York on Tuesday 29th April 2008

In the spring 2008 edition of Boarding School you can read an article written by Tim Holgate on his work as the BSA's Director of Training from 1997 to 2008. Typical of the man, Tim outlines in dispassionate prose the founding of the professional development programme and the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA)/ University of Roehampton Professional Development Certificate courses. I use the word dispassionate carefully and do not apologise for stating its meaning: not affected by personal or emotional involvement.

Whatever Tim's dispassionate prose says, in Tim Holgate the Association has benefited beyond measure from the efforts of a man who has been highly committed personally and emotionally to the cause of improving the pastoral care of boarders in our schools and the training of boarding staff in that pastoral care. Working closely with Tim for eight years, I have been privileged to see the man behind the systems and the programmes and am happy for Tim's article to inform you about those. My pleasurable task is to pay tribute to the man who produced the systems and, as is often the case, there is much more to Tim than just the programmes he has developed.

It was not the most auspicious of starts. I was a member of the

interview panel for the new BSA role of training co-ordinator and we were rather thrown by the news that one of our candidates was trapped on a train because sheep were loose on the line. To the good fortune of the Association, the sheep were rounded up, the delayed candidate arrived, the interview schedule was re-jigged and Tim was appointed.

It is not given to many to have a tabula rasa (literally a blank slate) but that is what Tim inherited in terms of formal training. It should be rightly acknowledged that the BSA, since its foundation in 1966, had run stimulating conferences for a range of boarding staff. In addition, Tim was able to build on a pioneering training model set up by Jane Laing at the Friends School. Apart from these, the training programme was a blank sheet of paper. And, my goodness, how well has he written on it.

In the late 1990s three complementary events were managed astutely by Tim to give impetus to what we know as today's professional development programme.

Firstly, the BSA acknowledged that it should develop a Professional Development (PD) Certificate in partnership with a university so that boarding staff had the equivalent of a PGCE but in pastoral care rather than classroom practice. Tim worked long and hard with what was then the Roehampton Institute, later to be the University of Roehampton, to develop the



course content for what was then very much a "first" (and still acknowledged as the leader) in boarding education throughout the world. It is appropriate here to pay tribute to Tim's attention to detail. Anyone who has worked with him knows he is a stickler for detail and will not allow corners to be cut even if it takes longer to produce the right programme or course. So it was with the Certificate courses, which are, as you know, flourishing at both graduate and non-graduate level. At times during this tribute I will make mention of colleagues, who Tim would be the first to acknowledge have supported him in all the developments he has managed. In the case of Roehampton, Shirley Lee, the first course convenor and her successors, have been of great support.

The second event which Tim ensured the BSA contributed to in a major way was the development of the National Boarding Standards. In a nutshell, the quality of the NBS National Committee and Tim's work on detail ensured that the 52 standards offered to the Government as a result of the committee's work, were accepted with very few changes. In this area, the support of Dr. Roger Morgan, now the Children's Rights Director, was invaluable, as has been his support of the whole PD Programme.

The third event was an approach to the BSA at the end of 1998 by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), as it

was known then. In essence, the government wished for more formal training for boarding staff but the government did not feel it necessary to set up its own training arm if the BSA would deliver the training with financial support from the DfEE. At a meeting with the DfEE in late December 1998 Tim and I had what might have been our only major altercation. The DfEE pointed out that their budget only ran until March 1999, but that, if the courses went well, more money would be likely to be available for the next financial year. So, how many day courses could you deliver before the end of March, they asked? In my gung ho way I suggested: "oh four to five". I was then conscious of someone's foot pressing down hard on mine under the table and a grimace from the owner's foot. Tim quite rightly was pointing out that gung ho promises were different from delivery and we agreed on three courses.

The first was a course in January for nearly a hundred at London Zoo, mainly delivered by Roger Morgan. At one point in the day he was thrown off his stride by a giraffe passing by the conference centre and, as he re-told it, winking at him through the upstairs window.

