

# Exporting Excellence: *Creating Great British Schools Internationally*

*Edited by Amy Wevill and Edward Wild*



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the **Gold Standard** in education

 Wild Search



Wild Search is grateful to both the Alpha Plus Group and OxfordAQA for supporting this publication.

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# Preface

*The Right Honourable Sir Stephen O'Brien KBE*

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Throughout the various stages of my career, it has been a great privilege as well as necessary to travel widely to almost every part of the World and often to very remote and sometimes dangerous areas, as an international lawyer, in manufacturing industry, in politics (especially in relation to the global campaign to control and eliminate malaria and neglected tropical diseases), as a Government Minister for International Development - especially across the many countries on the African Continent - and, most recently in my role as the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator. Whilst travel is stimulating and exciting, its benefit is also humbling, realising that the challenges for everyone as global citizens are the same - to survive and to thrive in safety and security, above all with hope. There are so many for whom the starting position is so much more threatening and challenging than our own experience, not least in the chance of receiving an education and gaining skills that will serve and support each one of us through life. Education is the key that unlocks the potential, dignity and hope that sustains lives. This is true whether in a refugee camp or in an advanced industrial and fourth industrial age economy and democratic society, where the chance to do great trade deals has to be learnt as much as how we ensure the provision of food and water, shelter and security, health and economic opportunity. Feeding minds with high quality education is absolutely essential in enabling all peoples and all countries to develop and prosper.



As Britain prepares to develop new relationships and trade deals, Exporting Excellence is a welcome and timely report. At a time when our relationship with Europe and the rest of the world is on the point of change, the authors of these essays - all of them successful educational leaders with vision and ambition - demonstrate how the vision of the founders of their institutions in earlier centuries has been re-energised and shared for future generations both at home and abroad.

I have been inspired by reading the contrasting accounts of the challenges of establishing schools in different countries and how they have been overcome not only by traditional boarding schools such as Haileybury but also by day schools such as Dulwich, who were the first to identify and embrace the international opportunities and, more recently, King's, North London Collegiate and Reigate

Grammar. Thinking about the potential for the educational chances for young minds in places as diverse as the Sahel or Kenya, Cairo or Kinshasa, I was particularly interested to read the essay on opportunities to develop schools in Africa. One of the most exciting sectors for British exports of excellence now and in future, as I see from being a member of the Board of the Department for International Trade is our education sector, notably for secondary, higher, university and specialist education. Whilst this may have an inevitable tilt towards the private education sector because of the freedom and resources they have to engage in export opportunities, the essential skills of people and professions in teaching, academia, research, financing, organisational management and leadership are universal so offer the chance for all those interested and experienced in these exportable types of expertise the chance to take advantage of this moment, not least on the backs of the impressive experiences recorded in these essays by pioneers and visionaries.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I commend this report and hope that it will serve to inspire other schools to look overseas for opportunities to expand and, in so doing, enable British schools to widen access to the education they provide in the United Kingdom. Every child given the chance of an education at every level is another fellow global citizen enabled to take on their own agency in life to survive, thrive and play an important part in making our World a better, more peaceful, hopeful and just place for all.

*London  
August 2019*

## Introduction

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The value of British education overseas, and of international students coming to the UK, has long been an interest of Wild Search. We first produced a report on the power of education as a British export in 2012. We have since engaged with a range of clients with an interest in this area both in searches and through our reports. We recently hosted various roundtables, dinners and talks on the theme of British education and its international dimension. Our 2018 publication, *World Class Education* (produced in partnership with Keystone Tutors), explores how high net worth families make their education choices when considering the UK as a destination. This publication – our 25th – considers British schools and other education businesses setting up overseas.

*a broad range of contributions from those who have experience founding schools or businesses overseas with great success*

Following stimulating and wide ranging discussions during roundtables at both King & Wood Mallesons and the Centre for Policy Studies with independent school heads, governors, those running education businesses and their

advisers, the Alpha Plus Group invited us to produce a publication focussed on this topic. We were subsequently delighted to welcome the support of AQA and OxfordAQA. This resulting publication includes a broad range of contributions from those who have experience of founding schools or businesses overseas with great success, as well as those setting out on this path. It includes overviews of specific geographies and themes including how to find the right overseas partner; understanding regulations, managing risk and gaining governor support.

Exporting Excellence opens with a selection of case studies of British independent schools setting up overseas. Graham Able discusses the setting up of Dulwich College International, a hugely successful endeavour which now sees over 9000 students benefiting from a Dulwich education across China, South Korea, Myanmar and Singapore. The Alpha Plus Group instead looked West to establish their latest preparatory school in New York and its Chief Executive Mark Hanley Browne emphasises the importance of retaining core values. Philip Cottam explains how the idea of a parent led to Haileybury College opening two schools in Kazakhstan and the evolution of that strategy.

Ian Callender reveals that the greatest challenge in setting up the North London Collegiate School franchise has been finding great teachers aligned with the school's ethos. King's College School's expanding partnerships with education groups in China and Thailand are detailed by its Head Andrew Halls. Reigate Grammar School Head Shaun Fenton explains how the ambition of creating global citizens and a better cultural understanding was part of the goal for his school embarking on international partnerships.

Before embarking on establishing overseas, there are broader issues to consider, which former lawyer Caroline Wood-Robertson discusses in the context of Giggleswick School. Geography is a key consideration for any school looking abroad and the African market and its attractions are examined by Gordon Carver. Whether it could be better to use your brand in a different way should also be thought through. Catherine Whitaker of EtonX and Keystone Tutors' co-founder Will Orr-Ewing discuss the growth of their education businesses overseas, with technology being a significant driver.

One of the main challenges across all these endeavours is ensuring that British education quality and values are carried through into the new context, despite cultural or regulatory differences. Alex McGrath discusses this with reference to the British Council schools. OxfordAQA's Sadie Visick explains why the current British curriculum offers a world class education and how educators should be clear on its benefits.

A first step toward establishing overseas is to get the right team in place to evaluate opportunities and develop relationships. At a much later stage, building an overseas team with strong credentials in British education is likely to present a challenge. At Wild Search, we thrive on filling complicated briefs and working with organisations to inspire individuals to have the vision and motivation to become great leaders and drive progression from idea to action.

This is a critical time for considering what the UK has to offer the world and the education sector has a great deal in this regard. Strong brands, world-leading quality, a legacy of connections and shifting global demographics mean there is huge potential. However, ambitious competitors, the potential for brands to be diluted and the risks of flawed overseas partnerships should not be dismissed.

Developing new schools overseas provides a number of opportunities for the schools in the UK which choose to pursue this course and many of them are set out eloquently by our contributors. Demonstrating the founding school's global outlook, creating opportunities for pupils to work abroad and, as importantly, a chance for teachers to pursue their careers within the wider group of schools are all tangible benefits. Another one is economic. At a time when financial challenges – not least significantly increased costs of the Teachers' Pension Scheme – are on the minds of independent school governing bodies – an additional and recurring source of income from schools abroad can be an attractive proposition. Although not without challenges, some of which are de-tailed and acknowledged in these essays, the rewards for most have outweighed the difficulties and are, in a number of instances, bearing fruit. We hope this publication proves useful for those seeking to undertake the ambitious step of setting up overseas, and that it might inspire future developments.



# The Development of Dulwich International

Graham Able

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When I arrived at Dulwich College as the new Master in January 1997, Dulwich International College had just opened in Phuket under an agreement negotiated by my predecessor, Tony Verity.

Whilst visiting the school, I met Paul Sizeland, an alumnus who was then Deputy Ambassador in the British Embassy in Bangkok. Paul later became the British Consul in Shanghai and invited me to visit and meet a range of potential

*They had a common vision which accorded well with Dulwich traditions*

partners for a Dulwich College in the city. I met ten different groups in twenty-four hours with my wife acting as scribe. The last meeting was with Fraser White and his Chinese business partner, Eric Li. They had a common vision which accorded well with Dulwich traditions and, following a meeting with key Governors back in London, we worked together on an agreement which led to the opening of Dulwich College, Shanghai in 2003. The immediate success of the school and the appreciation that common educational philosophies were shared by both parties produced further negotiations which resulted in a 100 year partnership agreement between what then became Dulwich International and Dulwich College Enterprises (the commercial subsidiary of Dulwich College). The agreement gave Dulwich International the right to develop Dulwich Colleges in various countries subject to quality and geographical controls by the mother school. Our Chairman of Governors at the time, Lord (Robin) Butler, was very supportive throughout, and two governors with good commercial experience, Andrew Seth and Nick Tatman, worked closely with me during the negotiations and thereafter whilst common standards were being established.

*a common ethos reflecting Dulwich traditions was quickly established across the group, and academic standards, which are regularly monitored, are very comparable to those in SE21*

Through several staff and pupil transfers, allied to regular visits by senior staff from London, a common ethos reflecting Dulwich traditions was quickly established across the group, and academic standards, which are regularly monitored, are very comparable to those in Dulwich College London.

The original Dulwich International College in Phuket divorced itself from Dulwich after seven very successful years when the Thai owners wanted to run it in a way which did not reflect our standards and traditions. We therefore withdrew from this agreement, as the contract allowed, and decided only to pursue future international options through our partnership with Dulwich International. The success of this partnership can be seen in the eight international schools (all bearing the Dulwich College name) now operating in China, Korea, Singapore and Myanmar. Additionally, Dulwich International operates two Dulwich High Schools as sixth form entities within Chinese senior schools, thus allowing Chinese students to move to a British curriculum at age 16, and it has recently opened the first of a planned group of DeHong bilingual schools for PRC nationals in China.

*Perhaps the most impressive statistic underlining the reputation established across the group was the nearly 900 students who started at Dulwich College Singapore on the day its doors opened.*

The annual royalties from Dulwich International allow the College in London to fund many additional bursaries, and it is now moving ever closer to the 'needs blind' entrance policy which Dulwich enjoyed under the unique relationship forged by Christopher Gilkes and local authorities just after the Second World War, but

this time without any recourse to public funds.

