



Journal & News 20

Summer 2005

You are invited to:

Join the
Autumn Forum Meeting
Saturday 1st October
Leicester
Free mini conference
and lunch
Speakers from GTC
Networking and Federating
AGM and NSSF
“Roundup”

Enter the
Website Competition
Entries by 13th April '06

Enter your school's website
for a £100 prize
Free entry

Take part in
National Small Schools'
Week
Starts 19th June 2006

Link your events in Summer 2006
to the National Small School's
Week and highlight the
benefits of small schools

National events TBA

Details on back cover.

www.nssf.co.uk/
Registered Charity 1096234



Promoting high quality education in small schools

Journal & News 20

Summer 2005

The **NSSF** Journal & News is published twice a year and issued to all individual and group members. Individual members receive their copies directly by post. Group members receive their copies via their group or LEA representative. We are most grateful to our group and LEA contacts for distributing the Journal & News on our behalf.

For information on how to join the **NSSF**, please see the details below and at the end of this Journal & News.

The editor of the **NSSF** Journal & News 20 was Mike Carter.

E-mail: mike.carter3@tesco.net

Phone/fax: 01743 233893

Post: 6 Butterwick Drive, Herongate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3XE (UK)

*The views expressed by contributors to this publication are not necessarily those of the **NSSF***

About the NSSF

Registered Charity Number 1096234

The **NSSF** is an independent, member organisation with charitable status, which seeks to promote the continued development of high standards of teaching and learning in small primary schools. Its 1200+ members include individual schools, heads and teachers, governors, LEAs, LEA advisers, independent consultants and groups of schools in the United Kingdom.

Our aim to promote high quality education in small schools is implemented via the termly meetings of the **FORUM**, Journals, publications and papers, a website and an annual conference, which keep members in touch with one another, with research into the work of small schools and with developments at national and local levels. We do not, however, engage in campaigns on behalf of schools that have been identified for reorganisation by their local authorities beyond calling attention to the evidence about the high standards attained by pupils in small schools. We commend the work of the National Association for Small Schools in this area.

In alternate years, we organise with the National Association for Small Schools and Human Scale Education, **National Small Schools' Week** to celebrate and publicise the strengths and achievements of small schools in the UK. These have been held in 2002 and 2004 and the next is due in 2006. We also organise a Best Small School Website competition which will in future coincide with National Small Schools' Week.

Our definition of small primary schools includes schools of up to about 100 pupils in nursery, primary, first, infant, junior, middle-deemed-primary and special settings. Our membership includes a number of larger schools who welcome our emphasis on high quality teaching and learning and on slim management systems. We welcome this diversity. While the majority of members are from England, we have many friends in other parts of the UK and hope to extend this in the belief that the Forum will benefit from experiences gained in diverse contexts.

Membership

Membership is open to individuals (eg heads, teachers, governors, LEA personnel, colleagues in HE etc), schools, higher education establishments, groups and clusters and local education authorities. Individual persons or schools join for £10 per annum; groups, clusters and education authorities may join for £4 per school plus £4 per adviser or officer who may also wish to receive our mailings, subject to a minimum of 6. Membership brings the benefits of two journals each year, attendance at meetings of the **FORUM**, access to the members' section of the **NSSF** website and preferential rates at our annual conference.

The membership year is from 1 April.

For membership details visit the **NSSF** website at www.nssf.co.uk/ or contact the membership secretary, Jim Cork, 19 Clinton Way, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln LN10 6QW (telephone: 01526 353848; email: nssf@care4free.net).

© **NSSF** 2005

Members may reproduce items from this publication for educational purposes so long as the source is fully acknowledged.

Editorial

Colleagues,

I'm feeling daunted. Taking back the Editor's reins after Mike Brogden has done such a good job is intimidating. We are all indebted to Mike for the incredible work he has put into the Forum, not least in the editorship of the Newsletter. The job entails encouraging people to draft some words (anything from 100 to 2000) and sending them to the editor. It will help others to know how you have met particular government requirements or the problems you need help with to resolve. Please, please, please send me your thoughts. It may, for example, be a paragraph from your report to the governors or an evaluation of an externally funded project. (Pictures or pupils' work are good too.) Many thanks are sent to those who have done so this time. Some of you may be involved in research and an extract or paragraph may be very enlightening to others (we are sad that so little research is centred on small school education).

We were very disappointed to have to cancel our annual conference. The picture I get from members is that there is much support but few have sufficient time or money to attend conferences. However, we need to have an AGM to ensure that the Forum is democratic and meeting needs. We have decided to invite you to a Forum meeting during which the AGM will take place. This will be free and take only a few hours. Please see the advert in this Issue.

A special welcome is sent to new members. We hope you find the Forum of interest, at least in knowing

that there is help available and that NSSF provides a portal for that. The help and community of the NSSF continue to grow. We often get questions from headteachers, governors and advisers (See 'Ask the NSSF' in these pages) and attempt to answer problems or make links. Support for small school issues has developed well over the last decade with recognition from the NCSL, the rural schools advisory group and now the GTC (see the article herein). Our website is developing under our new web-master and includes a new weekly news service with relevant Parliamentary news. We know that small schools can and do regularly offer excellent education for their pupils partly because of their small and human scale. The feeling of insufficiency that we often have is due to the many ill-fitting government requirements usually entailing large amounts of management time that we don't have. The Forum endeavours to put requirements into context and share ways of enhancing the provision we make for pupils and their families. This edition deals largely with English requirements but our Welsh and Scottish members will find our new Parliamentary service of interest.

Lastly, it would be very helpful to have feedback about what you would like the newsletter and journal to contain. Do send me any articles or photos etc.

Please keep in contact.