From this initial DfEE contact, much fruit was to be borne. Tim worked assiduously on the annual proposals for funding for both training and publications and I can confirm that none of his proposals were ever questioned by the DfEE. After the London Zoo experience and the first tranche of gap year training courses (where 100 antipodeans for a day with London on the doorstep did not make for the easiest of training experiences), Tim was convinced that courses needed to be

smaller. This played well with the DfEE grant and, as a result of their financing of the day courses, groups were kept small and the cost to schools was kept as low as possible. We met many DfEE staff over the years, but I am sure Tim would wish to acknowledge the work of Michael Phipps in the founding of the DfEE/BSA link and Penny Jones who carried it on.

The university-based two-year certificate courses were, however, only part of the story. Understandably, schools needed bespoke day courses dealing with the range of pastoral care issues, which I do not need to delineate to this audience. I would just ask you to look at the annual Professional Development Programme and imagine, if you would, starting that from scratch. The quality of this programme is founded on a number of Tim's principles. Firstly, he believes in responding to schools' needs and some of the national day courses have been developed as a result of specific requests from schools. Secondly, Tim has always searched out experts in their field so that boarding staff benefit from professional expertise as well as the sharing of best practice. Thirdly, Tim soon became aware that some schools prefer "in house" training and he has provided this on many occasions.

In running this comprehensive programme, Tim has used his delegation and teaching skills to develop a support team, without which the programme would not run. It is right to acknowledge at this point the support given to Tim by the team of tutors and the particular support of Dale Wilkins, Helen Holland and, notably, Pam Baillie as the BSA's

training assistant.

It did not take long to realise that the PD programme needed the support of written material, which in 1998 amounted to nothing. I invite you to look at the back of the Conference Brochure and glance down the list of publications which Tim has commissioned. Testament to Tim's reputation is the range and quality of authors of the BSA's publications. Many of these publications have been engendered by Tim's commitment to keeping abreast of issues and legislation pertaining to boarding. So much he does is "behind the scenes" where he has beavered away in the best interests of all in boarding education. Three of the public faces of this work are the programmes of the annual training conferences, one for Housemasters and Housemistresses, one for Matrons and Medical Staff and the Easter Residential Conference. Thanks to Tim's personal and professional qualities these conferences are fun, informative and pro-active. In addition, as many of you will know, Tim's reputation is high internationally through his work in boarding schools in the Far East and Australia.

Venues for the PD programme are many and various. We have always enjoyed the support of Jenny Wilde and her team in seeking out conference and training venues. One year Jenny was very keen for Tim and me to sample the delights of the Norbreck Castle Hotel in Blackpool. This hotel has a reputation for hosting big events as its exhibition hall can accommodate a large number of 32-ton articulated trucks. When Tim and I visited the hotel, Jenny should have told us about the dress code: the hotel was

hosting the British Line Dancing Championships with 2000 line dancers, all of whom were sporting leather jackets with frills, cowboy hats and cowboy boots. We felt distinctly underdressed at supper.

I am sure that many boarding staff over the years will remember Tim for his personal support to them. He is known for being available to staff for advice and help and, all credit to him, he always answers his own phone or personally returns calls if he is away from his office. He offers a variety of advice such as supporting matrons with the challenge of project work for the Roehampton/BSA Certificate, advising housemasters and housemistresses on the whole gamut of boarding challenges and heads on a range of legal and management issues. Tim's wealth of experience and expertise is invaluable to members of the Association. As well as answering his own phone, Tim has undertaken all the administration of the PD programme and has been loyally supported in this by his wife, Anne. I know, because of my years of working with Tim, how much goes on "behind the scenes" in Etchilhampton and the BSA will ever be indebted to Tim and Anne for ensuring all staff on training had the information and mailing they needed to benefit fully from the programme. Anne is a modest lady and many will not know of her work in support of the PD Programme. Now is the right time to acknowledge it.

It is an honour, on behalf of the Association and the thousands of boarding staff who have benefited from Tim's work, to pay tribute to Tim's professionalism, his capacity

for very hard work, his wisdom, sensitivity, care and commitment to the purposes of the Association. These are attributes which have ensured the success and development of the key work of the Association. Rightly, he is held in high regard and with much affection by so many members of the Association.

On a personal note, I told Tim when I retired from the BSA that I rated our working relationship as one of the best I have enjoyed in my career in education. Looking back two years later, I am just as convinced.

Finally, it has been said that people with vision reach for the stars, they do not count them. Tim has always had the vision of offering the highest quality of care to the boarders in our schools and the highest quality of training to boarding staff. The Association has been blessed to have been served by a man with great vision, but, as you will understand from what I have said, one who has also kept a careful count of the stars on the way to that vision.