Dulwich International now educates over 9000 students in its schools and representatives from these took part in celebrations in London during 2019 to mark the 400th anniversary of the College. Alumni of all the Dulwich campuses are now welcomed to Alleyn Club (the College alumni organisation) events worldwide, and the network of those who have benefited from a Dulwich education will thus soon be one of the largest former pupil networks globally. Perhaps the most impressive statistic underlining the reputation established across the group was the nearly 900 students who started at Dulwich College Singapore on the day its doors opened.

The management team of Dulwich International has grown as numbers have increased and the senior members act as a professional governance organisation, but the important contribution from the mother school continues at this level as one Deputy Master is appointed with the sole responsibility to provide Dulwich College (London) input to this process.

Above all, I am delighted that so many students can now enjoy and benefit from a Dulwich education.



*WPNY Founding Head, Kate Bailey, with  
WPNY pupils  
Courtesy of Alpha Plus Group*

# A British School in New York

Mark Hanley-Browne

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In September 2017 the Alpha Plus Group proudly opened our first school outside of the UK: Wetherby-Pembridge, New York (WPNY).

The inspiration for WPNY came from the heritage and ethos of Wetherby School (for boys) and Pembridge Hall School (for girls), both of which are located in Notting Hill, London. Wetherby and Pembridge Hall are two of the finest schools in the Alpha Plus Group and showcase all that is highly desirable, the world over, in British Education.

At the heart of the educational offer at both Wetherby and Pembridge Hall is a commitment to excellence in academic achievement, a very high level of pastoral care, and the provision of an astonishing range of experiences layered in and around the curriculum in sport, music, art and drama. These schools also take great pride in their close relationship with parents, which we believe is a vital ingredient in creating excellent schools.

*At the heart of our offer...a commitment to excellence in academic achievement*

We knew, before taking Wetherby-Pembridge to New York, that there are some long established schools in Manhattan which model the British approach to education. However, none of these schools actually are British – and this was one of the reasons why Alpha Plus Group wanted to rise to this particular challenge. We quickly recruited a Founding (and British) Head from within the Wetherby Group: Kate Bailey, who was the Senior Deputy Head at Wetherby Preparatory School, and together we planned how to transport the best of Wetherby and Pembridge Hall from Notting Hill to the Upper East Side.

*These core values are respect, resilience and responsibility*

Kate was very keen to build Wetherby-Pembridge school on three core values, which are also important values for its sister

schools in London. These core values are respect, resilience and responsibility. Kate's aim was also to take the essence of the creative and varied teaching found at the London schools to create a broad and balanced curriculum which would truly bring out the best in the children.

Kate knew that the curriculum would have to be localised in such a way that the local American children would not be disorientated. After all, it is one thing to for the Brits to pronounce “tomato” differently on this side of the Atlantic, it is another thing to be bombarding the children with unfamiliar words such as “pavement” instead of “sidewalk”, the “tube” instead of the “subway” and to be talking about “terms” instead of “semesters” without offering them at least an explanation for the difference! Kate and Alpha Plus knew that we had taken on a significant challenge, not only educationally but culturally...

One of the unique features of WPNY, which is different from either Wetherby School or Pembridge Hall, is that it combines co-education and single-sex education in the same learning environment. This is a radically new offer in New York and it is also exciting for us because we are breaking new ground. So WPNY aims to capture the best of both single sex and co-ed education by having single sex lessons for some core subjects, such as Mathematics and

*One of the unique features of WPNY...is that it combines co-education and single-sex education in the same learning environment.*

English, sprinkled throughout the timetable, but operating within the immersive environment of a fully co-educational school. We know that, because of their biology, boys and girls learn in different ways. Studies have shown that separating classes by gender can, depending on the circumstances,

improve behaviour, performance and confidence. As educationalists, we wanted to encourage our staff at WPNY to explore these ideas to see how this fresh approach can help the children to learn to the best of their ability. It is still early days but, just over two years into the life of this new school, the response from the children and their parents has been very encouraging.

### **The timeline for creating Wetherby-Pembridge**

Once the location had been identified on the Upper East Side, there was a lot of work to be done in lining up professional support (legal, employment and financial). We also carried out research into the local market, such as looking at the local prices and special educational offers. We then developed a marketing plan, found a very special property, and appointed the Head and her (mainly British) key staff.

The site we found was in an ideal location for learning: just 100 metres from Central Park and right in the heart of the Carnegie Hill neighbourhood of the Upper East Side, not far from the Guggenheim and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The area is known for its historic charm, its cultural institutions and its neighbourhood feel. The building itself dates from 1912, with beautiful marble floors, an oak panelled Hall, and a sweeping staircase up to the first floor (which, we quickly discovered, is known as the second floor in the States!) The lease was taken from April 2016 and building works started a few months later. In 2016-2017 we completed the building project, moved into the recruitment phase and prepared for the school opening in September 2017.

Although the building had previously been used as a school, we completely refurbished it. The building currently provides 15,000 square feet of classroom and teaching spaces, arranged over six floors. The on-site facilities at 7 East 96th Street include a dedicated Art and Design Technology studio, a Science Lab and an expertly curated Library. At the heart of school life is the Founders' Hall, where school assemblies, music performances and educational seminars are hosted. There is a Dining facility on the Lower Ground floor.

*These initiatives allowed us to connect with prospective parents and share our passion for a British education with them.*

While the school was being totally refurbished from August 2016, we leased office space at 641 Lexington Avenue in midtown Manhattan to serve as a base for recruiting the School's Founding Families. Initial Child Play sessions and Parent Interviews took

place there and the office also served the school well for marketing purposes and for building relationships with suppliers and contractors. Initially our marketing and registration was informal, done through word of mouth. But then we started to work with an Admissions specialist from the Horace Mann School, and with a team of consultants, to refine our marketing and advertising approach. These people knew the American market well and helped us navigate the key dates of the American academic calendar, working to NYSED (NY School Education department) and ISAAGNY deadlines (Independent School Admission Association of Greater New York). They also helped us to build a good working relationship with the Parents League of New York (PLONY). We also formed a close relationship with the British American Business Council, The St George's Society, and the American Australian Association. These initiatives allowed us to connect with prospective parents and share our passion for a British education with them.

The first Open House for the School, followed by an article in Wall Street Journal and other publicity, followed on during the Autumn term in 2016. The Wetherby Pembridge website went live, and applications for places could then be completed through the site. One of the highlights of the lead in period was working with the British Consulate General in New York. We were able to hold a Christmas drinks party under the auspices of the then-Consul General Antonia Romeo, who also happened to be an ex Wetherby parent! This provided a great opportunity to meet other local heads, local education consultants and agents, contractors as well as parents.

While the school was being promoted in New York City, back in the London Head Office recruitment began for the Founding Faculty. Kate Bailey recruited mainly from the UK, but she also appointed a few American teachers so that the school could be anchored properly in its home city.

We are two years into the life of this new school and the school is growing fast. However there is still much more to be done. For example, we are very keen to secure a second building nearby in the coming year or so. This is because we want to continue growing the school upwards, at least to age 13 and possibly all the way up to age 18. By acquiring another building, we will be able to open a Nursery 2 (age 2 and upwards) as well as having more space for the children once they reach grade 4. By having both co-educational and single sex lessons, we will need more space than the average school and despite the high cost of doing this, we are keen to create a spacious, open, and engaging environment for our children to live and work in.

*it is vital that we form very good relationships with senior schools...this focus on "exmissions" will be very important in the years ahead.*

As the school grows we will become increasingly focused on where the children will go when they leave us. We will be preparing the children who wish to leave us at grade 8 (while reminding them that we may carry on to age 18) and hence it is vital that we form very good relationships with senior schools, which

we know that the children may wish to attend. This focus on "exmissions" will be very important in the years ahead.

Part of building our relationships with other schools means also maintaining an excellent relationship with the original schools back in London. Mark Snell, Nick Baker, and Henry Keighley-Elstob have all visited WPNY and shared their experiences with the staff, pupils and parents there. The Heads are keen for the children at each of their schools to have a very good relationship with one

*Part of building our relationships with other schools means also maintaining an excellent relationship with the original schools back in London.*

another through pupil exchanges and online lessons. It is no co-incidence that we have already seen a child move from New York to one of our schools in London, due to a relocation, and the same thing has already happened in reverse (a child leaving one of our London schools and going to WPNY). The parents really appreciated the help Kate was able to give when they found that they had to move to the UK.

Additionally, we have now set up a charitable trust which can help with fee assistance (financial aid). This is because, as in the UK, we want as many families as possible to be able to access our Gold Standard of Education whether home or abroad.

### **Lessons learned**

We have learned a lot of valuable lessons from opening a school in New York. Some of these lessons relate to the local market, and others relate to the operational and regulatory environment.

One of the important marketing lessons we learned was the need to explain why this new school in New York would be different from any other school which currently exists in that city. We realised that appointing a British Head who had inside knowledge of Wetherby, very early in the proceedings, would be vital in proving to prospective parents that we would be able to take the best of Wetherby and Pembridge Hall abroad and that they could be confident about our offer. We were very conscious that families had to be willing to enrol in this school without seeing a building or a full faculty. The faith and trust they were willing to put in us, and particularly in the Founding Head, was inspiring, and this has allowed the school to be successful.

The regulatory challenges have been troublesome. We knew that we could not simply take our UK compliant policies and implement them in the US. But this was an onerous task because each policy had to be completely rewritten in order to comply with the US rules.



The property we chose to occupy is also a heritage building, so this requires special care and attention. There were also challenges associated with relocating staff from the UK and finding staff who were willing to “take the plunge” to go to live in New York for a few years, leaving their friends behind. We are truly thankful to all those staff who have relocated for us and helped Kate to create this very special new school.

Kate’s interest in building close links with our neighbours has been very well received. To give some examples: Kate and her staff have taken part in initiatives involving the Carnegie Hill Neighbours, Notable Neighbours (a group of local entrepreneurs who come in to speak in schools), Carnegie Hall, the Central Park Conservancy and the NYC 5 Borough Daffodil initiative, to name but a few. The willingness of the Founding Head to engage with local residents and the community has been very warmly welcomed and has undoubtedly helped to anchor WPNY school in the local neighbourhood.

