

Redesigning Schooling

Four crucial areas of education go under the microscope during SSAT's Redesigning Schooling symposia



Teaching & learning

Curriculum design

Professional capital

Accountability

A campaign for education



Redesigning Schooling is campaigning to ensure that the future of education is shaped by high-quality practice and research from within the profession. As such, a recent series of symposia saw teachers and leading educational thinkers discuss four key areas – teaching and learning, curriculum design, accountability and professional capital. SSAT's **Sue Williamson** introduces the debate

SSSAT's Redesigning Schooling Symposia provoked considerable thought and debate, as well as reaffirming that schools in England have made considerable progress.

But there is always a "but". Schools are not changing as quickly as the world around them. Despite our best efforts, our system is not producing young people with the knowledge and skills needed by employers, and schools are not taking advantage of the freedoms in the system, because of real fears around accountability.

The discussions were far-ranging, but time was not wasted on polarised viewpoints, for example, the knowledge versus skills debate – we agreed that young people need both.

Participants were challenged to have the confidence to lead, for example Professor Tim Oates stated: "The problem is our own timidity not our structures." Professor Andy Hargreaves implored us to adopt the professional capital strategy to teaching, and Professor Dylan Wiliam stressed that "pedagogy trumps curriculum – schools need to be places that create and implement curriculum."

Curriculum and assessment

The national curriculum is only part of the curriculum. All schools need to design their curriculum based on agreed core principles with all members of the school and wider community, including employers. Teachers must be trained as curriculum designers. Prof Wiliam memorably argued that teachers must not be intellectual navvies – told to dig holes but not knowing why.

Schools need to design assessment systems that are aligned to curricula and re-emphasise the importance of assessment for formative purposes as well as summative assessment. The ending of national curriculum levels gives teachers the opportunity to agree what they want their students to achieve during their time in school. For more on this debate, see page 5.

Teaching and learning

Professors Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas argued

for deep learning for all students. Schools need to be precise about the habits of mind they want students to develop in order to be powerful learners. Powerful learners are curious, unafraid of uncertainty and complexity, good at exploration and investigation, enjoy experimenting, are imaginative, have reason and discipline, collaborate and reflect. These habits of mind must be integrated into the subject disciplines.

Parents and the wider community have a significant role to play in a student's learning. Research evidence shows that when parents are engaged in learning, it helps to raise achievement, develops more confident and socially adjusted children, and helps to shape children's self-concepts as learners. For more, see page 4.

Professional capital

All the symposia reinforced the importance of teaching as a profession. Professors Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan are deeply concerned that we are being moved to a business capital model – favouring a teaching force that is young, flexible, temporary, inexpensive to train at the beginning, and replaceable by technology.

If we accept this approach, the impact on school performance will be felt five years down the line, and the attrition rate for teachers will be even higher.

Good teaching is technically sophisticated and difficult; requires high levels of education and long periods of training; is perfected through continuous improvement; involves wise judgement informed by evidence and experience; is a collective accomplishment and responsibility; maximises, mediates and moderates online instruction.

Prof Wiliam said that expertise in teaching takes 10 years to acquire and that the first requirement of any good teacher was to like young people and be willing to develop them. Profs Claxton and Lucas emphasised the importance of teachers as learners and of school leaders creating the opportunities for teachers

to be action researchers. School leaders have to have the courage and the confidence to develop a long-term strategy that meets the needs of their students. Sustained improvement can be achieved by doing the right thing.

For too long, school leaders have been compliant and introduced practices that help with the league table position rather than meet the needs of students. Prof Oates said too many children are taking 12/13 GCSEs when they are on the C/D borderline – the right thing to do is to review their offer. For more, see page 6.

Accountability

Throughout the symposia, the elephant in the room was the accountability framework. School leaders wanted to do the "right" thing but felt constrained by league tables and Ofsted. This means that they are reluctant to take advantage of the new freedoms because of the risk of failure.

Christine Gilbert focused on the role of school accountability within a self-improving system. There was little discussion around Ofsted – parents greatly value inspection reports. She urged school leaders to become more confident in presenting an inclusive narrative for the school that links vision, moral purpose, direction of travel and action. For more, see page 7.

What next?

SSAT will be producing a series of pamphlets outlining the results of the symposia, while a number of resources will be created to give schools practical support to implement change.