With best wishes for a good Autumn term
Mike Carter

Extracts from Chair's Diary

29 Jan '05	Forum meeting in Leicester - tried a new venue - Good - further planning to Conference - Self eval.
11 Feb '05	Contributed to NRT Meeting about small schools and workforce remodelling. They listened to all the problems and while all were very positive about the theory, few attending were about the practice.
25 Feb '05	Sent e-mail to 1400 small schools to try to get more interest in NSSF Conference.
4 March '05	Sad Day - Had to cancel Conference with too few bookings.
22 March '05	Went with Mike Brogden to meet Diane Fisher as new website manager.
21 April '05	Took part in LGC Conference on workforce remodelling. Declined request to Chair this!!
29 April '05	Christine Pfaff kindly took my place with a talk at GTCs first small school's conference.
8 June '05	Gave talk at GTC's second small schools' conference largely about CPD in small schools.
11 June '05	NSSF Forum meeting in Leicester. Considering news from regions, Licking conference wounds!
16 June '05	Presentation at County Durham's Small schools' conference.
6 July '05	Took part in making programme for Teachers' TV at TES offices with Chris Foster of GTC.
25/6 July '05	FOI training - gained strong ideas about new inspections in small schools.

A teacher preserves the past, reveals the present and creates the future.

Last Autumn the 12 pupil Forest of Teasdale Primary School, Barnard Castle, won an International School Award for making world wide contacts and integrating these into its curriculum. At the award ceremony then Education Secretary Charles Clarke announced an additional £250,000 to expand the award scheme.
See www.britishcouncil.org or www.lect.org.uk and page 7 of this issue.

Call up the NSSF website to:

- Get the best of advice on small school curriculum and management issues from NSSF Papers
- Read or download NSSF Reports (research, studies, conferences etc)
- Browse and download authoritative *summaries of documents from the DfES, OfSTED, the QCA and **now a weekly service of up-to date news and Parliamentary reports, including Wales and Scotland** (*You need a password for the Summaries; see below)
- Visit back copies of the NSSF Journal & News
- Sign up for conferences
- Get details about the next meetings of the Forum
- Find links to other useful organisations and ideas

***To protect the copyright of some of these Documents, members need to use a password to gain access to these marked pages. Members should please email Jim Cork at nssf@care4free.net with your name, school, cluster name (if applicable) and LEA and a password will be sent to you.**

Not sure if you are a member?

Individual members receive this Journal & News by post. Group members receive it via their cluster/ group/ education authority contact. See the list of member education authorities and groups on page 21. If in doubt, email the membership secretary Jim Cork: nssf@care4free.net

Also visit the website for joining details.

BOOK REVIEWS

(Contributions to the book review section are welcomed by the editor)

Pathways to Child Friendly Schools

By Fiona Carnie

Published by Human Scale Education; ISBN 1-898321-05-1 £7.50

This is a reader-friendly book about things to consider when trying ensuring a child-friendly school. The style is accessible, and the content is sensible and practical, with only occasional lapses into unconvincing phrases that begin "Many parents feel..." or "Many headteachers...". The book will appeal to headteachers, teachers, governors and parents and poses nothing that is too difficult to implement - though I would imagine that most of the ideas are already in place in many state schools, especially small ones where good relationships with everyone are part of everyday life. The book's greatest value could be in a self-evaluation exercise to help answer the question, how child-friendly is our school? It also has many useful references and lists of organisations. Considering the strong partnership we have with Human Scale Education in promoting National Small Schools' Week, it is disappointing that the NSSF does not get a mention in these lists. There are a few minor errors that reveal a lack of detailed knowledge of state schools and their curriculum, SATs, prospectus and home-school agreement requirements but these don't detract from the book's overall usefulness. At £7.50, it's a good buy.

Mike Brogden

Small Schools: Clustering for Growth

By Wendy Barlow and David Taylor. Published by the National Primary Trust, 2004. ISBN 1 898908 79 6. £9

The National Primary Trust provides a number of very good publications, usually "from the grass roots". This is no exception. By researching clustering in some 12 LEAs, the authors provide a strong rationale for "organic" clustering and collate the views of many on its benefits and difficulties. Although published in 2004, it lacks the broader perspective and national agenda about networking and the encouragement offered through the NCSL and other national bodies. Nevertheless it does outline a variety of activities, explains how the activities were set up, reviews their benefits, and provides good advocacy for collaboration.

Mike Carter

The Turnabout Programme

By Dr Carol Goldfus & Enid Korn

ISBN 141202955-4 Trafford Publishing, 2005

Rurally isolated parents sometimes find problems getting the advice they need when their child has special learning needs. With difficulties such as dyslexia, helpful strategies for use at home are hard to come by. This book provides many suggestions. A school may want to recommend the book to parents having children with mild or severe dyslexia or attention deficit problems. The authors are passionate advocates of the methods they have evolved. The book provides very sensible and supportive strategies and should engage parents very positively.

Mike Carter

Congratulations to **East Sussex** and Connie Hughes for producing the most comprehensive and beautiful small schools newsletter yet. It provides much of interest and a real platform for many East Sussex small schools to celebrate their successes and to keep up to date. We were very grateful to receive a copy.

ASPE (the Association for the Study of Primary Education) is staging a National Conference at the very good Yorkshire Hotel, Harrogate. The conference is called "**Primary Schooling for the Future**" and has an impressive line up of national speakers. It lasts from 2pm on Friday 11th November to 3.30pm on Saturday 12th November. The full conference fee is £260. Details from Jenny Hyde, Conference Administrator, 11, East Ave, Bollington, Cheshire SK10 5DY Tel: 07967 373896

Ask the NSSF

I was interested to hear you speak at the GTC conference in Birmingham on June 8th. Our school is Green Lea First in Staffordshire. We had a super Ofsted report on the 9th only to be threatened with closure the same week. Do any members have experience of successful campaigns? Any tips for managing the situation as a teaching head? Do you know useful documents to build the case for small schools?

Many thanks
Sandra

*We replied giving the link to NASS that supports schools under threat of closure, but Sandra would like to know of any members' experiences of managing and leading through such threats. Please contact her at:
headteacher@greenlea.staffs.sch.uk*

I enclose e-mail link for petition in favour of introducing "presumption" to Scotland. Could you please forward to your membership? Thank you.