Following the success of WPNY, Alpha Plus is now actively considering similar ventures elsewhere in the world. So watch this space!

# Haileybury's Adventures in Kazakhstan and Beyond

*Philip Cottam*

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Haileybury began its venture into the international school market partly by accident when a Kazakh parent whose son was in the 6th Form suggested founding a school in his home city of Almaty. After much planning and research Haileybury Almaty opened in September 2008 in a RIBA prizewinning building. When the President of Kazakhstan visited the School in 2010 he expressed a wish to see a sister school established in Astana the new capital of Kazakhstan (now Nur-Sultan). A year later saw the opening of Haileybury Astana. The two schools are 'all through' schools offering a British curriculum with Haileybury Almaty offering IGCSEs and A levels and Haileybury Astana offering IGCSEs and the International Baccalaureate. The pupil profile of both schools is very similar with 70-75 per cent of the pupils being Kazakh and 20-25 per cent from the expat community. Haileybury Almaty is opening a boarding house in the very near future and if it is the success that is anticipated Haileybury Astana is likely to follow suit.

A key principal underlying Haileybury's involvement in establishing international schools is that any project will be not for profit. This has certainly been the case in Kazakhstan. The shareholders who provided the capital to build the schools have not received, and are not expecting to receive, any financial return from their considerable investments. Annual surpluses are automatically reinvested in improvements. Haileybury Astana, for example, has just opened a second and larger sports hall as part of this programme. As a direct result of the influence of Haileybury the shareholders have also established generous scholarship and bursary programmes. In Haileybury Almaty Sixth Form, for example, there are now some 20 scholars on full fee remission. If any of these scholars gain a place in one of the top ten world universities they will also have their degree course fully funded by the shareholders.

*A key principle underlying Haileybury's involvement...is that any project will be not for profit.*

*Underlying this close relationship is a determination to embed the holistic ethos of Haileybury.*

The relationship between Haileybury and the schools in Kazakhstan is unusually close. The Board of Governors of each school includes members of the Council at Haileybury, the Master and the two principal members of the Partnership Office, one of whom chairs the Education

Sub-committee of the Board of Governors of each school. Members of the Partnership Office visit Kazakhstan regularly to provide general advice and support. The principal administrator in the Office spends a significant part of the year in Kazakhstan not only to ensure new staff are looked after through the recruitment and visa application processes and get practical advice as they move to an unfamiliar country but also to provide on-going HR support to all expat staff in post. Members of the academic and support staff also visit the schools in order to provide targeted support.

Underlying this close relationship is a determination to embed the holistic ethos of Haileybury. This is particularly reflected in the encouragement given to the development of ambitious co-curricular programmes.

Running the two schools has not been without its challenges, not least the six-hour time difference, the six-hour flights needed and the minus 30 degrees centigrade winter temperatures in Astana. The first challenge was simply the recruitment of staff given the lack of knowledge about Kazakhstan. This has been overcome partly by time and word of mouth but also by the creation of excellent recruitment material illustrating what a safe and exciting place it is to work, by having a competitive package and by putting much time into looking after staff through the appointment process and when in post.

*Running the two schools has not been without its challenges*

Another challenge was getting the shareholders to accept that there could not be a rigid division - shareholders deal with finance, Haileybury deals with education. This view meant they did not feel they had to attend Boards meetings consistently. Winning this battle improved decision making and meant the shareholders now have a better understanding of the product in which they invested.

There was a similar challenge with some parents who knew they wanted the product without necessarily fully understanding what it meant in practice, not least the importance given to the co-curricular programme. The biggest educational challenge was working out how best to manage the language programme given that the curriculum is taught in English, Kazakh has to be taught by law and the majority of pupils speak Russian as their first language.

Looking to the future Haileybury aims to build a franchise of five to eight schools, including the local academy it already sponsors. It has two principal objectives: to contribute to spreading the benefits of British independent education worldwide and to use the income generated to

*Haileybury is committed to creating a clear group identity by ensuring each school embeds the Haileybury ethos*

widen access to Haileybury itself. The establishment of a school in Malta is already underway and there are on-going negotiations for a school in China. Having established itself as the market leader in Central Asia steps are also already underway to extend beyond Kazakhstan into other parts of the region. Haileybury is committed to creating a clear group identity by ensuring each school embeds the Haileybury ethos as far as the local context will allow and by exploiting the opportunities for shared events as well as staff and pupil exchanges.

Reflecting on the experience of Haileybury there are a number of initial steps that any school thinking of entering the international market should consider carefully. There needs to be clarity as to whether the project is simply a franchising exercise with limited involvement or if it is to be more on the lines of the Haileybury model. This is important as it will affect the kind of investor needed, the governance model and the resources required to carry through the project. An outline plan with clear objectives and an appreciation of the dedicated staffing needed to implement the plan is also necessary.

Careful research to identify a region or country where there is not only a gap in the market but a market that will bear the cost of a school staffed by expat teachers is essential if the project is to have a sound financial base. Finding investors who want to share the same educational vision can be a challenge but is crucial because, without a shared vision, the relationship will not work in the medium let alone the long term. Lastly, if the intention is to build a group of schools, it is important to be prescriptive right from the start about certain aspects of school organisation such as the leadership and pastoral structures (house versus year group), data management and assessment systems - to name but a few.

If this is not done creating the cross-fertilisation and problem sharing that is the mark of a genuine school group will be immeasurably more difficult as will undoing individual decisions made about these and other areas by the founding heads.

Building and developing international schools is not without its challenges. Some are the challenges that attend the founding of any school, some are the result of the particular cultural and geographical context and some arise from the nature of

*some [challenges] are the result of the particular cultural and geographical context*

the relationship with the shareholders involved. That said, Haileybury is clear that it has been, and continues to be, a rewarding and worthwhile undertaking with benefits for the mother school as well as for the pupils of its offspring. Not least of the rewards is the pleasure of seeing pupils secure places in world class universities that previously would have been beyond their reach.

# The North London Collegiate School Experience

Ian Callender

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The North London Collegiate School (NLCS) opened its first franchise school in Jeju, South Korea in 2011, a project that was conceived and led by the late Mrs. Bernice McCabe OBE, who was Headmistress of the School for 20 years until 2016. It was a project that reflected

*a parent or pupil entering one of our schools anywhere in the world would instantly recognise it as an NLCS school*

NLCS' outward looking, pioneering ethos as the first girls' school to set up an internationally. We have since opened a School in Dubai in 2017 and will be opening NLCS Singapore in 2020.

Our objective is that a parent or pupil entering one of our schools anywhere in the world would instantly recognise it as an NLCS School (with appropriate adaptations to local circumstances); this is a goal we are well on the way to achieving. As a result, we have a very hands-on model to ensure that we maintain our educational quality, values and ethos. This involves recruiting teachers, training them in London, and a rigorous inspection process to ensure the school teams develop and embed our ethos. It is an approach that has been well received by parents and partners, who are reassured by the involvement of the London school and its presence on overseas governing bodies. We have also seen how this approach has attracted parents to move between NLCS Schools.

*a huge amount of faith that an untested institution will deliver the same quality of experience as the parent school.*

Parents who are placing their students in a new school are putting a huge amount of faith that an untested institution will deliver the same quality of experience as the parent school. This was certainly true of our experience in Dubai where not only is the expatriate population transient, but families have a tendency to move schools frequently to find the best fit for their children.

Our increasing experience in both Singapore and Dubai is that parents are becoming very sophisticated in the questions they ask about our ability to deliver a quality comparable to the home school, and at fee levels that don't make UK a competitive option. Our track record of delivering excellent IB and university results in Korea, where we have the added complexity of teaching the mostly Korean student body in a second language, has undoubtedly helped demonstrate that our model does work.

Parents and partners also need to be convinced that the approach taken by the school mirrors the British education they admire and desire. In the high-pressure Asian parenting world, there is an arms race to ensure ones child has the perfect CV, whilst the School is concerned about the growth of the whole personality and the resilience needed to succeed at university and life beyond education. Tensions exist with partners who are understandably anxious about the need to fill the School roll, so see the Principal's role as being much more externally focussed selling to parents, whilst the institution needs the Head to be firmly focussed on the quality of education. This is particularly the case in the early years of a new school when it has no public examination results to market and use to reassure potential parents of its quality.

*...need to be convinced that the approach taken by the school mirrors the British education they admire and desire.*

The largest single challenge international schools face is the recruitment of excellent teachers. The key is finding Principals and senior teams who buy into our ethos and approach and who can project the authenticity needed to sell to parents and embed the culture with staff. In Dubai, our founding Principal was a long serving member of the London School, which was a significant boost. The Senior Team need to be able to attract teachers who are similarly attracted by our ethos – passionate about their subjects and committed to the hard work that is required to deliver an ambitious education, excellent pastoral care and breadth of extra-curricular provision. Once we have trained teachers in our approach, we want them to stay with us. As our network grows, we can increasingly offer career opportunities within the Group, and we already seeing staff moving between our schools. Additionally, we can provide experience on inspection visits and working collaboratively across faculty groups both of which are great ways to develop a perspective on ones' own teaching practice.

*The key is finding Principals and senior teams who buy into our ethos*

Government regulation is a challenge when this does not enable one to deliver a specific model of education in the right way. This is particularly true of China given the rules around the teaching of the state curriculum to Chinese nationals. Where schools cannot deliver a full immersion experience due to national regulations, students' proficiency in English needed to compete for top places at top universities can be compromised. Schools need to think carefully about how they therefore market themselves to parents, such that there is clarity of expectations and a differentiation with their purely international curriculum-based models.

Increasingly we are investing in training and consultancy expertise to help partners in places like China to set up their own schools, affiliated to us.