Adrian Underwood OBE
BSA National Director
1998 - 2006

Ofsted

BSA is grateful to Dr Jean Humphrys, Deputy Director, Children at Ofsted, for the following article.

I am delighted to have been asked to write a short article for your bulletin.

In our first year we have completed a programme of training for all our inspectors and administrators, put in place our organisation values and established our priorities, all while continuing to meet our regulatory and inspection programmes. To view our Strategic Plan/values, please go to www.ofsted.gov.uk, click on **Publications and research**, and then **Raising standards, improving lives** on the right hand side of the page.

For those of you who have looked at our priorities you will have noticed that they all begin with the word better – this puts improvement at the heart of all that we do, including our own performance.

We are not complacent about our work and know that there is much more to do, but I am particularly pleased with the progress we have made to further Better Consultation.

I thought the following would give you a flavour of the work we have done this year. In addition to the many conferences we have attended and the liaison meetings we have established we have tried to involve those we inspect more fully in inspection developments.

Much of the development work is overseen by a new cross Ofsted Inspection Development Project. The aim of this group is

to bring together all of our inspection principles and frameworks. Currently we have over 50 different inspections across schools, early years, children's residential social care services (including children's homes, boarding schools, secure estate and fostering and adoption) the inspection of colleges, adult training centres, initial teacher training and the inspections of local authorities.

The project team has made good progress, but there is still a long way to go. We will keep you informed about this work in the months to come. We use Ofsted News as one of the main ways to let people know about our work. If you don't already subscribe to Ofsted News, our free on-line e-magazine, please sign up now by going to the publications section on our website (<http://live.ofsted.gov.uk/newsletter/>). The following is an extract from an article that will appear in May.

As part of the drive for a joined up approach to inspection, the Education Directorate and the Children's Directorate have been working together to integrate the inspection and reporting of welfare (boarding) and of education in state and independent schools and in residential special schools. The project does not apply to those schools that are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

The project's aim is to integrate inspections so that those being inspected feel as if they have had a single inspection

from Ofsted rather than separate education and welfare inspections. We aim to produce a single report covering both aspects from September 2008.

Some of you will have responded to the consultation we have been running, or may have been involved in pilot inspections to develop single inspection events. These pilot inspections test out:

- arranging and conducting a single inspection
- gathering pupils' views
- writing and publishing a single inspection report
- whether we have the right guidance and frameworks in place.

Early responses to the consultation are very positive.

I hope you agree that new Ofsted has made a strong start. We do not underestimate the task ahead, but I believe that we can work together to improve our services. I am confident that by putting in place better ways of working and systems for communication and consultation we will achieve better outcomes for children and young people through coherent, rigorous and proportionate inspections.

On a final note I was very pleased indeed to see the positive feedback in your April 2008 bulletin (issue 45) about our inspections. I have noted the concerns that you have raised with your association and we will continue to work with you to improve our inspection arrangements.

Jean Humphrys
Deputy Director, Children
Ofsted

Jet propelled to the finish!



A huge thank you to everyone who supported me in my quest to run the London Marathon and I am delighted to say that I did finish (in 3 hours and 57 minutes) and it was a truly amazing experience. I did not realise that the crowds line every mile of the route, so there are people cheering and willing you on every step of the way.

I ran for JET (Joint Educational Trust) a charity some of you may have connections with. They aim to help children who have suffered tragedy or trauma to continue their education in state and independent boarding schools. Pupils, Staff and Parents at Farlington set a target to raise £2000 and I am delighted that we have exceeded this and raised £3,200.

Thank you to the BSA and colleagues in boarding schools who have supported this worthwhile cause.

Julie Lodrick
Deputy Head,
Farlington School

Ofsted Inspection of Boarding

Since April 2007, boarding inspections have been conducted by Ofsted. The end of term will see the end of the first whole academic year of Ofsted boarding inspection.

The Executive Committee asked that BSA survey schools in which boarding had been Ofsted inspected this year. These are the results of that survey.

Heads were asked to rate the various elements of the inspection on a four point scale in which
1 = outstanding
2 = good
3 = satisfactory
4 = unsatisfactory

102 replies had been received by 12 May 2008.