Save Scotland's Rural Schools

Please sign and forward the following link to give Scottish rural schools the same protection as that currently afforded to English rural schools.

The Scottish Parliament e-Petitions: View/Sign Petition

The past year has seen a sudden escalation in the threat to Scotland's rural school network. There are currently over 35 rural schools in Scotland facing the threat of closure. These are spread over a number of council areas from the Borders to Aberdeenshire. This compares to an annual closure rate of 6 per annum over the last six years. Most of the local authorities cite the Scottish Executive's "21st century" school estate strategy as the reason behind this escalation. The threat of closure has a destructive social and economic effect on rural communities contributing to depopulation. Such fears also discourage families who may consider moving into rural areas. In many cases the local school is the only service left in a village and as such is the focal point of community life. Please help by signing our e-petition calling for the "presumption against closure of rural schools". This is a form of statutory guidance which has been in place in England since 1998 reducing their rate of closure from 30 to 3 per annum.

NSSF contributed comprehensively to the petition although some was deleted because we mentioned NSSF

I'm developing a new series for Channel 4 looking at parental choice and involvement in primary school education. The project is in its earliest stages, and I'm currently speaking to a wide range of people to get their thoughts and suggestions on our proposal.

We are very interested in the increasing number of campaigns by parents to save their local schools from closure, many of which are deemed to small to survive. We are looking into the idea of helping parents faced with this to set up their own co-operative school where parents would have direct impact on, and provide a sustained contribution to, the education of their children. The project is intended as a long-form documentary series with a lengthy development period. We would plan to follow the school's progress over the course of a year, or possibly longer. assume that a small school would encourage greater parental involvement, and I'd be very interested to know whether this has been the case in your experience, and what form this usually takes. I'd also be very interested to hear your thoughts on the benefits - and potential difficulties - of running a small school, and also whether any of your schools are essentially run by parents.

I'm sure you have a very busy schedule, but I'd be grateful if you could spare a few moments for a quick chat about our project.

We did chat and passed on info. about HSE and some research about parents in small schools.

I wonder if you can help us? I am sending this message on behalf of our Primary Link Inspector with special responsibility for small schools. We are members of the NSSF and I have been asked to contact you to request any information you might have relating to small primary schools working together in partnership collaboration or federation. We have two small schools who are looking closely at this.

Thanks in anticipation.

Extensive information given on the state of Federating. Reply available from the editor.

I received the 'Journal & News' for the first time today. I started my first Headship in September (90 on roll) and I really enjoyed reading through thee pages. Just wanted to write and thank you! I assume that I received the Journal because my LEA has joined up to the organization? Anyway, thank you. I will be sending for all the publications! This is the most useful thing to have come through the post since I started!!

Thanks for your lovely comments - much appreciated – keep in touch.

Finally finished my multigrade dissertation. I didn't receive any replies to my ad on your website but never mind. I changed my focus on my tutor's advice and produced research about resource management in multigrade schools and as an added bit at the end asked multigrade teachers what qualities and skills they consider necessary to be an effective multigrade teacher.

I am attaching my abstract as promised for use on your website. I won't know until October whether I've passed or not but I assume I have as the tutors don't allow us to submit mediocre material. I've also sent some of it to Anglea Little at I.O.E. London to see if it's of any use to her for her multigrade research programme.

The title of my research is "How do Multigrade Teachers Manage Monograde Resources?"

I am a Researcher at Brook Lapping Productions. Our company has been commissioned to produce 40% of the programmes for 'Teacher's TV'. I am working on a weekly magazine show, 'My Career', which will give teachers advice on how to fulfil their potential and improve their careers. One of the slots on the programme will be 'Career Changes' - a short observational film looking at a teacher who is about to make, or has just made, a dramatic change in their career.

It would be fantastic to feature a teacher at a small school in one of the programmes. To fit the career change aspect this teacher could be swapping inner city teaching for a small village school or vice versa. Either they have recently made this career change or, even better, are just about to make it in September. Or perhaps we could feature a head teacher who has taught at the same small school for many years and is about to retire. I was wondering whether you may be able to put me in touch with someone suitable.

Thank you very much in advance for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

We passed on a few possible names - not sure if they were used. Has anyone any info?

I'm a male NQT starting at a small village Junior school in September (52 pupils). I want to create some sports clubs/teams as there is a lack of these at present. We are in Hertfordshire. Are there any leagues or competitions (football, netball etc) for schools of our size? Do you have a list of schools of similar size in the Herts., Beds, Middlesex area?

John Berry (Puller Memorial School)

We expect you will have answered this by now through your county or cluster sports association. It's great to extend the pupils opportunities like this. If anyone can help further we will put them in touch with John.

I have been asked by CfBT to help them in a small piece of research to promote leadership in small schools. We are looking for any literature on this issue including anything that discusses the effectiveness of various models of leadership....federation, networks etc etc..... I shall be using all the usual techniques of search but though it wise to go to the Oracle first for your advice and direction. Could you let me know of anything or anyone you commend in this field please. All help gratefully acknowledged. Prominent researcher from Exeter University.

We passed on a literature review of leadership in small schools and several other articles of interest. We think the research is still in progress.

hi, we are a small school and due to numbers we will be going from 3 classes to two. We will have 30 children in the whole school. Numbers are tight and we are going down the topic route. Could you kindly suggest planning for literacy, numeracy, and maybe science? many thanks Maria year 2 teacher

Suggested the NSSF website for mixed age planning and other sources.

This is but a selection of the enquiries received recently. NSSF is pleased to help and often is able to put folk in touch with those having a similar problem/solution. Contact

mike.carter3@tesco.net

More International Opportunities

I was interested to read in the spring journal about all the enterprising educational visits undertaken by teachers in small schools. During my time as a headteacher of a small school (over 25 years) I have been privileged to be involved in many such visits. Art tours to most of the countries in Europe, an exchange with the US, a European Union project in Indonesia, various Comenius projects with France, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Spain and Sweden. In 2002, I took all my staff to Russia to study the education of gifted and talented pupils (a Teachers' International Professional Development project). There is no doubt these visits are professionally and personally of great value. But perhaps the most poignant and humbling of these for me was last year when I was asked to lead a group of teachers on a study tour to South Africa to study citizenship and heritage. The visit was funded by the League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers (LECT). This is another organisation offering teachers international professional development opportunities.