*Getting the finances wrong is a sure way to undermine the long-term success of a partnership*

Finding the right partners is not becoming any easier. The challenge is always to develop a partnership where both partners bring complementary expertise and there is a shared interest in education. Patience and deep pockets are required to sustain a school through the early unprofitable years of its growth, particularly with a premium brand. A rush to build the roll can not only damage educational quality by recruiting students unsuited to the education on offer, but it can undermine the ability of the teaching team to embed the culture and processes needed to sustain results. Schools need to understand the financial pressures on partners just as partners need to recognise the challenges in developing a great school that will survive in the long term. Getting the finances wrong is a sure way to undermine the long-term success of a partnership. Equally, not being able to deliver the British Education that parents expect from top institutions will undermine the credibility of International School brands. Whilst education can bring steady returns on investment, the core purpose is an investment in our children's futures – a public benefit.





# King's College Overseas

Andrew Halls

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## An Overview

King's College School was founded by Royal Charter in 1829 by the then Prime Minister, The Duke of Wellington, and both its historic presence among leading British independent schools and its current reputation for being one of the most forward thinking and successful schools in the UK has led to many approaches from overseas partners. I think they first notice the league table results and see we are one of the very top schools in the country – the first-placed boys' or co-ed school in this year's Sunday Times league table of all public examination results, for example. But then they research the school a little more and see that we have an unusually strong reputation for pastoral care, partnerships with state schools, independent educational thinking, and, of course, working with overseas partners.

*they first notice the league table results and see we are one of the very top schools in the country*

Our first overseas partner was the Chinese educational group, Dipont. We agreed with them in 2015 that we would, over about twenty years, establish ten schools in mainland China. The first two of these are now built and flourishing – one in Hangzhou and the other in Wuxi, and we are currently

looking at proposals for another three.

Since then we have also partnered with XET to open a school in central Bangkok. I have just returned from our first marketing event for a specially invited group of key parents, and it was an enormous success. Of the hundred and twenty families invited, almost every single one registered their child having heard speeches from the new headmaster, himself a former member of the senior leadership team at King's, Wimbledon, the new head of early years, the key figure from the Thai partnership, and myself. The school is in the most sought-after location in the city and it is a reflection of the dedication of our Thai partners that they were able to secure such an incredibly valuable site for a school which, they insist, has to be excellent.

One thing that King's governors have been clear about, and which I fully support, is that we never look at any proposals which involve King's making any form of financial investment.

*we never look at any proposals which involve King's making any form of financial investment*

However attractive the returns may be, we will not do this. We know that in the case of every project, we have the right to walk away if we feel it is no longer reflecting our original terms, or if it became destructive of our name and reputation. However, it is important to be honest. The establishing of overseas schools, and the necessary attention to them thereafter, is very time-consuming. We are fortunate in that so far we have all enjoyed working with our partners, but I can imagine that if this were not the case, it would feel exhausting and debilitating.

It is very helpful to reach a point when your income is assured and you are able to appoint staff to run an overseas school office, and this has certainly made an enormous difference to all of us at King's. That said, there are still many calls on the bursar's and my time, and increasingly that of other colleagues willing to visit the overseas schools as inspectors, for example. I do not think these will ever really diminish, especially as the bursar and I are invariably involved with the Director of Overseas Schools in any new negotiations or major concerns with current projects, so you have to bear this in mind if you intend to develop a group of overseas schools.

*there are still many calls on the bursar's and my time...I do not think these will ever really diminish*

Our reasons for these partnerships are various. Having become friends with all of our partners, we most of all want to ensure the schools that bear our name are successful, and enable children to have a wonderful education, influenced by the values that all of us at King's, Wimbledon, hold dear. These include doing

your very best to fulfil your various talents, being a responsible and creative member of society, being kind and understanding of those in the world around you. Of course, there is a financial motive too. The fees we charge are significant, and they enable us to provide bursaries for boys and girls who attend our school in Wimbledon. In time, we would like to be means blind. For now, we are proud that since we first received an income from our overseas schools, we have dramatically increased the number of pupils joining the school at the age of eleven on 100 per cent bursaries. Nowadays, these are paid entirely by our own benefactors and the overseas income - not as a "tax" on pupil fees.

We also feel that it is important to take a lead as an independent school. Our sector is much criticised within the UK – and yet abroad, the best independent schools are seen as historic, remarkable in the range of successes they help their pupils achieve, outstanding in the way they add academic value, and striking for the opportunities they give each pupil to discover talents in sport, drama, music, debating or whatever else it may be that we can help them develop. I think it is right to share our strengths if we are invited to do so, and maybe, in doing so, encourage people within the UK to see that we have important qualities worth reflecting on. We think that running schools abroad makes us more attractive to future teachers as they realise that they might have

*it is important to  
take a lead as an  
independent school*

an opportunity to teach for, say, three years in Wimbledon, and then perhaps teach in one of our overseas campuses for a few years. That is a very exciting prospect for a lot of teachers.

Finally, our overseas schools help open King's up to the wider world, providing opportunities for student exchanges, too. In a world that seems to be desperately hurtling towards isolationism, heads down behind tariff barriers or recently resurrected tribal prejudice, this seems more necessary than ever.

Every international scheme seems very different so perhaps it would be most helpful if I went into a little more detail under a few headings.

### **King's in China**

Dipont stood out for its innovative, imaginative and bold approach. At its core, this had a desire to bring together the very best of Eastern and Western education. To achieve this ambition Dipont brought together a local authority who built the school, a famous Chinese school, and King's. I don't know any other school involved in anything remotely like this four-way partnership for its schools.

But in another way, these schools are imaginative too. They are quite clearly designed to look outwards, and to be international in character. Not only is King's a key influencer, but every child, from their very first day, is taught both in English and Chinese. The curriculum is balanced, with a real focus on a holistic education. For instance, there are around 100 different co-curricular activities on offer, and the pastoral care is central to the educational philosophy; each school has adopted our house system – even down to the names.

The emphasis is on developing a love of learning, an inquisitive mindset and stimulating teaching. Students will take GCSEs in year 11, and then A levels. In all of these ways the schools are different, exciting and brave.

That this is a genuinely bold approach is evidenced by the fact it has already attracted parents in huge numbers – Nanwai King’s College School, Wuxi, and RDFZ King’s College School, Hangzhou,

*the emphasis is on developing a love of learning*

received around 3,000 applications each, and when both schools opened in September 2018, we had around 800 pupils in each school. Parental interest has remained very strong, and Nanwai King’s and RDFZ King’s will have around 1,400 pupils in their respective schools from the next academic year.

Our students at King’s seem to be genuinely interested in finding out more about our partnership schools overseas, and we are seeing the first collaborative projects take shape: students in one house produced a video for their counterparts in the same house in Wuxi and Hangzhou, Chinese students have contributed articles to our student-led magazines, our alumni have new gap year opportunities and from next year, a student exchange and a teacher visits programme will commence.

### **Beyond China**

In 2018 we signed an agreement with Thai based company Excellent Education Thailand (XET) to establish King’s College International School in Bangkok. We were attracted by XET’s desire to replicate King’s as closely as possible to provide outstanding education both to local Thai and expat families. The model is different from the one in China, as we are the sole school involved in this project - this is a more traditional arrangement and of course places more responsibility on King’s.

### **Looking ahead**

Increasing numbers of partners now approach us for help with setting up a school abroad. It is exciting, but we have established King’s College School, Wimbledon, International, to help us manage the current projects and ensure we fully debate any other plans not only among ourselves within the school management team, but with senior governors, before any future plans are put to the whole Board.

# It Takes A Global Village...

Shaun Fenton

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If it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes a global village to educate a global citizen.

*our teachers can learn  
with and from teachers  
around the planet*

At Reigate Grammar School (RGS) we think this starts with a network of international schools. It offers RGS UK students, their parents and our alumni new opportunities to network, develop relationships and form

friendships that cross continents and which would never previously have been formed. Students and teachers are able to enjoy placements and secondments overseas, we can have a much more authentic partnership visits programme. Our teachers can learn with and from teachers around the planet to develop a new paradigm of world class education.

Children educated in our UK and international partnership schools will benefit. In our international partnership schools, such as RGS Nanjing in China, the schools will reflect and respect the cultural and political environment of the host country and their added value proposition is to prepare young people to have the skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding to undertake degree level study in America, UK, Canada or Australia. These young Chinese adults will need to have open and enquiring minds, be globally aware and have a sophisticated outlook. I believe that such qualities of character will benefit the young people, the countries where they take their degree and also their homeland when they return from their studies ready to take on 21st century leadership roles.

I can only believe that creating, for example, Anglo-Sino links between young people and school communities will promote empathy, understanding, tolerance and friendship and that must be better than the alternatives. Our

*our world benefits  
from cross-cultural  
collaboration*

world benefits from cross-cultural collaboration, whilst different countries do have different curriculum content. Some of that difference presents challenges to UK schools working in collaboration. However, when we look back over the 20th century we see world wars, local conflict and fears of nuclear holocaust. Education and international collaboration are important if we are going to learn the lessons of history.

Brexit means that for UK pupils and schools it is more important than ever that we understand our interdependent, international context. In fact, I urge the Government to increase the emphasis on preparing today's children to be global citizens through curriculum design and areas of school inspection, for example. Currently, it is simply not given enough time and emphasis.

*I urge the Government to increase the emphasis on preparing today's children to be global citizens*

In terms of professional development for teachers, I have already seen the benefits. It is great to provide opportunities to teachers to travel overseas, to engage with professionals working in different contexts and to learn from the strengths and problems of other territories and school systems. In the UK,

we will, I believe, attract more people to the teaching profession if we offer those new teachers the chance of international posting as part of a planned career programme. Having said that, I do believe that UK schools opening international partnership schools with some UK teachers do face an obligation to help train and retain more teachers in the profession. This is a problem that is getting bigger as more and more international schools open. We all need to help.

Should we avoid educational partnerships involving countries where there are controversies about human rights and political freedoms? I totally appreciate the difficult issues here and it is a controversy that challenges the governing body at my school significantly. On balance, I believe that more good will come from talking than from silence, from engagement than from isolation, from education than from ignorance. For that reason, I am more than willing to see education as a bridgehead. Crucially, we also have to be wary of cultural imperialism – it is just possible that we do not have the best of every possible value and principle operating perfectly here in the UK! We should not be afraid of being proud of our values and cultural heritage, but neither should we underestimate how much we can learn by working with others around the globe.