Question 1: Notice of inspection

Outstanding	29.6%
Good	46.9%
Satisfactory	14.3%
Unsatisfactory	9.2%

Question 2: Information available prior to inspection

Outstanding	14.4%
Good	36.1%
Satisfactory	37.1%
Unsatisfactory	12.4%

Question 3: Pre-inspection visit

Outstanding	25%
Good	45.7%
Satisfactory	19.6%
Unsatisfactory	9.8%

Question 4: Questionnaires for parents

Outstanding	1.2%
Good	27.7%
Satisfactory	27.7%
Unsatisfactory	43.4%

Question 5: Questionnaires for children

Outstanding	1.2%
Good	23.8%
Satisfactory	34.5%
Unsatisfactory	40.5%

Question 6: Conduction of inspection

Outstanding	43.2%
Good	40%
Satisfactory	12.6%
Unsatisfactory	4.2%

Question 7: Verbal feedback

Outstanding	41.4%
Good	40.4%
Satisfactory	15.2%
Unsatisfactory	3%

Question 8: Opportunity to challenge verbal feedback and results thereof

Outstanding	27.2%
Good	44.6%
Satisfactory	17.4%
Unsatisfactory	10.9%

Question 9: Written report

Outstanding	16.9%
Good	47%
Satisfactory	24.1%
Unsatisfactory	12%

Question 10: Opportunity to challenge written report and results thereof

Outstanding	21.1%
Good	39.4%
Satisfactory	18.3%
Unsatisfactory	21.1%

Question 11: How would you grade the overall inspection process?

Outstanding	13.4%
Good	48.5%
Satisfactory	27.8%
Unsatisfactory	10.3%

Question 12: Approximate cost of inspection Only 47 schools replied to this question

Outstanding	0%
Good	34%
Satisfactory	38.3%
Unsatisfactory	27.7%

Summary

Clearly, Heads had most concern about the questionnaires. Ofsted has acknowledged these concerns and is redrafting the questionnaires ready for the new academic year in September.

It was pleasing to see that Heads were broadly satisfied with the inspection process. However, for independent boarding schools, inspection by both ISI and Ofsted is likely to make unified inspection of their whole operation more difficult to organise.

BSA, therefore, asked a supplementary question: Would Heads prefer future boarding inspections to be conducted by Ofsted or ISI?

Of the 77 independent boarding schools which replied, 2 had no preference and 57 said they would prefer future boarding inspections to be conducted by ISI.

Eight state boarding schools, whose education provision is inspected by Ofsted, said they would prefer Ofsted to continue with boarding inspection.

Easter 2011

Schools which are still reeling from the impact on the academic year of the very early Easter in March (21 – 24 March) may wish to take note that in 2011 the Easter weekend will be 22 until 25 April.

While this is clearly very late for Easter, for boarding schools in particular, it is of interest that Monday 25 April, Easter Monday, will be just one week before the first of the May bank holidays, Monday 2 May.

Exchange Programme

BSA offices received the following request in early May. We have made no direct enquiries of the association, and can make no recommendation, but we publish it here so that schools which are interested may, if they wish, pursue the exchange offer described directly.

ACEIMAR is an association of Teaching Centres in Northwest Spain (CEMAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL and COLEGIO MARCOTE). Both schools offer day and boarding facilities. You can visit our web site: www.aceimar.com

We would like to exchange a small group of children aged 12 to 14, for a period of up to three months, from October. This should be done during term time, but we are flexible regarding the time of year. There is also flexibility with the age of the children.

Isabel Barros
International Relations Dept.

Mind the Gap

At the time of writing, the relevant website on the timetable for implementing the new Points Based System of Immigration tells us that details on the Youth Mobility Scheme will be available this month, probably between our going to press and your reading of the Bulletin.

If you have Gap Assistants, therefore, or expect to have them next year, I suggest you go to <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration/apointsbasedsystem/timetableforPBSlaunch>

A letter received following our enquiries at the Home Office about possible changes for visa regulations for Gap Assistants tells us the following:

'The Government recognises the importance to (sic) providing opportunities for youth exchange, and therefore also included among the PBS (Points Based System) proposals plans for an entirely new, single, generic, quota-based youth mobility scheme (YMS) under Tier 5 of the new system.