My group consisted of twenty experienced educators from all phases of education in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our primary aim was to observe how Citizenship and Heritage underpinned an emerging and inclusive curriculum within a country experiencing momentous social and cultural change. Our study tour itinerary allowed us to visit a wide range of schools in the Durban area - from wealthy independent schools in the leafy suburbs, to the poorest township schools dealing with a huge range of problems.

The recent and troubled history of South Africa brings a whole catalogue of problems with which many schools have to cope without outside assistance. Crime is rife in many areas; unemployment is high in the townships and some of the schools have nearly 50% of the roll HIV positive.

Education is perceived as a key to put right previous wrongs and rebuild a new nation of citizens beneath the South African flag.

Some facts and figures relating to schools and education in the KwaZulu-Natal Province will put the problems faced by UK schools in perspective.

- There are about 2.7 million pupils in the province.

- There are over 5000 schools.
- In a significant proportion of the schools there is no running water within walking distance.
- Over half the schools in the province do not have an electricity supply.
- Only 34% of schools have a telephone.
- Nearly 2000 schools have buildings in a very poor condition.
- Many schools have unsanitary toilet facilities some schools have no facilities at all.
- 47% of schools have no facilities for sport.
- 14500 new classrooms need to be built to cope with present needs.

The funding of schools was a surprise to me. I had expected the independent schools (with a few exceptions for pupils gaining bursaries) to be fee-paying but I had not expected state schools to be fee-paying as well. The salaries of all the teachers in the state system are paid centrally and in addition each school receives a fixed amount, based mainly on the pupil numbers, with which to run the school. Some schools, under severe financial pressure, 'elaborate' on the number of children on roll. One particular school we visited, was in the midst of a government inspection - the only purpose of this visit was to establish the correct number of children on roll and make sure this number tallied with the figure submitted by the school.

In reality, the government funding is inadequate

and so each school has to raise additional funds by charging fees. Fees are set by the school governing body and are used to purchase, for example, educational resources and additional staffing. Many families are unable to pay the fees but schools must, by law, admit all children, whether they pay fees or not. Schools develop their own strategies for dealing with this dilemma. Some schools allow parents or children to 'work' for the school (for example, as cleaners, cooks, gardeners or builders) and thereby gain credit for their school fees. Others who are unable to pay (or refuse to pay) have their fees exempted, placing a greater financial burden on the rest of the parent body. The fees charged, in the state schools we visited, ranged from 200 Rand (£17) per year in the most deprived township areas to 8000 Rand (£660) per year. Fees are based on

the location of the school and the socio-economic background of families. Teachers starting salaries are about 1600 Rand per month (£135) and rise with experience to about 6500 Rand (£542) within the state system.

Many schools in the townships and rural areas struggle for adequate resources but in spite of this manage to attain excellent matriculation examination results.

Good results equal more pupils and more pupils equal more government money.

Although class sizes are high in the schools we visited, they ranged from a low of forty-two to an incredible eighty-eight - the pupils were all well-behaved, listened carefully to the teachers and were well motivated, working hard in their lessons. The pupils were all very well dressed for school with clean white shirts and ties, a fact I found amazing considering the squalor some of them were living in - wood and polythene shacks with no sanitation, for example. I was intrigued when one girl in a primary school took her shoes off when in the classroom (a common practice in many schools), put them on again when walking about within the school grounds but removed them when she was walking home at the end of the day!

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is huge - about half the size of England. It is Zulu in origin and has the largest Indian population of anywhere outside India itself. In the new South Africa, the focus of heritage education has altered and the Zulu language, culture, music, dance and traditions are now a valued part of the curriculum.

All of the schools I visited were eager and willing to demonstrate the singing, acting, musical and dancing talents of their pupils and there was always a great sense of national pride.

The township primary schools I visited had Zulu as their first language and English as their second. Many schools admit children who only speak Zulu and, as the language of learning in schools is English, one of the first challenges for primary schools is to teach them English.

Further details about professional development opportunities can be obtained from:

www.lect.orq.uk/

With many thanks to Adrian White of Kentisbury Primary School, Devon

The Zulu heritage is evident everywhere. On a visit to the Victoria Street market in Durban, traditional Zulu medicine (Muti) was on sale. Here one could find on sale in the Muti Market roots, herbs, snake-skins, skulls, animal bones and other unidentifiable animal parts awaiting purchase by Zulu doctors and herbalists. Traditional Zulu beadwork was on sale everywhere. Beads form an integral part of the culture and social life of ordinary people. Regional beadwork styles evolved over time, the intricate patterns and colour combinations symbolising a variety of complex meanings. Although you are likely to see Zulus wearing Levi jeans and Nike sweatshirts in the street, for ceremonial occasions (and also for the tourists) they do still wear their traditional dress. Although its form and symbolism have changed over time, it still provides a powerful link with the past. Many Zulus still wear a strip of goatskin on their wrist as an everyday tie with their heritage.

I welcomed the opportunity to visit South Africa, a humbling experience that has made me reflect on my own practice. The image sticks in my mind of so many welcoming and kind-hearted people who face life's difficulties with a smile and a determined resolution to better themselves. The Citizenship and Heritage learning programmes are used, quite rightly by the government, to promote National pride and self-esteem, confidence, tolerance and values. All these were evident in the schools themselves and also in the wider community. I appreciated and admired the fact that even in challenging circumstances headteachers could offer vision and direction to their schools and dedicated teachers could dramatically change lives.

The future of South Africa is in the hands of the pupils going through the system now -

nothing will change overnight and there is much work to be done but the will and determination of the children of South Africa will eventually overcome all obstacles.

Gaining a Chartermark

Context: Very small primary school with 32 pupils - 2.2 teachers – 3 class assistants – no one an expert!