A strategy document will also be sent to policy-makers showing the agreed thoughts of school leaders, employers, further and higher education, and parents.

- Sue Williamson is chief executive of SSAT.

Further information

For more details of the Redesigning Schooling symposia and wider campaign work, visit www.redesigningschooling.org.uk

SSAT National Conference 2013

The importance of teaching as a profession is the theme of SSAT National Conference, which takes place on December 5 and 6 this year. Professors Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves will be working with delegates to understand the opportunities and challenges of redesigning schooling.

With a focus on high-quality teaching, the aim is to build on the Redesigning Schooling work to help delegates collaborate with other experts and professionals to formulate a series of practical actions to take back to their schools and to develop confidence across the profession to embrace all accountability measures. Visit www.ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference2013



Redesigning Schooling is inspiring education professionals across the country. We speak to school leaders about why they are involved and how the campaign is affecting their schools and their practice

The Redesigning Schooling campaign could not have come at a better time as far as Stephen Tierney is concerned.

He has been headteacher at St Mary's Catholic College in Blackpool for 13 years and in September this year will become executive head of both St Mary's and of Christ the King Catholic Primary School. The two schools have been hard federated since 2009, share one governing body and will be based on the same site from 2014.

"Redesigning Schooling is a great opportunity to network with like-minded, creative people with fantastic ideas and practice," said Mr Tierney, who is cohort leader for SSAT's Aspiring Senior Leaders programme. St Mary's was one of SSAT's 10 System Redesign schools and the System Redesign programme "massively" influenced the design of the new building. He explained: "If heads are not careful they can get very inward-looking and limited in their thinking. The governing body is keen for me to go out and find great ideas that I can bring back to enrich the two schools."

“ We need to be challenging ourselves to ask: ‘If you had to set the rules yourself, what would you teach and how would you teach it?’ ”

Mr Tierney also believes that with the slimmed-down role of local authorities in education there is now a "real vacuum" between government and schools. "It is going to need filling and schools are going to have to work together in collaborations, some of them tight, some of them loose," he continued.

"Redesigning Schooling has the ability to start moving the profession back into the centre of educational thinking and policy. It will establish us as professionals with the confidence to take forward education and so show that we are not dependent on the government – local or national – to tell us what to do.

"The campaign will be a way of spreading great practice and getting people together

Taking back the education agenda



in collaborations. It will work nationally, regionally, locally and virtually to help schools and individuals move forward in their practice and develop. It will challenge my thinking and I am very excited by it."

West Sussex deputy head Caroline Barlow also believes that it is crucial that senior leaders across the country work together, learn from each other and support each other.

Ms Barlow has been deputy head at The Weald School in West Sussex since 2007. She is also a member of the West Sussex Deputies Network, a group that shares leadership CPD and good practice, runs its own annual conference and forums and has its own blog.

"What is key about the Redesigning Schooling campaign for me is that it reaches outside the profession and involves academics and employers as well as teachers," said Ms Barlow. "As a profession we can often feel quite 'done to', so the idea that we have an opportunity to embrace a bit of autonomy, not only in our curriculum but in our schools in general, is quite empowering.

"This opportunity is about being much more positive, much more proactive and much more energised – which is why the campaign has taken on such a life. The biggest message I am getting out of it is that we need to stop waiting for permission and get on and do the things that we think are important."

Meanwhile, Tom Sherrington, who has been headteacher at King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford since 2008, hopes that Redesigning Schooling will catalyse the teaching profession into "driving the agenda".

"There are a growing number of voices which are saying that the current direction of travel is far too short-sighted and too dominated by a very narrow view of measurable outcomes – Ofsted outcomes and examination outcomes – and that we are losing a sense of what a rounded education is all about," he said.

"As a profession we need to seize ownership of schooling and do what we think is right,

Taking the lead: Headteachers drive the discussions during one of SSAT's Redesigning Schooling symposia

rather than always being forced by short-term policies to go down particular roads."

Mr Sherrington is also chair of the Vision 2040 group, a group of 20 headteachers and practitioners who will be taking the Redesigning Schooling campaign forward – with the aim of bringing the shaping of education policy back into the teaching profession's hands.

"There is an empowerment that comes from Redesigning Schooling – but a challenge too. We need to be challenging ourselves to ask: 'If you had to set the rules yourself, what would you teach and how would you teach it?'"