'The detailed terms of the new Scheme have since been developed and the YMS is due to be launched later this year. A Statement of Intent, setting out in full the proposed terms of the Scheme, is due to be published next month.

'At the launch of the YMS, the existing youth mobility Schemes, including the Working Holidaymaker Scheme and the Gap Year Entrants concession, will be abolished and thereafter no new entry clearances will be granted under those schemes.

The new Scheme will have a single set of criteria which will apply to all countries seeking consideration for the Scheme, and there will be a single set of entry requirements and entitlements for the young people participating in the Scheme. We believe that the new Scheme will be simpler for applicants and the public to understand, and fairer than the existing arrangements, as the terms will be consistent for all youth mobility participants.

'All participants in the schemes being abolished will be entitled to complete the period of leave they have been granted under those provisions. Former gap year entrants will also be eligible to apply for an entry clearance under the YMS. There will also be provisions for the entry of charity workers under the Temporary Worker provisions in Tier 5 of the PBS, so a person sponsored to enter for unpaid charitable work with a UK charity, including a school with charitable status, will be able to do so.

'Entrants under the YMS will be able to participate in the Scheme only once and it will be for individuals to decide when it would best suit them to do so. All YMS clearances will have a validity of two years, but participants will of course be able to enter and leave the UK at any time during the validity of their entry clearance, so if

an individual wishes to utilise the Scheme to enjoy a gap year experience in the UK between school and university they will be able to do so. In that case, however, as you suggest, they may not be able to utilise the second potential year of stay under the Scheme, but that decision will be for them. The new Scheme is not designed to replicate existing provisions, or to accommodate all the disparate purposes that they served.'

BSA's reading of the above is that many prospective Gap Assistants may decide they would rather have their 2 year YMS clearance to come to Britain after graduating than between school and university. They may find that universities at home are reluctant to hold places for them for two years, and to come for one year between school and university

is to lose the second year of entitlement. BSA has asked for a conversation with Mary Andrew, Policy Project Adviser in the Temporary Migration Team but this has not yet occurred.

One last note: BSA advice in recent years has been that Gap Assistants should be on a Gap Year Entry visa and then paid the minimum wage. However, the above letter from Ms Andrew points out that **young people may still come to work unpaid at an independent school which is a charity under the Temporary Worker provision of Tier 5 of the PBS. In response to a further question from BSA, Ms Andrew has said yes, such Temporary Workers, unpaid volunteers working for charities, may later apply for the full 2 year YMS clearance.**

HM

Have you had a look at the new BSA website?

Member passwords have been sent to all schools and should have been distributed in staff areas. Please look out for these so you can enter the Members' Area.

Have you uploaded information about your school? Did you know that you can

now add photos to your entry?

Do you have a Job Vacancy that you would like to advertise?

Go to the Members' Area and post it now - you might find the perfect applicant.

www.boarding.org.uk

Chinese Students - Visa Tips

We are grateful to Martin Webber of Academic Asia for the following notes. They are based on Academic Asia's experience and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Home Office or of the British Embassy or Consulates in China.

In China: in order to apply for a UK student visa, parents have to prove, among other things, that they can afford to pay school fees and living costs over the entire period of proposed study (including university). It is not sufficient for them to produce a bank statement showing a healthy balance - they must be able to prove that they have, and will have, sufficient income over a period of years to finance their child's study in UK. This can often be very difficult for some parents because:

1. their main sources of income may come from the grey economy
2. many other family members (grandparents, uncles etc.) may be contributing to the student's education.

Further, Her Majesty's Government has decided that all visa applications made in China shall first be approved by an external vetting agency. This is a private company contracting to the Embassy in Beijing and the various regional Consulates to vet all visa applications before they are seen by the British visa officers. This vetting agency is contracted to check every detail of every application before it receives official consideration. The vetting agency checks every detail of every application against a detailed list of

regulations and requirements and any omissions, variations or discrepancies (even spelling errors) can result in the summary rejection of an application.

The acceptance letter issued by the UK school forms a vital part of the application package and, unfortunately, sometimes causes problems as the vetting agency has been given very strict guidelines on what does, and what does not, constitute an acceptance letter.