I have focused upon the educational and cultural benefits but there are clearly hard-nosed financial benefits from having a successful international partnership. When it goes well then the income stream returning to the UK can and will make a huge difference to the bursary programmes. The traditional model of establishing an endowment fund to provide bursaries may be harder than ever to replicate from a standing start. I think that major bursary programmes in this century are likely to be funded from business plans with sustainable income. It seems entirely appropriate that a school should utilise its expertise and intellectual property to develop an aligned business where the proceeds will create life changing bursary opportunities for children from less advantaged backgrounds. This is a good way to help independent schools be more effective engines of social mobility. This is a modern answer to an old question.

Over the last few years I have learned to move from caution to optimism and to embrace the opportunities that internationalisation could offer to young people and the school where I am headmaster, Reigate Grammar School. I have been to a growing number of countries: from being part of a DIT Trade Mission to Saudi Arabia to attending a meeting about Sixth Form colleges in India, discussing opportunities in South America and looking closely at the Middle East, China, North Africa, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The first RGS international school opens in China September 2019.

I am delighted to work in the independent sector at a time when internationalisation has truly come to the fore. There are dangers and risks, obviously, but the potential rewards are far more than financial as we educate future leaders to make the world a better place.



# Giggleswick School: Steering a Course Overseas

Caroline Wood-Robertson

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The journey for Giggleswick school, a 500-year old co-educational independent boarding school located in the Yorkshire Dales, started nearly two years ago with a decision by the governing body to endorse an international strategy. A dedicated team was set up to focus on international development and here I share some thoughts on our journey to-date. The team has experienced a learning curve but, with a robust plan, dedicated resources and experienced advisors the course has been far easier to navigate, placing the school in a strong position to move forward.

The potential benefits, both educationally and financially, of setting up overseas are undeniable. Being able to create a wider educational community as well as strengthening the business model make internationalisation an appealing venture for many independent schools. Some schools make the path look effortless whilst the journey for others serves to highlight the possible pitfalls and risks. It is clear that there is no one-size fits all approach, and each school steers its own course to find a partnership and a project which works for them.

*the decision to commit to internationalisation demands a careful analysis of the risks and rewards.*

Governor backing is essential for any overseas development, and the decision to commit to internationalisation demands a careful analysis of the risks and rewards. Understanding the school's motivations help crystallise the criteria for a potential partnership, providing a clear plan of what constitutes success.

Clearly, every school and every partnership is different. It is crucial to build up a strong internal team with direct access to Governors and support this team with an experienced, collaborative network of advisors, who can provide invaluable guidance to help navigate the way. Depending on territory, there will be cultural sensitivities and business etiquette to understand. Having eyes and ears on the ground is essential for seeking out and exploring potential opportunities. But the road to overseas set-up involves more than just finding a partner, and there is much preparatory work to undertake. To be truly ready for action, legal and intellectual property (especially trademark) issues are best considered early on. Whilst some of this evolves around formulation of a partnership and project, there are clear benefits to a well thought-out, considered route.

Then there's the partner search itself. With new international schools opening on a regular basis, and stories of schools receiving daily emails with international propositions, you'd be forgiven for thinking this is the easy stage. For some it can be: well-positioned alumni or strong connections with an international sponsor can be a great foundation for an international project. But it's evident that others have to kiss a few frogs before they find their prince.

*the focus needs to be on finding the right project - not just any project - for the school.*

The process presents numerous challenges, and can be frustrating at times, but the focus needs to be on finding the right project – not just any project – for the school. It's a balance of educational and commercial objectives, remaining true to the initial motivations.

Ultimately, it comes down to the relationship between the school and the partner, and whether it has synergy.

It sounds obvious but ensuring clear, direct communication channels with prospective partners can really help maintain an efficient process, and one which allows relationships to develop. Being clear about what is required by the school, asking for information at an early stage, and sticking to a defined timeline all help maintain momentum and reduce time spent on projects which aren't going anywhere.

And what about the cost of it all? One challenge, especially pertinent for charities, is to keep down the costs of international strategy implementation. Whilst ideally execution of the strategy remains cost neutral, there are inevitable costs at the early stages if only from a resourcing perspective. Face-to-face meetings are needed to show commitment and strengthen relationships but a degree of early due diligence before hopping on a plane justifies the expense and minimises wasted costs.

Markets are changing so it is increasingly important to maintain a flexible outlook without prejudicing core values and objectives. This may involve adapting proposals and thinking creatively rather than following a previously well-trodden path but hopefully it will secure an outcome that suits the school.

Whilst the road to overseas development can present challenges, the journey itself helps clarify the motivations and criteria for success. Ultimately, the extensive benefits for students, teachers, and the wider educational community make any commitment to international set-up, an exciting and fruitful one.



*Nairobi School  
Courtesy of Gordon Carver*

# *The Case for British International Schools in Africa*

*Gordon Carver*

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I frequently speak to UK international schools and education investors who are eager to expand abroad, but who often do not consider Africa at all. China, Malaysia, Dubai - these are all much more obvious places, where competitors have gone before. Why take the risk of being fleeced

*UK international school and education investors who...often do not consider Africa at all.*

by untrustworthy local partners? Isn't the market too immature? How do we know if any contracts will be enforceable? How would we find sufficient teaching talent? Surely, my investment returns will be reached more rapidly somewhere else? These are some of the common perceived risks that are cited to me, and I do not pretend they are not significant. In some cases those risks are indeed currently more acute in the African context than elsewhere. These risks are, however, commonplace in almost any jurisdiction one could choose for expansion, and I hope in this short article first to make the case why certain African markets should at least make your shortlist for consideration, and second to outline some key strategies to help frame your market entry.

First, why Africa? The basic reasons usually trucked out are the demographic ones: almost all African countries have massively young populations (typically 40-50 per cent of the population is age 18 or below) and population size is growing yearly (typically annual population growth is 3-5 per cent).

*the rise of a middle class with...a hunger for private schools.*

All of this means large and growing demand by children who need schools, in an already undersupplied market. Of course, the other important trends to consider are rapid urbanisation, and the rise of a middle class

with more disposable income and a hunger for private schools. These positive trends need to be tempered with some reality checks though: urbanisation is happening in generally unplanned spurts where population shifts are outstripping city infrastructure capacity, leading to large residential slums and gridlocked roads. "Middle Class" by World Bank standards means earning in the USD \$8-\$15 dollar per day, which will not reach the affordability test for most British International schools seeking to charge student tuition fees of \$10,000+ annually.

This presents a different kind of opportunity: the addressable market in any individual African country may be smaller than a comparator Asian destination, but the point is that it will continue growing over the next two decades, and that international boarding schools can have a regional catchment area of more than the single country in which a school is located.

*the strong appetite  
for British curriculum  
amongst African parents*

More appealing than these macroeconomic drivers are the other key factors: the African diaspora, the strong appetite for British curriculum amongst African parents, and the bias towards the English language that

most Sub-Saharan African nations have, many of whom also belong to the Commonwealth. Parents from the socio-economic segments which consider international private schooling very often have live links to the UK, be they through other relatives, business interests, or from their own prior UK higher education experience. They understand and appreciate British culture and the quality of our school system, and as the African diaspora moves in ever greater numbers back to Nairobi, Lagos, and Accra, those same parents are keen for their children to experience high quality education at home. Moreover, like many parents globally, they are seeking post-16 qualifications for their children to get into a reputable UK or American university, and the curriculum of choice to achieve that tends to be a British curriculum (with the International Baccalaureate becoming gradually more popular, often offered in parallel to the mainstream British curriculum).

So, let us assume temporarily that I have convinced you to consider opening your international school in an African country. What steps should you take, and what strategies should you contemplate to maximise your returns? As someone who has led the establishment of a non-profit organisation in Ghana, a low-cost school chain in Tanzania, and a schools lending business in Kenya, there are a few basic tips I can pass on to help minimise any false starts:

1. Assemble an Advisory Board: this means having at least three to four local senior professionals across a range of industries and the public sector (who are living in-country currently) on whom the incoming British investor school can lean for wisdom and advice, particularly

*local senior  
professionals...on whom  
the incoming British  
investor school can lean  
for wisdom and advice*

in the early stages of investment activity when word-of-mouth referrals and initial introductions need to be brokered with a range of stakeholders. The Advisory Board will be able to short-circuit discussions around

regulations, incumbent competitors, sensible campus locations, supplier reliability and realistic pricings, and crucially provide recommendations for early in-country first hires. Many incoming foreign companies create such Advisory Boards either informally or formally, although my preference is for the latter, in which case the local professionals will expect to be paid as consultants on retainer, which is a perfectly legitimate and legal business practice for the first year or two if a contract is mutually agreed and in place.

2. Consider 'second-tier' cities as strategic internal growth hubs: it will be natural to consider the capital city of your chosen country as the first location for your new school, and in some cases for a flagship school this will make perfect sense or be non-negotiable. However, if a greenfield school site is going to be constructed anyway and the school model includes boarding facilities, it is worth looking at 'second-tier' cities away from the capital, as land will be much cheaper and more plentiful, there may be specific federal or local government tax breaks to encourage social infrastructure investment, and those cities themselves will be very unlikely to have any existing competition. The internal growth rates of certain cities (e.g. Kumasi in Ghana, or Mwanza in Tanzania, both of which have populations exceeding 1m people already) are staggering, and they will continue that exponential growth over the next decade, in a virtuous circle of industrial diversification, cheap construction development and labour, and continued strategic importance for the government. Occupying the first mover advantage as a major international school in these kinds of cities may prove to have a long-term advantage as new locally driven catchment dynamics are created over time.  
*it is worth looking at 'second-tier' cities away from the capital*
3. Undertake due diligence on your lawyers rigorously, pay them well, and then optimise the relationship in all directions: the selection of and subsequent relationship with your lawyers is absolutely critical, and you will need at least two types of lawyers. First, the fully established top-tier local law firm, which will most likely have links to your UK law firm and will probably have its own footprint or affiliate partnerships across multiple African markets. They will be expensive and you will need to ensure that you have access to a senior Partner there, but consider them as a form of upfront insurance. They are particularly helpful as an intermediary to guide you on the most expeditious way to get permits, visas, school registrations and the like.