He is particularly concerned about accountability, which he believes is holding schools back.

"Learning could be so much more invigorating if we weren't driven by short-term performance and accountability goals determined by other people," he said.

"The snapshot culture around inspection is toxic because it drives schools and teachers into perverse behaviours that are about showcasing, rather than about routine and sustained good practice. Ofsted leaves schools and teachers fearful and inhibited, rather than self-confident and expressive. If someone spends a day and a half at my school, having read a booklet of data beforehand, how can they possibly tell me more about my school than I know already?"

"We should have what I call 'knowledge-driven accountability', where external scrutiny is delivered by people who know schools well, visit them regularly and hold them to account continually over time."

Symposia reflections

Read more about the themes of the four Redesigning Schooling symposia in the following pages and see the back page for more reflections from these school leaders.

What kind of teaching for what kind of learning...?

What are we, as schools, trying to cultivate in our young people? What are their needs as learners in the 21st century? And does our teaching meet these needs?

Professors Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton thought long and hard about the most appropriate title for their Redesigning Schooling symposia.

“We felt that we couldn’t really embark on a discussion about redesigning schooling until we were clear about the outcomes that we are looking for from schooling,” explained Prof Claxton.

“As teachers we are always making value-laden judgements about what to teach, what to respond to and what kinds of behaviours are considered to be positive or negative in classrooms. Before we started talking about what kind of teaching is going to be effective we felt that it was important to have a philosophical look at what we are trying to cultivate or produce in young people.”

With this in mind the pair, who are co-directors of the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester, decided to title their two sessions: “What

what schools are actually aiming for. Until we have got some clarity about that, we can’t really understand what kind of teaching is going to be appropriate or effective.”

The two professors spoke of their conviction that it is “the fine detail of teaching” that makes a huge difference to learning outcomes and to students gaining the skills they need for university, work and life. To illustrate their point, they cited former Oxford University vice-chancellor Sir Richard Livingstone, who remarked in 1941 that “the test of successful education is not the amount of knowledge that pupils take away from school, but their appetite to know and capacity to learn.”

Schools may, for instance, produce high-achieving students who are inquisitive, resilient self-starters or they may produce high-achieving students who are passive and compliant. Similarly, while some low-achieving youngsters develop into resilient, resourceful learners, others become brittle, passive learners.

“It’s not about taking your eye off the ball when it comes to conventional forms of attainment,” explained Prof Lucas. “But it’s about asking yourself, ‘what else are we cultivating in youngsters in our attempts to help them attain as well as they can?’”

The pair then led a discussion about what they see as “the eight principles of expansive teaching and learning”. The first principle states that schools are “the foundation of a lifetime of learning”.



day. “It’s the ‘in the moment alteration’ within a class – when you realise that the route you are going down is not actually going to get your desired outcomes,” he said. “Perhaps the students have clammed up because you’ve given them too much space in a group work activity when they should have had more structure.”

They also touched on a number of other key issues, including the role of parents (who are, after all, children’s first teachers) and the role of the school leadership team.

“It seems to us that the intention behind the Redesigning Schooling initiative is to encourage school leaders to reclaim their control over the development of schooling and to adopt a much more values-centred and proactive approach,” said Prof Claxton.

Prof Lucas agreed. “We think that the project is about a massive habit-change,” he said. “It’s about an unlearning of passivity accumulated over the last few years and a relearning of taking control of what teachers believe to be in the best interests of providing an expansive education for young people.”

Further information

Professors Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas set up the Expansive Education Network to encourage schools, colleges and teachers to be more precise about what, alongside knowledge and skills, young people are learning. They have co-written a range of books on education, including *The Learning Powered School: Pioneering 21st Century Education* and, to be published in September 2013, *Expansive Education: Teaching Learners for the Real World*.

“We wanted the audience to question what schools are actually aiming for. Until we have got some clarity about that, we can’t really understand what kind of teaching is going to be appropriate or effective”

Kind of Teaching for What Kind of Learning?”

Prof Lucas and Prof Claxton passionately believe that as well as encouraging students to achieve the best possible results, schools should also be helping to create “the most fabulous learners”.

“What we are doing is questioning the idea that exam results are the bottom line,” said Prof Claxton. “Many other countries around the world are looking to cast the desirable outcomes of education in terms of more general qualities, such as communication, collaboration, resilience, resourcefulness, initiative and enterprise.