To satisfy the UK visa authorities, an acceptance letter must:

- be written on letterhead
- be dated (day, month and year)
- be signed in ink by the Head, Registrar or other person in authority
- give the student's full name exactly as it is written in their passport
- give the student's date of birth exactly as in their passport
- state the exact nature of the course
- state the exact start date of the course, the length of the course and the expected outcome of the course
- state whether the course is full-time or part-time
- give details of the accommodation arrangements
- specify any entry conditions and/or any English assessment that has taken place¹
- state the annual or termly fees
- detail any deposit paid by the parents²

February 2008

We are very pleased to confirm a place at the school for Charlie Wang starting next Winter Term.

We look forward to welcoming Charlie to the school and wish him every success in his studies.

Yours faithfully

pp Headmaster

Some of these requirements may seem unnecessarily detailed but any application submitted without these is likely to fail. Thus, the above would fail on at least 12 points:

An acceptance letter that is more likely to succeed might look like this (below):

TS

The Thatchers' School

17th January 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: WANG XIAO LI d.o.b. 12.05.1991

This is to certify that Wang Xiao Li has been offered and has accepted a place at The Thatchers' School with effect from 8th September 2008.

Xiao Li will join our Year 12 for a two-year course of full-time A-level studies ending in June 2010. It is expected that she will then proceed to an undergraduate course at a British university.

We have tested and assessed Wang Xiao Li's English and we are satisfied that this is sufficient for the proposed course of study.

Full boarding accommodation will be provided at the school.

The fees are £8,750.00 per term. A deposit of £2,500.00 has been received from Xiao Li's parents.

T Richards
T. Richards
Registrar

All visa letters must be an original - faxed or emailed copies are not accepted.

The normal timescale for obtaining a UK visa in China is 3 - 4 weeks after all of the correct documentation has been submitted.

¹Any entry conditions must be very specific and clearly achievable.

For example:

"This offer is subject to Liu Wen Long making a significant improvement in his English by next September" - would probably result in visa refusal as the condition is not specific.

"This offer is subject to Liu Wen Long undertaking a two-term course of pre-sessional English" - is acceptable (as long as proof of the English course is also submitted).

If you have tested a student's English and found it to be sufficient for the proposed course of study, please say so in the visa letter - unfortunately, visa officers have been known to reject applications on the basis of their own assessment of a student's English.

² If a deposit has been paid by or on behalf of the parents then this must be mentioned and the exact amount given in the acceptance letter. It is not enough for the parents to submit evidence that a deposit has been sent - it must also be confirmed by the school.

London Low Emission Zone

We have heard from Transport for London that from July 7 2008, the London Low Emission Zone will be extended to include additional vehicles.

"Vehicles that do not meet the required emissions standards are required to pay a £200 daily charge to drive within the zone or risk a £1000 Penalty Charge Notice."

In future the LEZ will apply "from July 7 2008 to all diesel engine lorries over 3.5 tonnes and buses *and coaches over 5 tonnes with more than 9 seats*. Please note this can include larger minibuses." (our italics)

Our letter further points out that "Vehicles first registered as new on or after 1 October 2001, are deemed to be Euro III compliant and so will meet the LEZ emission standards in 2008."

TfL has set up a dedicated enquiries service; (Tel: 0845 607 0009) to help vehicle owners and operators understand what the LEZ means for them and what they may have to do to comply with the scheme. TfL's website, www.tfl.gov.uk/lezlondon, also provides detailed information about the LEZ.

Heads on the move

The following Heads recently took up post. We wish them every success.

We thank their predecessors for their service to BSA and SBSA schools and wish them every good fortune in the future.



Fyling Hall School (ISA)

Mr Ken James, who was previously a teacher and Director of Co-Curricular at St John's School in Leatherhead, Surrey, has been appointed Headmaster at Fyling Hall School, North Yorkshire.



Rossall School (HMC)

Dr Stephen Winkley has been appointed Headmaster of Rossall School. Dr Winkley, a former BSA Chairman, replaces current Head, Tim Wilbur, who vacates the office to move to New Zealand to take up the post of Headmaster at Wanganui Collegiate School.



Burford School (SBSA)

Mrs Kathy Haig, a former pupil of Burford School, was appointed Headteacher in January 2008. Mrs Haig returned to Burford after a wide-ranging career in which the most recent 12 years have been at Ellesmere Port Catholic High School.