Question: Would a Chartermark have an impact on standards in our school?

We did not start the venture to answer this question but by the end of the evaluation form filling **we knew we certainly had raised standards.**

Question: What is an Artsmark and how did we go about applying?

Nearly two years ago our High School held a presentation about Artsmarks. The Blessed William Howard High School had been granted Arts College Status and had money allocated to work with partner schools. Arts activities had been developing in our school with input such as their drama teacher working at our school. This good quality work in school was supported with outside expertise.

The first step was to examine **the documentation and it did seem a little daunting.**

Would this be the main stumbling block? In September 2003, the timescale to complete the forms was impossible. So we waited a year and this gave us time to gather information and make sure we were fulfilling all the criteria.

At the end of the year we held an Arts Festival a new venture, which included all aspects of the arts. We had outside experts coming in and a visit

to the Potteries Museum, which proved a very tiring but exhilarating for all the staff, children and parents. Then came the Summer holidays – three and a half week in the States - but with the Artsmark documentation in my bag. I knew that the November deadline would come too quickly unless I had prepared. (Extra paperwork is not my priority at school! So I admit to spending some holiday time in correlating ideas and recording practices.

Writing a new Arts policy statement was the next step. (Please see our website – address below.) After a long staff meeting we managed to put together a statement that reflected our beliefs and our hopes for doing better. Then came the completion of the form filling – draft and re-draft. Finally, we submitted the form and waited. A week later a phone call revealed that form had not been received correctly – I had a two-day deadline to re-submit. This time we also sent a paper copy!!!

Disadvantages

- The criteria for out-of school activities are hard to meet in very small schools.
- Finding the time to fill in the forms was difficult.

Advantages

- We have a real acknowledgement of our achievement in the arts.
- The form, though time-consuming acted as an excellent audit tool.
- We now have a good Arts policy and an action plan for future development.
- Standards have been raised and all aspects of the arts are well developed.
- The children's experiences have much broader and they enjoyed every activity.

Question:

Should you have a go?

There are many Chartermarks so you should be able to find one that suits your school's needs. It is a good way to mark achievement in a small school.

Our thanks and congratulations to Janice Jenkins, Swynnerton RC Primary School, Staffordshire.

56-pupil Kells Primary School in Scotland reached the final of the BBC Songs of Praise School Choirs' Competition. It was such a great achievement to be amongst the final three in competition with much bigger schools who could select their top singers.

Self-evaluation and Section 5 Inspections

I recently went for up-date training as an inspector for the new Section 5 school inspections. I was most gratified by the degree of interest and concern that course members and tutors showed about how these inspections will impact on small schools. As usual the enduring problem seems to be time, but there was a strong empathy and wish to make inspection work productively for small schools. During the two days (There's also an assessment and a check by HMI before I can inspect) I made notes about the details of the process and what it may mean for small schools.

Much will rest on the accuracy with which the Self-evaluation Form (SEF) is completed. In a sense, schools are being asked to inspect themselves with the same rigour as an OFSTED team. There's an expectation that you know your school well and that

your knowledge is based on evidence of outcomes. This assumes a good degree of skill and rigour in monitoring activities that will lead to whole school evaluation. In a future issue we hope to give further advice although in issue number 17 the Devon Advisers gave us some good ideas and the web-site carries our Monitoring Matrix for small schools. If you have not already done so, hold a PD day soon and together work out how you will provide robust evidence on which to make evaluations. You might do this as a cluster and/or buy in inspector expertise. It may feel that OFSTED is still driving your activity but these are really empowering things to do, which can lead straight to development planning and school improvement. The inspection focus areas of standards, teaching and learning and leadership and management are still to the fore, but ECM outcomes are now also important.

Standards	No more raw grades of oscillating trends in the report – A better focus on progress and achievement of individual pupils and groups. More sophisticated data allows schools (and inspectors) to see how well pupils are doing taking account of a wide variety of factors.
Teaching and learning	Pupils' measured progress is seen as the outcome of teaching. More focus on how different groups or individuals are progressing. Far less lessons observed (possibly even none). Some short classroom visits to look at specific issues. The assumption is that heads can show why they think, for example, that teaching and learning are good. (This might be copies of lesson observation sheets with data about those pupils' progress.) Grade descriptors for teaching and learning are available on OFSTED website.
Leadership & Management	The focus here is on the impact and capacity for further improvement. (You might have provided evidence for your last EA visit.) Assessment systems that can give NC Levels annually would seem helpful in providing such evidence, because it is achievement (not attainment) that is proof of the school's effectiveness.

Some thoughts

- **Be Ready:** ie keep the SEF up-to-date. After an initial phone call there will be practically no time to amend the SEF before the lead inspector accesses it. From the SEF and the Panda etc., the lead inspector will identify apparent strengths and weaknesses and may ask for evidence to support or deny these. This might include discussions with external people, where available.
- **Have the evidence available:** (eg analyse your Panda as soon as it comes and augment it with your own findings eg QCA interim.) Keep evidence of pupils' and parents' views, of attitudes and SMSC etc., and of ECM outcomes, etc.
- **Be aware of timescales:** Inspection every three years, at least. The phone call might be at end of preceding week, first from the RISP and later from the lead inspector (LI). This latter call may arrange the best time for a long (about an hour) call, probably for Monday. This discussion may request possible meetings with any available governors or parents, where the issues require. On Tuesday the team (In many small schools this will just be the LI.) arrive, meet head, and discuss the Pre-inspection Briefing. Much of the day will be spent in reviewing the evidence available to substantiate the SEF and the LI will often ask "Please show me". If the head is teaching this is going to be difficult. It would be

helpful to have a supply teacher available who could come at a day or two's notice. By the end of the inspection, the key findings will be fed back and the report finalised within three weeks.