The best lawyers will be commercially savvy as well and are likely to want to refer several of their own family's children to occupy the waiting list of your international school! Consider this top-tier law firm as a trusted adviser on big-ticket strategic areas such as an incorporation or the structuring of a JV partnership (particularly when sticky patches occur). In addition, also have a city-specific local lawyer (often a sole trader, recommended by your Advisory Board or one of your in-country senior management) who can much more cost-effectively do transactional tasks (e.g. submit immigration forms) and will have a vital local network. A final tip: your lawyers can and should drive the early-stage process of setting up a local company or notarising Director forms, but always build in more time than you think you will need for incorporation documents to be produced, and to get working banking facilities up and running. The bureaucratic jungle is unfortunately dense and things take much longer than you would expect in the UK.

4. Teaching talent will need to be sourced early, from diverse sources, and nurtured internally for the long term: it is true that finding top quality teachers familiar with international school operations in Africa can sometimes be difficult, and where British or American nationals are imported in, they command a significant cost. There is no point in trying to evade this foreign import necessity completely, but the educational and commercial models of the new school will need to be designed in tandem with this talent shortage in mind from the outset. There are many international schools which adopt a one third mixed teaching staff model: one third of teachers are Western nationals, one third are sub-continental Asian nationals (often fourth or fifth generation in-country), and one third are local African teaching staff (which sometimes quite accurately reflects the constituency parts of the school's student population too). This  $\frac{1}{3}$  model can work well from the perspective of managing overall labour costs as an employer but needs careful thought in terms of managing the school's culture and the preferences of the local paying parents. Like all good employers planning for the long term, the best solution is to recruit young, coachable, new local teaching talent and invest in a rigorous in-house professional development scheme. Ensure you create a working environment where teachers have a clear career pathway and are remunerated competitively, and retention will remain high.

*There are many international schools which adopt a one third mixed teaching staff model*

5. These are, of course, but a few of the items to consider for your market entry strategy, but I hope give you a sense that the obstacles to what may initially seem like a scary investment environment can be overcome. I hope more British schools will start actively considering Africa as an expansion destination. Do not underestimate what a flight to quality can mean in a market which is not only undersupplied but often is lacking any genuine homegrown UK school operators of quality. There is a real demand in Africa, with a specific pro-British bias, waiting to be met, particularly by school operators willing to take a long view (which means committing to 20 years or more).





## Eton's Radically Different Route

Catherine Whitaker

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Eton College, in common with many British boarding schools, has grappled with the question of how to expand its reach and grow income to broaden its bursary programme. Having decided some years ago that the route taken by many other schools of setting up overseas campuses was not for them, senior leadership at Eton settled on a radically different route: using technology, not only to export its education but to investigate new ways of teaching and learning.

EtonX was established in 2015 and is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the College. We are a London-based education technology company which brings to Eton the kind of skills you would not usually find in a busy boarding school: software and content development, digital marketing, and start up business acumen.

*Is it possible to distil the ethos of a school into a programme to be delivered partly or wholly online?*

In setting up and supporting EtonX, the College asked two key questions. Is it possible to distil the ethos of a school into a programme to be delivered partly or wholly online? How can we ensure that the programme has a distinctly Eton feel?

These questions prompted extensive discussions about what makes an Eton education special. Simon Henderson, Eton's Headmaster, believes that Etonians learn as much outside class as they do within it and they learn as much from each other as they do from the teaching staff. The boys have ample opportunities to develop leadership skills through the hundreds of clubs and societies that they run themselves and through the house system. It is this ability to support the development of soft skills which is key and on which EtonX has focused. At Eton, the Centre for Innovation and Research in Learning (CIRL) has looked extensively at this area so it was with staff based at CIRL that EtonX developed its Modern Leadership Programme in 2015.

We cut our teeth in China between 2015 and 2017, working mostly with private bilingual high schools in a blended learning model. During this first phase, we learnt a lot about the needs of aspirational Asian students and how the Eton 'brand' was perceived in the region. We developed ways of working closely with Eton at every stage of a course's development from initial concept to syllabus development, materials writing, approval and piloting.

In the process we learnt what makes good content for soft skills development and assessment.

We also learnt a lot about the regulatory challenges of operating in China. When we wanted to make a step change and move the programme completely online and make it available globally, we realised that the size of the business could not support these major developments and continue to run the Chinese business. We therefore paused our involvement in China in summer 2017 and refocussed the business to be able to deliver both revenues and pedagogic innovation for the future benefit of Eton itself.

*'...designed to ensure meaningful communication between students with an emphasis on active learning.'*

In September 2018, our Future Skills Programme was launched. This is a series of short 100 per cent online 21st century skills courses delivered in a virtual classroom we have developed ourselves. Courses cover skills such as Critical Thinking, Entrepreneurship, Verbal Communication and Public Speaking. Our virtual classroom is built on the latest video streaming technology and is designed to ensure meaningful communication between students with the emphasis on active learning. Through close consultation with Eton and its safeguarding advisers, we have created safety features which are missing in most live online learning environments.

EtonX is now working with education institutions of many kinds including international and private schools, training centres, pathway and English language providers. Students from 30 different countries have taken our courses and 53 per cent of these are female.

The Future Skills Programme has a distinctly Eton feel and I believe that all the students we serve are experiencing some of what makes Eton special. The maximum number of students in each cohort is eight which mirrors the small groups of the Eton tutorial system. There is an emphasis on peer learning. Each course has an Eton Course Director who introduces and concludes each unit through videos recorded at Eton. Individual courses have particular Eton inputs. The Entrepreneurship course syllabus, for example, was developed with boys from the Eton's Entrepreneurship society and we have filmed mock interviews with Eton boys for our Interview Skills course.

EtonX has now come full circle and are sharing our learning about online pedagogy with Eton. This year we contributed to the character education project undertaken by CIRL thanks to our experience with students worldwide. For Eton's UK Outreach programme, we are offering free access to our courses for partner schools. We are now in discussions with other education providers who want to use our software in a 'white label' version.

Eton may be one of the oldest schools in England, known for its traditions but its export strategy is cutting edge and full of potential for future development and partnerships.

# Keystone Tutors - Our Experience in Asia

*Will Orr-Ewing*

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## Background

Keystone was founded in 2007 and has established itself as one of the leading private tutoring and advisory organisations in the UK. We advise families on choosing UK schools and universities, and then give them the academic preparation needed to enter these institutions successfully.

We have always had an international clientele and set up our first overseas office in 2012. We did so to capitalise on the enormous appetite for high-quality UK education in Asia; at the same time, we also wanted to provide our tutors (most of whom tutor full-time) with students to teach in the morning, which is after school in Asian time zones.

We signed a Joint Venture (JV) with a leading learning centre in Hong Kong in 2012, and one of our founders lived in HK for six months to give this partnership the most chance of succeeding. We came out of this JV in 2018 – more on this below – and now have our own office in HK. In 2017, we set up our own office in Singapore. At the point of writing we are in the process of setting up an office in Shenzhen.

## What we have learned

Here are a few reflections of what we have learned from our work in Asia in the last seven years:

- **Partners and partners.** JVs are not to be entered lightly. We enjoyed a mostly positive and always instructive relationship with our partners but, once I had returned to the UK, the weekly calls (often scuppered by scheduling conflicts, poor reception etc.) were not enough to bind together a collective vision. However, we do not regret the JV in the slightest: it forced us to commit to the internationalisation of our work properly, turbo-charged our progress and helped us to get a foothold in a country that would have taken much longer to establish on our own without very regular travel. Relatedly, we would not be where we are now in HK, China or Singapore without the help of partners with a

*once I had returned to the UK, the weekly calls...were not enough to bind together a collective vision.*

small 'p'. By this I mean a network of informal partners – some supportive families, some school leaders, an outstanding education consultant & school fair organiser and many others – who have helped us establish our international offices. These relationships still need a lot of work to keep them on an even keel (and are just as vulnerable to a miscommunication in a text message sent in the middle of the night!) but are generally much easier to manage and less binding than the full alignment required by a JV. Schools growing overseas could fruitfully spend the first few years seeking such people out and winning them over to the cause.

- **Signal vs. noise.** It is no doubt a feature of entering any new market, but seems a special feature of Asia, that you will encounter many gatekeepers purporting to unlock the secrets of the local mind-set for you: “all Asian families care only about results”; “until you have drunk baijiu with your partner, you’re not partners” etc. However, we have generally prospered when we have trusted our own instincts, offering families the same service we offer to our UK-based families, without bending our work to fit some new supposedly “Asian” mould.

*in Shanghai it is not uncommon for parents to request meetings with their under-11s at 9.30pm*

- **Contagious seriousness about education.**

These days it is hard to think of any parent in the UK taking a whimsical attitude to their children’s education. And yet the lengths that some Asian families go to for their children is remarkable – humbling, intimidating and, for educators, exciting. When I am in Shanghai it is not uncommon for parents to request meetings with their under-11s at 9:30pm. In Shenzhen, I met a 16 year old boy for tea in a mall at 10:30pm who had found our services himself, and who wanted to talk about his interest in 17th century history and his hopes of studying it at Oxford. A mother from Hong Kong rented a house in the high street of a famous UK boarding school so that she could arrange tutoring for her son whilst his housemaster thought he was on the rugby pitches! What does this mean for those who want to set up in Asia? From our experience, this seriousness of purpose can translate into a temptation to flock to providers who are ‘the proven best’ – in other words those who come high in the league tables. However, we see this attitude as a commitment to seek high quality and have been encouraged by families’ ability to see quality as more than that which can be measured. Local educational provision can be surprisingly low quality when compared with the expectations of its consumers, and British educators should take heart that a quality operation will win parents through the usual mechanisms of word-of-mouth and other recommendations.