The Royal Wolverhampton School (SHMIS)

Mr Steph Bailey, pictured here with pupils, formerly Acting Headmaster at The Royal Wolverhampton School, was appointed Headmaster with effect from March 2008.

If your school has a new Head starting in September, please let us know and we will include the details in our September Bulletin.

Annual Conference for Headteachers

Royal York Hotel, York, April 29 - May 1 2008
'Boarding: Education in the Round'



What is a conference for, if not to meet friends and make new ones, compare notes, anxieties, triumphs and the names of good speech day possibles, enjoy workshops and lectures, be provoked, motivated and inspired in equal measure, and return to the fray refreshed?

Well, in the case of the 2008 Headteachers' Conference, under the Chairmanship of Geoffrey Boulton, Headmaster of Giggleswick in Yorkshire, it was also an opportunity to attend Evensong in York Minster, and revel in the silence and the song and the sight of (from my seat) 84 separate stained glass windows. Here was the chance of real reflection in busy lives, a busy week, a busy day; few who attended will forget it.

The Conference also offered a drinks reception with a difference - aboard the York Eye, from which, in the thin drizzle, we could all see not only York laid out beneath us, but also the fire engines scuttling to the hotel in response to the fire alarm which evacuated

the hotel (and some possible stay-at-homes) while most of the Heads happily circled above the turmoil.



It was hard to know which was most appealing to the Heads - the trip on the Eye, or the fact that to reach it, we enjoyed open access at the York Railway Museum - what bliss, as Headteachers equipped with champagne toasted the interests of their youth, within reach of displays of model railways and standing in the shadow of the great beasts themselves - you should just see the size of the engines which cross China.

At dinner on Tuesday night, Adrian Underwood OBE spoke in praise of Tim Holgate and all that he has accomplished in his 35 terms as Director of Training for BSA (his speech is reprinted

in this Bulletin) and Chairman Geoffrey Boulton presented Tim with tokens of appreciation from the BSA and from his many friends and colleagues in the Association who had contributed to a leaving gift for him. Tim's farewell speeches at this conference were models of their kind, reflecting on his time at BSA and gently prompting his audience to look to the future and the challenges it will undoubtedly present for boarding schools.

Speakers included Gervase Phinn, broadcaster and raconteur, funny and serious by turn, and Hektor Krome, whose enthusiasm for travel knew no bounds; Matthew Burgess, General Counsel at ISC, on the Charity Commission and Matt Perry, former England full back, on the benefits and opportunities provided by sport at boarding schools. David Smellie and Katie Lancaster from Farrer and Co, ably assisted by willing volunteers from the audience, gave an interactive workshop on 'How not to sack a teacher!' - a session as amusing as it was educative. Professor Bart McGettrick, Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Glasgow, took his audience back to their roots as educators and creators of future citizens. And Dr Martin Stephen announced his intention not

to release the results from St Paul's School for newspaper consumption, on the basis that the August league tables were dishonest: too many young people had upgrades in September for the August figures to be accurate, and students these days took such a range of exams that it was impossible to find a numerical score which reflected their performance - and therefore that of their schools - accurately.



Heads were aware that here was a gauntlet before them: boarding schools are, almost by definition, about education in the round, about so much more than simple examination passes - which are in fact seldom simple. How many Heads would leave the Conference to go home and discuss with Governors what to do with their school's results in August? Could this be the start of a revolution?

No wonder then that Heads and their spouses and guests left the Conference having enjoyed the good food of Yorkshire, and with a great deal of food for thought.

HM



Royal Alexandra and Albert School Celebrates 250th Anniversary

The sun shone on a perfect Pentecost Sunday for Paul Spencer Ellis, Headmaster of The Royal Alexandra and Albert School and Chairman of the State Boarding Schools' Association, as he led the school through a day of celebration of the school's 250th anniversary on 11 May.

Addressing prizewinners and pupils, governors, staff, friends and visitors, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, spoke of the values which had sustained the school and would be a source of strength to pupils in their own lives.



The school has plans to increase boarding numbers and complete an ambitious project developing sports facilities in the near future.