- **Be prepared to offer advice** on which evidence to seek, once the issues for the inspection are known. You could even offer a suggested timetable of lessons that will help substantiate the SEF.
- **Data reliability:** The LI may need your advice in the reliability of data for small schools and where possible back this up with other evidence.
- **Inspectors are likely to look for evidence of differentiation:** Because of a greater focus on groups of pupils (eg age, gender, ethnicity, prior attainment, SEN, etc) the different ways in which needs are met are important to the school's overall provision. Underachievement by any significant group of pupils will be investigated.
- **Consequently, there may be classroom visits just to look at a particular group (SEN or G+Ts) or an issue** (use of staff, ICT).
- The pilot inspections found that head's tend to feel a greater sense of responsibility for the inspection.
- In all your discussions, **link provision to outcomes.** "I know the teaching is 'good' because

no pupils had less than the average number of NC Level gains and 8/10 gained well.”

• **DO NOT MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT PROCESSES FROM OTHERS’ INSPECTIONS.** Pilot inspections and some LEA staff, sometimes misled others. The issues and therefore to some

extent the process will be different school to school. The LI designs the inspection to fit the school’s needs.

• **DON’T BE AFRAID TO COMPLAIN,** particularly if you know that significant and available evidence has not been taken into account.

We are yet to know how Section 5 inspections will affect small schools. I suspect it will be more pressured for the head and the LI but less so for others. Are they likely to be more accurate? Will they promote a better understanding of needs and school improvement? What we can do as a Forum is to exchange our thoughts and ideas. In particular, I hope you will share your experience of the new inspection system. Contact me if I can help.

Mike Carter Rgl

Section 5 Acronyms

PIB	Pre-inspection Briefing	CPO	Child Protection Officer
QAM	Quality Assurance Mentor	QAR	Quality Assurance Reader
LI	Lead Inspector	TI	Team Inspector
RISP	Regional Inspection Services Provider	EF	Evidence Form
ECM	Every Child Matters	SEF	Self Evaluation Form
CCI	Child Care Inspector	LDD	Learners with learning Difficulties and disabilities

Some common weaknesses found in pilot SEFs by HMI

- In the section about the **distinctiveness**, most were too long and not specific enough. Avoid over-generalisations like “positive ethos”.
- In the section about **others’ views**, they often lacked evaluation and only listed how views were gathered.
- About how well **learners achieve**, some just copied Panda data, with no explanation or synthesis of other data, which sometimes undermined the school’s own judgement.
- In the **quality of provision** there was sometimes too little evaluation of the three distinct areas.
- Under **leadership and management** some SEFs omitted to address all eight areas and listed systems but did not evaluate their impact.
- Under the **Overall Effectiveness**, too much was left for the reader to deduce. Key aspects from other sections, or barriers to effectiveness were not evaluated that would explain the grade given.

Further help:

- Philip Schofield’s helpful TES article (TES 25.02.05) suggested four key aspects to self-evaluation: Organise your information, Spend time on things that matter, Value your strengths and check out things you may take for granted.
- Research on Self-Evaluation, available from NFER, or NSSF website.
- Try the small schools’ SWOT analysis.
- Buy in a Section 5 trained consultant or have a MOT!
- OFSTED’s website has many useful pages of information and a newsletter for schools.

NSSF asked OFSTED's data and research department to investigate the value added for small schools.

OFSTED categorises schools with 50 or less pupils as "very small" and those with 51- 100 as "small".

Value added in schools of different sizes

This paper looks at the value added (VA) between Key Stage 1 and 2 in primary schools of different sizes. The analysis is based on 2003 pupil level average point score data.

Main findings

- Value added in the smallest schools is slightly below that in other schools.
- Value added in other small schools is slightly above that in other schools.
- Though these differences are statistically significant, they are so small that they cannot be considered educationally significant.

Background

The analysis fitted a regression line¹ to the KS1 and KS2 pupil level VA data. Pupils had a different value added score relative to this national line. These pupil differences are grouped together by school size (figure 1), enabling us to compare VA in schools of different sizes.

Figure 1. Comparison of VA in schools of different size with the national regression line.

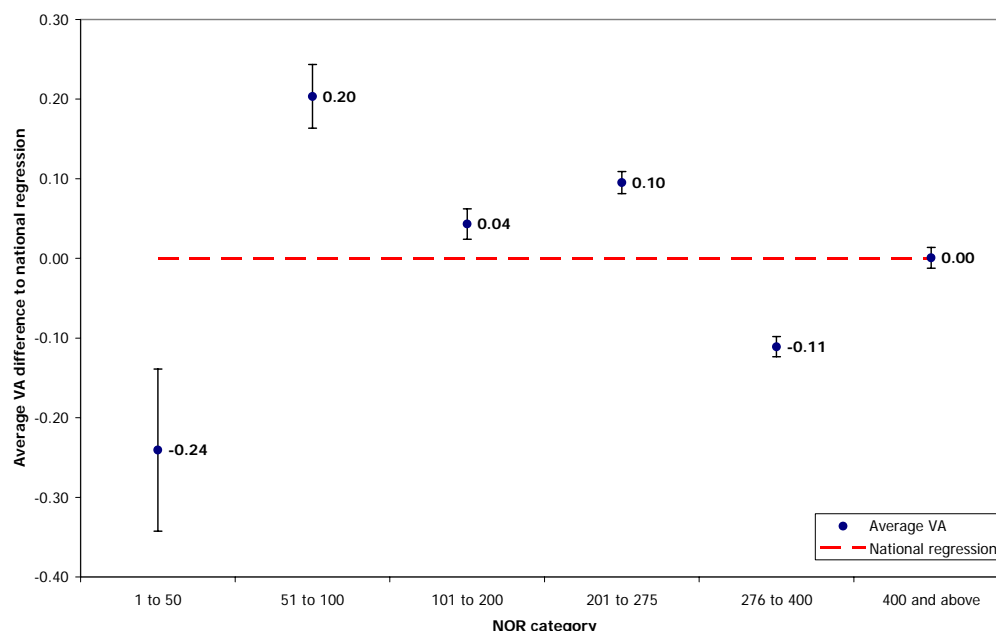


Figure 1 shows no clear relationship between VA and the size of schools. The results do show a statistical difference between schools of different size and the national. The smallest schools (1 to 50 pupils), for example, had a lower VA than the national average². However, the range of values overall is within +/- 0.3 of the national line. This small difference (representing approximately three weeks progress) is largely a result of analysing a large population and does not necessarily reflect differences in education.