- **Impact on the UK operation.** This educational seriousness ripples back to our work in the UK. It is tempting to see an overseas presence as a shortcut to revenue growth in an uncertain domestic market. The expectations of Asian parents, though, has had an extremely salutary and clarifying impact on the way we do things in the UK. With only a few exceptions, we have found our Asian clients to be razor sharp, extremely savvy and unapologetic about what they are looking for for their children. They do not put up with euphemisms or vagueness. We have therefore come to believe that if we can satisfy their needs, we can satisfy any family's needs – it has undoubtedly helped us raise the bar of our teaching and general service in our UK headquarters.
- **Global team.** I know that many schools will look to keep their UK and international school teams completely separate. However, for those who are looking to have some shared teams, we would recommend that the communication and culture in these teams be given careful up-front thought. We have found it beneficial to have 'culture-carriers' from our UK team to get our offices in Singapore and HK off the ground and to make sure that there is harmony between the outposts and the mothership. When people leave, as they invariably do in expat-dominated locales, we try to ensure that the handover process is protracted over a number of months to ensure that families and colleagues feel a continuity of service. One head of a Shanghai company with offices in London shared his frustration that his UK team can never appreciate the expectations of his Chinese clients – which struck us as a failure of culture-building. It is too easy to have bad faith for colleagues who you don't see on a regular basis and who just give you more work, so ensuring a healthy flow of communication (informally as much as formally – the harmonious power of a funny GIF posted on Slack is hard to underestimate!) and opportunities for team discussions via regular meetings is paramount.

*'culture-carriers' from our UK team to get our offices in Singapore and HK off the ground*

# New Wine in Old Wineskins? – The Problem of Authenticity When Taking Your Brand Overseas

Alex McGrath

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In the parable of the wineskins we are advised that new wine – still with fermentation to be completed – should not be poured into old, rigid wineskins. The old skins cannot contain the new, and will split, so that both skins and the contents will be lost.

In our zeal to provide authentic UK education, and often with schools whose values and particular vintage have been laid down over many centuries, we run the risk of seeking to

*a challenge of fitting in with these structures while remaining true to ourselves.*

pour ourselves into rigid structures abroad – and not least where government regulation is concerned. So we find that “British Values” – or those of our schools – face obstacles and challenges within other regulatory environments.

China – the largest foreign market; and the Middle East – the second largest; each have rigid systems which must be adhered to and/or navigated. We cannot control the education of Chinese children between the ages of 6 and 15. We must teach Arabic and Islamic Studies in Muslim countries from the UAE to Saudi; and from Qatar to Malaysia. Parental expectations surrounding cramming and competition in much of Asia are different to those of Berkshire or Bucks. We all face a challenge of fitting in with these structures while

*a mission of culture relations and mutual understanding...*

remaining true to ourselves. I think remaining true to our principles as educators is the key to future success at a time when there may be a temptation to focus on the business imperatives of founding overseas campuses.

It may be helpful to look at a specific example of “out of the box” thinking as we seek a way ahead. The British Council School, Madrid opened some eighty years ago now in the aftermath of a bitter Spanish Civil War. At a time when Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany were a threat, Franco’s new regime in Spain was hardly conducive to British values, but with a mission of cultural relations and mutual understanding the British Council was able to establish a school – the first with a UK curriculum in Spain (there are now over 120). Serving overwhelmingly Spanish students and sticking to the principles of the British Council to develop young people as role models for multi-cultural citizenship, the British Council School Madrid became one of the highest achieving schools in Spain.



*...we did what the British Council does: met people in their own context and sought to understand.*

It opened markets for other UK school operators; generated significant business for education publishers, examination boards, and suppliers. The network of families engaging with our school provided access for the UK across the highest levels of Spanish society. Sometimes organically,

and sometimes accidentally, but also through relentless hard work and focus we did what the British Council does: met people in their own context and sought to understand. In so doing we were able to understand the imperatives of the Spanish Government, whose curriculum was rigid, and meant access to university entrance overseas for Spanish students was difficult. We worked with the government on the Spanish university entrance examination to produce the iBac – a qualification allowing integration of Spanish qualifications and A-levels which was later rolled out across bilingual schools in Spain. This increased the opportunity for Spanish students to learn in UK curriculum schools, and so for them to join a global society and economy through opportunities to study abroad. Far from doing our own thing or rejecting our principles to comply with the rigid Spanish structure, we used the tension to bring about a creative solution, benefiting the entire market. We did not give up on our authenticity but used it to bring about positive change and development.

*we used tension to bring about a creative solution, benefiting the entire market.*

Authenticity takes hard work, self-reflection, practice, revision, feedback, clarity...and above all leadership. Be authentic educators! Be clear to your stakeholders about who you are, and lead!

One of the things which I have observed unites all educators in all countries is the children whom we educate. In the current expanding and developing market we are all facing bilingualism as a challenge for pupils and teachers. We should, surely, be ensuring the highest standards – not forcing our methods into regulations, but participating in an evolution of international education, and leading the debate by placing our values at the forefront of what we do while meeting the children, teachers, and parents we serve in their context. It does not matter which country we are operating in, or which country our students hail from. These are our students. Our children. They represent a new crop. Perhaps both old wine and old wineskins should be set aside?

# Can the British Curriculum Still Punch its Weight?

Sadie Visick

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A colleague on a recent visit to a third tier city in China asked a 12-year-old boy what he knew about the UK.

“Order!” the child bellowed confidently, followed by a decisive “Unlock!”

For the past year I have been hearing concerns in my own organisation, schools and government agencies that British curriculum education is in danger of losing ground. One of the drivers cited is reputational damage as a result of Brexit, with associated concerns about insularity and a poor impression of the UK parliamentary process.

Meanwhile, the latest QS university rankings show that the majority of universities from the US and the UK have fallen in rank this year. The global trend of a ‘pivot to the East’ is apparent here, with Asian Universities continuing to rise through the rankings: Nanyang and NUS in Singapore are joint 11th and four of Hong Kong’s universities are in the top 100.

*the majority of universities from the US and the UK have fallen in rank [QS ratings] this year.*

Taken on face value, it could seem that after years of positive growth, things are starting to slide inexorably in the wrong direction for British curriculum schools overseas. However, I would argue that the real drivers for this sense of eroding influence are a failure to capitalise on the UK qualifications reform programme, coupled with aggressive marketing by competing curricula.

## **Thank you, Mr President**

I’ll go on in a moment to talk about how we should reassert the strength and benefits of the British curriculum. However, first let’s take a quick look at another geo-political shift, this time one linked to the current trade policies of the US administration. Every school principal and academic head we have spoken to in China in over the past couple of months has said that the increasing tensions in Sino-US relations mean that they are experiencing a spike in interest in UK qualifications and universities.

There are also reports that the Ministry of Education in China has warned that students studying US qualifications like AP may not get their final certificate or be permitted to complete their studies.

As a sector, we should be pushing hard while this door remains open.

### **The trick we've been missing**

About 18 months ago, I was sitting in the office of the Jordanian Education Minister, Dr Omar Razzaz. The meeting was originally planned as an opportunity to introduce him to OxfordAQA, as we had recently been accredited to offer International GCSEs and A-levels in Jordan. It turned out we had a much bigger task – to explain the UK exam reform programme, the rationale for the introduction of the 9-1 grading system, and why all this was a positive development for Jordanian students. And it struck me that as a country and a sector, we have a job to do.

We need to explain to our international stakeholders – including parents – that there is a new generation of British curriculum qualifications that offers students an unparalleled opportunity to develop the knowledge and 21st century skills they need to progress to higher education or employment. And we need to make it clear what differentiates this new, improved British curriculum from the IB or American programmes.

*an unparalleled opportunity to develop the knowledge and 21st century skills they need to progress to higher education or employment.*

### **Here's my version:**

- The reformed qualifications GCSEs in England have been reformed to keep pace with the needs of universities and employers and benchmarked to international standards. They are based on new and more demanding subject content; have different and more rigorous assessment structures, and a new grading scale. The new 9-1 scale has more higher grades compared to the old A\* to G scale, so it distinguishes better between students at the higher end of the ability range.

*The new 9-1 scale... distinguishes better between students at the higher end of the ability range.*

The new qualifications help students develop more advanced, higher order skills and equip them better to progress and meet the demands of university study. It is no longer enough just to regurgitate information – students really need to understand what they have learned, so they can apply it in unfamiliar contexts and solve problems. British curriculum international qualifications that have been developed since 2015 and are benchmarked to the reformed qualifications are comparable to these new ‘gold standard’ UK qualifications.

- The British curriculum provides an opportunity for students to specialise comparatively early and concentrate on the subjects that interest them the most. This helps students focus on their strengths and the subjects they will continue with at the next stage of their education, which can be a powerful motivator. Early specialisation can also make progression to the next stage easier, as the more focused curriculum allows for greater depth of study.
- Progression. British qualifications are great preparation for progression - and not just to the obvious next stage of the British curriculum or UK universities. For example, GCSEs are excellent preparation for the IB Diploma, and GCSEs and A-levels are recognised by universities all over the world.

We need to go out and sell this vision of world class education - or your own version of it - and we need to actively promote the British curriculum over those that are outdated, do not enable great teaching and learning, and do not equip students to progress and fulfil their potential.

Parents all over the world want their children to experience a British-style education, in schools offering the British curriculum and British qualifications – but we need to keep reminding them why this is the best choice they could make.

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- (2) Cadell, C. 2019 China Moves to Suspend Some History Tests for US College Credit by 2020, Reuters, accessed 31/07/2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-education-exams/china-moves-to-suspend-some-history-tests-for-us-college-credit-by-2020-idUSKCN1TM0BS>
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## About the Authors

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### Graham Able



Graham joined the Alpha Plus Group as Chief Executive in 2009, shortly after his retirement from Dulwich College where he was Master from 1997-2009. He retired as Chief Executive in June 2014 but remains Deputy Chairman of the Group. Graham was responsible for the development of the Dulwich schools in China and remains Senior Vice-President of Dulwich College Management International.

Prior to Dulwich Graham was Headmaster of Hampton School. He was Chairman of HMC in 2003 and president of the International Boys School Coalition from 2006 to 2009. He is a governor of two schools outside the Alpha Plus Group.