“So we wanted the audience to question

Others suggest that wider life and learning skills need to be “deliberately cultivated” in the context of the curriculum and beyond, that what learners believe about themselves matters, that parents and the wider community have a significant role to play in pupils’ learning at school, and that when teachers actively continue their own learning and model this in their classrooms then learners achieve more.

Prof Lucas also talked about a pedagogy decision-making framework he has developed. Intensely practical, this seeks to help teachers decide what is going to work best in the classroom – with a particular group, a particular subject and on a particular

Is today's school curriculum fit-for-purpose? **Professor Dylan Wiliam** explains why the profession must take back the lead on what we teach in our schools, and discusses how we can achieve this

There is a dawning realisation that the model of schooling we have had for the last 200 years is not ideal for the needs of the 21st century.

I'm not saying that what we have done in the past is wrong – just that we need to revisit old assumptions about things like subject frameworks, subject boundaries and timetabled lessons that last 40 to 55 minutes. We need to ask ourselves: "Are these really the best ways to develop the skills that today's students need?"

If you look at education – from primary schooling through to post-graduate study – secondary schooling looks anomalous. Unlike primary children or under-graduates, secondary students have little choice about the activities they do. They are expected to change subjects five to eight times a day – whether they have finished what they are doing or not. When the buzzer sounds they march from one room to another, just to have a different subject teacher.

All of these things are potentially questionable – and this isn't how learning happens. In fact recent research has shown that mathematics lessons should ideally be 10 to 15 minutes long and take place three times a day.

In addition, as more and more schools become academies, they are increasingly free from national curriculum constraints. They have no excuse not to be the authors of their own fortunes and yet few of them are using this freedom to question whether what they are doing is right.

The curriculum cannot be developed without teachers, so what the government has put in the national curriculum is not actually a curriculum. It is a series of activities that say "children should learn this, children should learn that".

The real curriculum is the daily experience of children in classrooms. That's why we need teachers to be involved in curriculum design – to make it a real living process as opposed to a sterile, ineffective, dumbed-down procedure where teachers tell students what they need to know and students memorise it.

Denis Lawton once defined the curriculum as "a selection from culture". But how do we choose what to put in it? In the past the national curriculum has been a ragbag of topics. I believe that we need a more principled basis for choosing what goes into today's curriculum – and teachers definitely need to have a say in it.

We must also understand what the curriculum is for. During my Principles of Curriculum Design presentations, I highlighted the fact that we are preparing our young people for a world we cannot possibly imagine. Even so, it is important that schools design the curriculum on agreed core principles. They need to make



Challenge: Professor Dylan Wiliam leads a Redesigning Schooling symposium on Principles of Curriculum Design

Is our school model fit for the 21st century?

sure that the curriculum is balanced, rigorous, coherent, vertically integrated, appropriate, focused and relevant.

The basic principle of curriculum design is deciding to leave out good material so that we can spend even more time on the even better material. In other words, we have to prioritise, which is something we have been very bad at in the past. In science, for example, I would say that our national curriculum offers a nodding acquaintance to thousands of topics, rather than a profound understanding of a small number.

foreseeable future so in order to do this teachers will need to be more creative and spend less time on other things.

I believe, for instance, that we need to mark less. Teachers spend too much time marking, even though it has no impact on student achievement, and not enough time planning the curriculum. Another idea is to have larger classes – at least for some of the time. The iPad is a real game-changer too. Motivated students who find learning more difficult can watch video tutorials three or four times. Pausing and

“The real curriculum is the daily experience of children in classrooms. That’s why we need teachers to be involved in curriculum design – to make it a real living process as opposed to a sterile, ineffective, dumbed-down procedure”

When I started teaching in Shepherd's Bush in the 1970s, students arrived at the age of 11 and we structured and sequenced a five-year curriculum to get them to where they needed to be by the age of 16.

Today's teachers, however, have not been trained for this and have no experience of developing the curriculum – because since the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988 the government has done it for them. As a consequence, many teachers see the prospect of designing the curriculum as both liberating and terrifying.

In my view, the way forward is for teachers to spend more time working collaboratively and planning the curriculum together. There will not be any more money for education in the

rewinding a video is much easier than asking a teacher to go over something again.