With many thanks to HMI David Howarth

NSSF Comment:

This seems good news for small and very small schools, whose average results are often a little above national averages but when socio-economic factors are taken into account this advantage reduces. In Issue 18 we reported that OFSTED found that "the overall effectiveness of small and very small schools is broadly on a par with other groups of schools". There was a very slight advantage for schools under 50 on roll. For the above value added data it seems that schools with 50 – 100 have the advantage. This difference is due to the fact that the above is a measure of the value added in English and mathematics through KS2, while previous data relayed the 'overall effectiveness' judgements made by inspectors. Statistics in these comparisons can be given too much significance and the results of an alternative method from OFSTED are posted on our website. It is not that we want to contrast small and larger schools but we do need to refute those who seek to undermine small school viability on educational grounds.

¹ Often referred to as line of best fit.

² The average for the group was -0.24, the line that passes through this shows the 95% confidence interval; because this confidence interval does not cross the national regression line there is a statistical difference.

Broad Brush Small Schools' S.W.O.T. analysis:

Make your own analysis beside the generic points and then add your own.

NSSF, MC '05

Generic Strengths	Comment, Evidence of impact?
Good teaching, learning, and test results?	
Productive parental /community links?	
Holistic curriculum?	
Quick innovation?	
Strong personal development?	
My school's strengths	
Typical Weaknesses:	Degree of impact, evidence?
Achievement of the brightest?	
Limited social/intellectual stimulation?	
Weak link in the staff?	
Work overload?	
Provision for Foundation Stage? (including accommodation)	
My school's particular barriers	

Generic Opportunities:	Might these help my provision? How?
Cross curricular enrichment	
"Extended schooling"	
Community/Parental involvement	
Innovative patterns of learning	
Overcoming difficulties through networking or clustering, etc.	
My school's opportunities	
Typical Threats:	Degree of risk/ Strategies to reduce?
Inappropriate requirements Eg Time for inspection	
Recruitment (esp.to headship)	
Workforce remodelling + PPA	
Competition for pupils, NOR,	
Loss of earmarked funding	
Threats to my school's provision	

Remove these two pages so you can use them at will.

If you have comments on the helpfulness of this S.W.O.T. form we would be very grateful to hear about them. It could be used to identify areas where you need firmer evidence for self-evaluation or as a basis for discussion with your EA, SIP, or consultant.

Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development in Small schools

This year has seen the GTC entry to small school support. From teachers' feedback they realised there was a need for a greater national awareness and provision for the CPD of teachers working in small schools. NSSF is delighted with this additional support. Chris Foster is the GTC's person with a remit for small schools and earlier ran two ("Perfectly Formed") conferences to identify the nature of the need. (See Chris's article in this Issue.) We all know

too well how so many courses miss the mark for small schools, talking about year group objectives and senior management teams. This mismatch was identified as the "slip-stream syndrome" by Dunning over a decade ago. There are also problems for many small school with access and finance. Its good to see then that CPD is no longer seen as a bolt on. Jacqui Smith (Schools Minister) said at a recent conference:

"...it means that you and your school make the decision about what the priorities are, informed by accurate management and performance data. And it's exactly the same with CPD – you decide your priorities and the best way to achieve them. It means schools taking responsibility for their own development and vision, recognising the importance of collaborative working... You as professionals need to have CPD conversations about what, how much and when. This ensures CPD isn't a "bolt-on" activity but a well considered, well embedded part of teachers' professional lives. It shows that CPD is not a soft option going on the odd course now and then, but a structured programme..."

At the same conference, Carol Adams (Chief Executive, GTC) revealed that over 20% of teachers in a survey said that their needs were not met and many were self-funded but that

collaborative learning within the school was a common activity. Many teachers would like opportunities to observe colleagues teach or visit other schools.

"However, underneath the headlines it is clear that there is a huge differentiation between different groups of teachers. We must stop referring to the teaching profession as though it were a homogenous group... Teachers surveyed identify some crucial factors that are important to make CPD an integral part of the teaching profession...these are: an understanding of teachers' individual development needs – personalised learning for teachers to meet pupils' need: supply cover, i.e. time; support from senior managers and high quality provision..."

Carol had anxieties as well:

"...will school leaders and teachers be able, with all the pressures upon them, to integrate real teacher learning in a meaningful way into the requirements of performance management system and career ladder?"

At first sight, this seems like yet another additional responsibility where the difficulties of time are magnified for heads of small schools. However, most small school heads already are very mindful of the career development of their teachers. There are few to support and a teacher within the cluster may take the role of CPD co-ordinator. The problems are more to do with accessing and funding the right activity. Here schools will need to look outside to the cluster, the LEA or the growing private market.

However, a related issue seems of growing importance and that is the real threat to small schools of difficulties in recruitment to headship. Geoff

Southworth recognised the need for schools to "grow a head" and this is so needed in small schools. Career paths are extremely limited in small schools but the road to headship is a good opportunity for the many wonderful teachers working in small schools who have a wide range of experience and have been "close" to management and whole school leadership. We were asked to investigate if access to NPQH posed difficulties. We are assured that a lack of management points or formal leadership roles is not an issue because entry requirements are about what teachers have done rather than formal positions or training. (See information from NCSL in this Issue.)

Mike Carter (Chair NSSF)

SMALL SCHOOL ISSUES and NPQH

The issues facing small schools around recruitment of staff are generally those facing many schools but are magnified.

For the last complete round of NPQH - the mandatory headship qualification - the representation of small schools was comparable to that of all primary schools. That is, approximately one in twenty small schools had a participant on NPQH. This is very similar to the proportion of primary schools putting forward candidates. It is noticeable that of those who sought a fast-track application, where they were applying for headship, without a place on the programme, a disproportionate number were from small schools and there was appreciable regional difference too.