### Ian Callender



Ian is the Chief Operating Officer of North London Collegiate School (NLCS) which he joined after a PGCE course at Oxford University in 2015. He is accountable for finance and operations, and compliance at NLCS, and in addition the School's overseas franchises. Ian has over 30 years' experience in the aviation and aerospace sectors working for Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd, HAECO, the Swire Group and Rolls-Royce Plc.

### Dr Gordon Carver



Gordon was recently appointed Chief Executive and Clerk to the United Westminster and Grey Coat Foundation, a group of five state and independent schools. Prior to this Gordon Managing Director for Arboreum Ltd., an education development consultancy which he founded in 2016. Prior to this he founded the Silverleaf Academy, an affordable private pre-primary and primary school chain in Tanzania aiming to deliver high quality technology enabled schooling for bottom-of-the-pyramid families. This was a continuation of his work in the education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa with the Varkey Foundation which delivered donor-funded project work for a variety of different projects.

## **Philip Cottam**



Philip is the Director of Overseas Projects at Haileybury College. After completing a degree in History at Oxford he served as an officer in the Army for 16 years before becoming a housemaster at Sedbergh School. He then worked at Stowe School as Head of History and Senior Master before becoming Headmaster at Halliford School for 12 years. During this period, he also served as Chairman of the Society of Heads and as a board member of the Independent Schools Council.

## **Shaun Fenton**



Shaun has been Head of Reigate Grammar School (RGS) since September 2012. Prior to RGS he led Pate's Grammar School, Cheltenham and Sir John Lawes School, Hertfordshire. Educated at The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School and Keble College, Oxford, Shaun briefly worked in the commercial world before returning to Oxford in 1993 to complete a PGCE and gained the degree of Master of Education in School Leadership. In addition, he holds the National Professional Qualification for Headship. During the academic year 2018-

2019 Shaun held the post of Chair of HMC.

## **Andrew Halls**



Andrew has been Head Master of King's College School (KCS), Wimbledon since January 2008. He read English at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, graduating with a double first. He was previously Head of English at Bristol Grammar School, Deputy Headmaster at Trinity School and Master of Magdalen College School, Oxford. He writes regularly for The Sunday Times, and other papers.

## **Mark Hanley-Browne**



Mark is Chief Executive of the Alpha Plus Group. He graduated with a degree in Natural Sciences from Oxford University before going to Cambridge University to study for his PGCE. He is an experienced educationalist, having taught at Sevenoaks School, Charterhouse School and Highgate School before becoming Head of Emanuel School in South London. He held this post for thirteen years, leading the school through a period of very successful development and making it one of the most popular schools in the capital. Mark has

created partnerships with schools in the USA and in China and worked with the United Westminster Schools Foundation.

## **Alex McGrath**



Alex is Director of British Council Schools. Based in Shanghai, he leads the global efforts of the British Council to develop more schools around the world on the model of the British Council School, Madrid. A former HMC head, Alex's international career has seen him work on new school projects in the UAE, Russia, Western Europe, China, Korea, and South-East Asia.

## **The Right Honourable Sir Stephen O'Brien KBE**



Sir Stephen O'Brien is a British politician, member of the Conservative party and Non Executive Board Member of the Department for International Trade. He has served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development and most recently was the United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination.

Stephen is currently Chairman of Motability Operations Group PLC and Vice-Chairman of Savannah Petroleum PLC.

## **Will Orr-Ewing**



Will is the Founder and Director of Keystone Tutors which he founded in 2007, having tutored since 2005. Will was educated at Harrow School before undertaking a degree in History at Oriel College, Oxford. After graduating he taught History at Fulham Prep School. He is a board member for The Tutors' Association and the Harrow Association and a Governor of Westside Free School.

## **Sadie Visick**



Sadie joined OxfordAQA as Managing Director in September 2018. She was previously a member of the Executive Board at AQA, where she was Director of International and Corporate Affairs. She began her career as a journalist and moved into roles in PR, marketing, strategy and general management. She has held leadership roles in both the private and not-for-profit sectors, including global education services provider Tribal plc and the Legal Services Commission.

## **Amy Wevill**



Amy manages executive and non-executive searches, leads on roundtables and events and heads Wild Research, the publishing and advisory division. Amy has a background in international research and programming high-level events, most recently at Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs). She addressed the international view of British education both while she was previously a Research Associate at Wild Search, and in her Public Policy MA dissertation at King's College London. Amy also has a History of Art BA from University College London.



## **Edward Wild**



Edward established Wild Search in 2010 following his earlier career in executive search with two established businesses. He has advised a wide range of education organisations and charities since 2004 on appointments and strategic planning. Prior to that he was the Development Director of Hampton School and author of its history.

His early career was pursued in education as a teacher within day schools and national and international charities as both a volunteer and a fundraising specialist. A trustee of a range of educational charities since 2003, he is a trustee of the Royal School of Church Music.

## **Catherine Whitaker**



Catherine is Chief Executive and Head of Learning at EtonX. Catherine was previously Chief Operating Officer of Knowledge Transmission, an EdTech start up developing a social learning platform for English language learners. She has a background in educational publishing, having worked at senior level in business development and editorial roles at HarperCollins, Cambridge University Press and Macmillan. She holds a first-class degree from Oxford University and is a qualified English language teacher. Currently based in

London, she has lived and worked in France, the USA and South Africa.

## **Caroline Wood-Robertson**



Caroline is the Strategy Programme Manager at Giggleswick School, where she supports the school in the management and implementation of all aspects of governor strategy. A large part of this mandate involves development and implementation of the school's international strategy, working closely with governors and senior leadership to help secure an overseas partnership for the school. A Cambridge graduate, she practised as a solicitor with Walker Morris and Addleshaw Goddard prior to joining the Bank of Scotland as

an Associate Director.

## About Wild Search

Wild Search is an established, well-connected and innovative executive search and advisory company. Our team provides extensive sector knowledge and brings a formidable and constantly evolving network of contacts to every search.

Formed in 2010, our work has encompassed advising on the appointment of executive and non-executive appointments for a range of organisations, primarily in the education and charity sectors.

We have also worked with boards to develop new roles and secured shortlists for them. Our market knowledge, network and the Wild Search community are constantly evolving through a combination of searches, reports and events.

We are firmly committed to providing strong methodology, a rigorous approach, thorough research, imaginative thinking, in addition to clear and candid advice. We combine transparency with a sharp focus on the key requirements for each client for every position.

## About Wild Research

Wild Research was formed in 2011 and has since published 25 reports. The majority of the reports focus on education, but others relate to charities, housing and development and the rural economy. In order to further our understanding of our clients' needs and outlook, we seek to evolve and improve our knowledge of the issues they face and challenges that lie ahead.

By contacting and interviewing experts and practitioners in each field, we aim to improve our insight, share best practice and provide new perspectives.

Wild Research welcomes ideas for reports and commissions from clients to highlight new developments and challenges within a business or sector.

## About the Alpha Plus Group

The Alpha Plus Group seeks to deliver the gold standard in education. It encourages every one of its schools to have its own distinctive ethos. The group also has common aims and values, wanting to see strong leadership in each of its schools, and providing training and support to the Heads and their Senior Management Team in order for this to happen. Effective partnerships with parents are crucial to the Group's ethos and culture. We want all our staff to place the welfare of the child at the heart of everything they do. The aim of the Group is to give every child in our care the best possible start in life.

The Alpha Plus Group currently consists of 20 schools and colleges. There are 3 nursery schools, 12 pre-preparatory and preparatory schools, 2 secondary schools and 3 sixth form colleges. APG is the largest private educational company in London (15 schools in the capital) and we also have schools and colleges in Cambridge, Manchester, Coventry and Hilden Grange in Tonbridge. Internationally APG has recently opened a school in New York (Wetherby-Pembridge School).

<https://www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk/>



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the **Gold Standard** in education

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## About AQA

AQA is the largest provider of academic qualifications taught in schools and colleges in the UK. It sets and marks the papers for over half of all GCSEs and A-levels taken every year.

As an independent education charity, AQA's income is reinvested into activities such as the cutting-edge education research which sits at the heart of its assessments.

AQA works with around 27,000 teachers, lecturers, subject experts and academics, who help design its qualifications and set and mark exams. It also works collaboratively with teachers to create resources that are designed around their day-to-day needs.



## About OxfordAQA

OxfordAQA brings together the educational expertise of two leading UK-based organisations: Oxford University Press, a department of the University of Oxford, and AQA, the UK's largest academic awarding body.

It was founded on the belief that all students deserve a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned – and this principle of Fair Assessment underpins the approach to everything it does. This means, for example, that OxfordAQA focuses on testing subject knowledge, not English comprehension or UK cultural contexts.

OxfordAQA's international qualifications are benchmarked to the UK equivalents, and designed specifically for students who live outside the UK and don't speak English as their first language. Its specifications are relevant for tomorrow's global citizens and will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully progress to the next stage of their education or employment.



## **A Selection of Wild Research Publications**

A Sum Greater than its Part: Making Education Groups Work (2019) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-8-4

Studying Success: The Role of Books in Higher Education (2019) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-7-7

Universities Challenged? Embedding Diversity, Empowering Institutions (2018) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-6-0

World Class Education: A Report on Educational Choices and Opportunities for High Net Worth families in the UK and beyond (2018) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-5-3

Portfolio Planning: Insights from the Inside (2018) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-4-6

Leading Women: The Life, Legacy and Inspiration of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (2017) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-2-2

Sharing Resources, Securing Success: Making Sure MATs & Education Groups Work (2017) ISBN: 978-0-9576966-8-6

Education: The Greatest British Export (2017) ISBN: 978-1-9998729-0-8

Building Better Boards: An Opportunity for Education (2015) ISBN: 978-0-9576966-6-2

Standards, Freedom, Choice: Essays to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the 1988 Education Reform Act (2013) ISBN: 978-0-9576966-1-7

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All reports may be downloaded at [www.wildresearch.org](http://www.wildresearch.org)



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Front cover image: Two pupils from Wetherby-Pembridge, New York.  
Courtesy of Alpha Plus Group,



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