So as far as I am concerned, there is a lot of low-hanging fruit that we can pick without spending any more money. We just need to think far more carefully about how we are using the money and the resources that we already have and set about creating and implementing a world-class curriculum.

• Professor Dylan Wiliam has more than 30 years' experience as a teacher and lecturer and has been praised for his educational research on both sides of the Atlantic. He is Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at the Institute of Education, University of London. Visit www.dylanwiliam.net



We must invest in our teachers

Education must invest in its teachers if we are to benefit from their expertise and their professional capital. How can schools and school leaders do this effectively?

Professor Andy Hargreaves is a distinguished academic whose books on education have been read by teachers all over the world.

He began his teaching career at a Derbyshire primary school, went on to become a university lecturer and is now the Thomas More Brennan Chair in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College in the US. But 40 years on, he says that talking to teachers and working with teachers still has a huge influence on his work.

“My research isn’t simply done at a distance through surveys, paperwork and data-crunching,” he said. “My research involves strong elements of being in schools, working with leaders and teachers, talking to them, watching them, listening to them and trying to figure out with them what are the most important things in schooling and helping them to move forward.”

As SSAT’s Redesigning Schooling campaign got underway, Prof Hargreaves gave a presentation on Professional Capital and the Global Lessons of Successful Change, in which he emphasised the importance of investing in teachers as professionals.

He explained: “The factor in schools that most affects student achievement is not the curriculum, nor the assessment system, nor even the leadership. It’s the quality of the teachers. Good learning and strong results come from high-quality teaching and high-quality teachers.”

Together with co-author Professor Michael Fullan, Prof Hargreaves outlined many of his

ideas in *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, which was published in 2012. “Our argument is that education is an investment, not a cost,” he said. “Investing in our teachers will yield higher returns on student learning and student achievement. If you want to get a return you have to make an investment. So to invest in our students we need to invest in our teachers.”

Prof Hargreaves fears that the teaching profession is being moved to a “business capital model”, which assumes that good teaching is technically simple, can be mastered readily, should be driven by hard performance data, and is replaceable by online instruction.

“There are lots of moves afoot to lower or keep down the cost of teaching – by bringing people through alternative routes of qualification or by employing people for temporary periods of two or three years before they move on to something else,” he said. “But the evidence shows that these will not increase the quality of teaching over time.”

The “professional capital view” on the other hand assumes that good teaching is technically sophisticated and difficult, requires high levels of education and long training, is perfected through continuous improvement, involves wise judgement informed by evidence and experience, is a collective accomplishment and responsibility, and maximises, mediates and moderates online instruction.

Prof Hargreaves explained that professional capital comprises three key things – human capital, social capital and decisional capital: “Human capital is about your qualifications, your experience and your professional development over time,” he said.

“So the first thing we must do is look at ways of bringing higher quality teachers into teaching by keeping the pay up rather than driving it down, by talking teachers up rather than disrespecting teachers, and by doing this in a way that starts with leaders in schools and with teachers themselves.

“The second area, which has an even

bigger effect, is social capital. This is about collaboration, high trust and the fact that we are even more together than we are alone. Social capital actually raises human capital – so in a strong school community, with lots of support from colleagues, a poor teacher will become an okay teacher, an okay teacher will become a good teacher, and a good teacher will become an outstanding teacher.

“The third thing is decisional capital, which comes from decisional law. In any profession, your judgement develops over time by having a lot of repetition of practice and by stretching yourself or being stretched into more challenging areas. This is enormously important for the leadership in a school. Leaders tend to put most of their emphasis on teachers in the first two or three years of their careers or on teachers who seem to be losing steam towards the end of their careers.

“The group that is often neglected is the huge middle group, a bit like the quiet child in the class. Leaders often leave them alone because they seem to be doing okay. But this is exactly when teachers need to be stretched, challenged, offered new assignments, given opportunities to lead staff development and mentor colleagues and so on. If you don’t keep stretching and challenging your teachers in mid-career, you’ll be headed for problems at the end of their careers.”

In a nutshell, Prof Hargreaves’ advice for headteachers is simple: pick the best people, provide good working conditions as well as sufficient pay and status, get teachers to work together, retain them and continue to challenge and stretch them.

“And every so often, but not too much,” he added, “just check up on whether they are really doing what they are supposed to be doing.”