Royal Hospital School Opens New Girls' Boarding House

It is always good to hear of new boarding accommodation being built at any of our schools. Building for boarding declares the confidence of the sector in the future of boarding, whatever boarding may look like – full? Weekly? Flexi? - in the changing times of the twenty-first century. Building and refurbishing, whatever the trials and tribulations of dust, noise and upheaval, also create a buzz for all concerned – parents, pupils, staff and governors are made aware that theirs is a living, thriving school, growing and changing to meet the needs of today's customers.

It is even better to be part of the celebratory process itself

I was delighted to be invited to open Howe House, the newly refurbished girls' boarding house at The Royal Hospital School on Saturday 19 April. It is a superb facility, obviously much appreciated by the girls who were so at home there.

The weekend included a splendid concert and a Sunday morning which featured the whole school on parade followed by a service in the school chapel which boasts one of the finest organs in Europe.

Do please let us know about new developments in boarding at your school. We will try to feature news and pictures in future editions of the Bulletin.

Course Comments

The following is a selection of comments made by delegates who attended some of the BSA Seminars during 2007/8.

Meeting Boarders' Emotional Needs London, 27 February 2008

- Well organised; thought provoking; worthwhile; well-presented; really useful; enlightening; reassuring; informative
- Excellent speakers; clear and focused; interesting and likeable; relaxed but thorough - allowed lots of questions; helpful and sensitive
- A confidence booster; many useful ideas; all relevant issues covered; open and supportive environment
- Case studies and scenarios really helpful

atmosphere of sharing ideas, working with others; focus on taking specific messages away

- Depth and breadth of information; very practically based; excellent range of ideas
- Excellent handouts

North of England Pastoral Course York, 13 May 2008

- Excellent; plenty of thought-provoking issues; helpful, rewarding, informative
- Excellent course, contents and contacts; well worth attending
- Very enjoyable - extremely friendly whilst being very informative
- I know I can help a child with confidence; encouraging to someone about to start in boarding
- Specific incidents and comprehensive discussion
- Could have been longer - 2 days? A lot of material covered

Child Protection (general) London, 4 March 2008

- Excellent training
- Very informative and relevant, delivered in a straightforward, clear, precise manner
- Good, relevant content, well presented and interesting

North of England Pastoral Course Sheffield, 13 March 2008

- Very good; informative; issues relevant to all pupils; raised my awareness; very worthwhile course

Promoting Staff Development London, 6 May 2008

- Speakers knowledgeable and informative; excellent presentation - efficient and to the point; well-paced
- Very helpful/excellent

Meeting Boarders' Emotional Needs Birmingham, 15 May 2008

- Very/highly informative - all boarding staff should be encouraged to attend
- Down to earth, identifiable information; very useful information covered
- Perfect mix of lecture and interactive learning
- Useful and encouraging; very worthwhile; excellent - common sense and brilliant ideas

BOOK
YOUR PLACE
NOW FOR
2008/9!

From the Nurse Adviser

Inspection of medication in boarding provision

We have been receiving a number of requests for help over issues with audit trails for medications. The lack of these has been highlighted during inspections. It does appear that different inspectors are expecting different things. I contacted the relevant Ofsted pharmacist a month ago to ask for clarification and apart from an acknowledgement I have not received a response so far.

I will update you when I have further information.

Professional nurse training

The current cohort of nurses is coming to the end of their module on nursing issues in boarding schools. The feedback so far has been very positive. More information about this module, which will start again in September, is on the BSA website, or contact myself or Tim Holgate, Director of Training. It will also be explained again at the Conference in July.

Kathy Compton
Nurse Adviser
kcompton@plymouth-college.co.uk
or 01752 293807

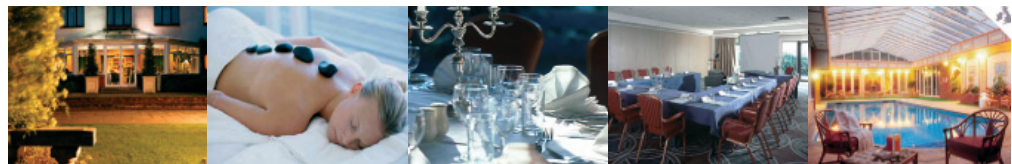
Annual Conference for Heads 2009

“Inspiring Places - Inspiring People”

Tuesday 5 May - Thursday 7 May 2009



The Oxford Belfry ★★★★★



The Oxford Belfry, Thame
Chairman: Melvyn Roffe, Principal, Wyomndham College



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