SSAT National Conference 2013

Prof Hargreaves will be speaking and taking part in debates tackling the themes above at SSAT National Conference 2013 – The New Professionalism on December 5 and 6. Visit www.ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference2013

Supporting each other

Former chief inspector Christine Gilbert maintains that intelligent accountability is about supporting school improvement. But how should we change our school accountability systems?

Accountability is “absolutely central” to school improvement. That was Christine Gilbert’s key message during her Accountability and Intelligent Inspection symposium for the Redesigning Schooling campaign.

Ms Gilbert, who was Ofsted chief inspector from 2006 to 2011, told delegates that while inspection is “very powerful”, accountability does not simply consist of inspections, exam results and league tables. It is far more.

She firmly believes that rather than being seen as an obstacle or pressure on schools and teachers, a strong accountability system provides important support for school improvement.

As she explained in *Towards a Self-improving System: The role of school accountability*, a resource she wrote for the then National College for School Leadership in 2012: “Accountability in its broadest sense provides important support for school improvement and is more critical than ever as we move to establish a truly self-improving system.”

She added: “A decentralised system of accountability operating at the level of the individual school, but more particularly across networks of schools, can provide a source of professional aspiration and improve teachers’ knowledge, skills and practice so that children are supported better in their learning.”

During her SSAT symposium, Ms Gilbert highlighted the fact that teachers’ strongest notion of accountability is the moral accountability they feel to the children they teach: “As soon as teachers come into school, even as student teachers, they feel a direct link with the children in their classes,” she said. “They feel a moral accountability to do well by those children.

“The best schools build on this and make it professional as well. It means that teachers are accountable to their colleagues, want to work well with them and help to build a school where professional accountability is central. They learn together, discuss problems together and move forward together.”

Ms Gilbert is convinced that while accountability within schools is crucial, accountability across schools is important too. In other words, the more schools work in collaboration with other schools, the more confident they will become.

She cited the example of Challenge Partners, a collaborative group of more than 180 schools, all focused on school improvement. The



“A decentralised system of accountability operating across networks of schools can provide a source of professional aspiration and improve teachers’ knowledge, skills and practice”

partnership was founded in 2011 by schools that wanted to retain their individuality, but realised that they would be stronger if they worked together. “They decided that their aims were about becoming better themselves but also about supporting each other,” she said. “They have done a number of things but the core of what they do is based on a system of peer review.”

Ms Gilbert stressed that when it comes to accountability, governing bodies have a vital role to play: “Governing bodies are absolutely fundamental to good self-evaluation and good accountability,” she said. “They are really supportive of schools, but they stand back from what is going on, ask questions and bring fresh light to things.”

She also referred to Ofsted’s *Twelve Outstanding Secondary Schools* report. Published in 2009, it examined why some schools “succeed brilliantly against all the odds while others in more favourable circumstances struggle”. Ms Gilbert wrote at the time: “These heads are excellent story-tellers – they develop an inclusive narrative for the school that links moral purpose, direction of travel and vision.”

Four years on, she feels every bit as strongly. “It’s not just the vision,” she said. “It’s getting a really strong sense of purpose into people’s daily practice, along with a narrative about what they are trying to achieve and how they are achieving it. In terms of accountability these schools build reflection into everything. They are constantly saying ‘this is what we are doing – how are we doing it, can we do it better?’”

But although Ofsted is generally regarded

as an important part of the accountability framework, one head who attended the Redesigning Schooling symposia questioned what he called the “snapshot judgement” of inspections.

Tom Sherrington, head of King Edward VI Grammar in Chelmsford, would prefer to see knowledge-driven accountability, “where external scrutiny is delivered by people who know schools well, visit them regularly and hold them to account continually over time”.

Ms Gilbert agreed that most heads know their schools better than anyone else but said that it is important for them to demonstrate this. She added that the vast majority of heads regard inspection as helpful in reinforcing the fact that their schools are on the right track.

“Lots of heads have said that inspection endorses their priorities and their way of working – and that it is good to be able to celebrate that,” she said. “Schools that were inadequate used to tell me how helpful it was to have an external perspective on the progress that they were making. But there’s no doubt that the force for improvement is not just going to come from Ofsted. It has got to come from the schools themselves.”

Join the debate

SSAT National Conference 2013 – The New Professionalism will develop confidence across the profession to embrace all accountability measures. Join us on December 5 and 6. Visit www.ssatuk.co.uk/nationalconference2013

After the four Redesigning Schooling symposia, we asked school leaders to reflect on the four key themes and the impact that the discussions have had on them and their schools

Headteachers who attended the Redesigning Schooling symposia have already begun to incorporate some of the approaches they heard about into their own schools.

Stephen Tierney, headteacher of St Mary's Catholic College in Blackpool, found that Professor Andy Hargreaves' session on Professional Capital and Global Lessons on Successful Change (see page 6) made him think further about the importance of teachers working together as a professional community.

As Mr Tierney wrote in his blog: "With Professor Dylan Wiliam leading on the development of new curricula and assessment – the 'what' we have to do – and Professor Andy Hargreaves on professional capacity – the 'how' to do it – we can move with both excitement and no small degree of trepidation into the next phase of education in this country. It's time for the profession to take the lead, working with government and other interested parties, to deliver an education fit for the 21st century and fit for our students."

As well as using Prof Hargreaves' session as a springboard to focus on how best to give teachers the time and space to focus on training and development, CPD, curriculum thinking, and teaching and learning organisation, Mr Tierney is introducing other ideas.

For the last two years, St Mary's has appointed a series of Innovation Fellows. These are two-year appointments and give teachers the chance to do research work and work with colleagues to develop their practice.

Mr Tierney is looking at launching research and development communities – groups of three to eight teachers who develop and embed best or emerging good practice within the school, with the intention of improving standards of attainment, levels of achievement, student wellbeing or student personal development.

The Redesigning Schooling workshops have also prompted Mr Tierney to start a blog and use social media to share ideas.

One of the key messages that deputy head Caroline Barlow took away from Prof Wiliam's presentation (see page 5) was the idea that every teacher needs to improve their practice – "not because we have to, but because we believe we can always be better". Her school, The Weald School in West Sussex, has a strong culture of supporting teachers in their CPD but staff are



aware that any formal observation is "a snapshot in time".

"We are much more interested in people's continual development because they want to improve and because they want to have a passion about their pedagogy," said Ms Barlow.

"Prof Wiliam referred to a study where people were asked 'what would you change if you could that would enable you to do what you want to do?', and of course it turned out that people already have the power to change those things.

"That was one of the biggest messages of the symposium for me – that teachers do have the freedom to change things."

Ms Barlow heard Professors Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton speak at the SSAT National Conference in December and was hugely inspired by their view of teaching and learning (see page 4).

"In school we have talked about seeing the curriculum in a much broader sense and not just as something that we have received from on high. We see it as a whole curriculum which embraces all aspects of our school and the learning that we want the students to experience.

"There is a running debate about what it should include, which as a historian I feel interested in, but we are really embracing the idea that the curriculum in its broadest sense is the set of skills, values and understandings that we want students to have by the time they leave us."

Tom Sherrington, headteacher of King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford, was particularly interested in Prof Hargreaves' view that investing in teachers as professionals is a key driver for school improvement.

"Making teachers have more sense of ownership of their own professional development is the heart of school transformation," he said. "It is something

Change: Deputy head Caroline Barlow joins the debate during the Redesigning Schooling symposia

we already do in my own school, but Prof Hargreaves reinforces the fact that focusing on professional capital, investing in teachers as professionals and using their professional expertise is really important."

With that in mind, Mr Sherrington is looking at developing the idea of lesson study, where teachers plan sets of lessons together, observe each other teaching those lessons, and then examine collaboratively and "in micro-detail" the tipping points that enable students to learn and move forward.

He and his colleagues will also continue to embed a professional review system – "which is about teachers setting themselves personal and professional goals, as opposed to target-driven, data-driven outcomes".

The symposium led by Prof Wiliam and Professor Tim Oates on Principled Curriculum Design also chimed with Mr Sherrington's own thinking: "We have this weird idea that the curriculum is decided by other people and we just deliver it," he said.

"Of course there is a need for students to have a bedrock of core knowledge – but who should decide what that core knowledge should be? It seems fundamentally undemocratic that a secretary of state should decide that every child in the country knows certain specific facts and not necessarily other ones."

School leaders' blogs

- Stephen Tierney: <http://headstmary.wordpress.com>
- Caroline Barlow (West Sussex Deputies Network): <http://westsussexdeputies.wordpress.com>
- Tom Sherrington: <http://headguruteacher.com>

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