Small schools were specifically targeted for recruitment using direct mail in October 2004, and they continue to be on the agenda for recruitment to NPQH. Of those who applied from small schools in Autumn 2004 it is significant to analyse the route allocated to participants, as this reflects the quality of leadership experience as indicated through the application.

Of those who applied from small schools; 52% went on to Route 1; 46% went on to Route 2 and 2% to Route 3.

This breakdown is very similar to national averages although significantly fewer went on to R3 (around 5% nationally). This indicates that the leadership experiences shown by applicants from small schools are similar to those shown by all candidates. Application is assessed by achievement and experience and not by role.

NPQH participants from small schools are eligible for 100% subsidy and repayment of travel, supply, and subsistence. NPQH admission requirements are available through our web sites and are made available at briefings prior to each round and in application packs.

The College also continues to share the latest commissioned and practitioner research across the profession through publications, and Leading Practice Seminars. A Research Associate report published this summer **Virtual Leadership: a small school reality?** (2005) Peter Ralley and Paul Cockcroft looks at using ICT for headteachers of small schools to network effectively.

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/C30/66/randd-ralley-virtual-leadership-summary.pdf>

Leadership succession planning is key issue facing all schools. NCSL has published two practical guides to help school leaders: **Meeting the Challenge: Growing Tomorrow's School Leaders** (2004) and **Shaping up to the Future: A guide to roles, structures and career development in secondary schools** (2005).

NCSL's Leading From The Middle programme develops the capacity of middle leaders, a critical part of developing emergent leaders. The programme has targeted small schools in recent application rounds and encouraged collaboration across small schools. Since this programme has been developed, small schools are over-represented and constitute 4.5% of all participants.

Our thanks to Dr Robin Attwood, NCSL.

New website service

In a new service to our members the website will carry the latest general education news in the form of "Education Weekly". We will also carry recent **parliamentary debates** and questions that are relevant to small schools. This includes the **Scottish** Parliament, the **Welsh** Assembly, and **Westminster**. These services together with the document summary service will be located in the 'members only' section of the site. A password is required for this part. If you do not have one, members should please email Jim Cork at nssf@care4free.net with your name, school, cluster name (if applicable), and LEA and a password will be sent to you.

Have you heard about the General Teaching Council's Small Schools Project?

By Chris Foster, (small schools remit for GTC)



Teachers in small schools reported to the GTC that they felt they had particular needs regarding continuing professional development that were not always met or well understood.

The GTC responded by inviting teachers from small schools, and staff from other organisations involved in supporting them, to attend a meeting to explore the issues and to ensure that the voice of small schools was heard.

The first 'Perfectly Formed' event took place in London on 29 April. It was then repeated in Birmingham on 8 June. In all, about seventy people attended and a number of others said they could not attend but wished to be kept informed.

Both events were very well received, with all participants reporting that we met our aims. Many people said that they particularly enjoyed meeting teachers from small schools in other areas of the country and having the opportunity

to exchange ideas and to share concerns and strategies.

The co-operation and support between the GTC Small Schools Project, the National Small Schools Federation and the National College of School Leadership was recognised as an important factor in the success of the 'Perfectly Formed' events. We would like to thank Mike Carter and Christine Pfaff, particularly, for their presentations, support and advice.

It was exciting to see people exchanging contact details with schools that were philosophically close, but not necessarily geographically close, as a result of the 'Jigsaw' activity and lunchtime introductions. The cross fertilisation of ideas that will result will be a great bonus for the schools themselves and for the GTC.

As a result of these and other conversations with teachers from small schools, the GTC expresses a commitment to ensuring that the voices of small schools are heard by:

- endeavouring to offer proportionate representation at our events and focus group meetings, as well as in our newsletters, publications and policy work;
- circulating the list of attendees (with email addresses) to every participant in the 'Perfectly Formed' events, and also to those who could not attend but who asked to be kept in touch, so that independent networks can develop;
- providing an annual event for small schools to offer them face-to face meetings with others in the independent networks that have emerged as a result of the 'Perfectly Formed' events;
- strengthening the links forged with other agencies and support services, such as the National Small Schools Forum and National College for School Leadership, so that we provide complementary support rather than duplication of effort;
- exploring links between CPD and performance management;
- bringing our influence to bear with regard to general issues around PPA that are particular to small schools;
- endeavouring to increase the number of small schools signing up to Connect to increase the pool of knowledge.

Learn more about what the GTC can do for you

The GTC website, <http://www.gtce.org.uk>, provides information about the remit of the GTC and the full range of services it offers to teachers and other stakeholders in education.

Teachers and others may find the information on the GTC's Professional Networks particularly helpful. There are currently three networks:

- **Connect** - for those who lead in continuing professional development
- **Achieve** – for those interested in promoting race equality and diversity
- **Engage** – a network being set up for newly qualified and early careers teachers

The Connect network was set up in response to a need expressed by teachers. It is an electronic network sharing best practice for the purposes of improving the policy, practice and effectiveness of CPD in schools.

The network now has more than 7000 members that represent 1 in 4 schools across the country. Members receive:

- a) A termly electronic newsletter featuring the GTC's CPD policy and project work, as well as case studies, academic research, resources and national developments in CPD. Back copies of these newsletters are available on the GTC's website.
- b) A monthly email showcasing 'One good CPD idea that works' with back copies soon to be available on the GTC's website.
- c) Opportunities to take part in and attend project group events face-to-face events.

The website provides network members and users of the GTC's website in general, with an opportunity to access an overview of the GTC's work in CPD. The Connect website provides network members with a range of practical examples of effective CPD in practice.

Network members find the exemplification of Learning Conversations and Peer Observation particularly effective in supporting their leadership of CPD in school:

"This has given me a better understanding of what a learning conversation really is. Hearing about what other schools have been doing has given me a chance to learn from their ideas."
Primary CPD leader, Kent.

"An excellent starting point for planning the use of learning conversations in my school", deputy headteacher, Kent.

"We have used the Connect case studies on peer observation to give a structure to our multi-disciplinary work. They have helped staff add a professional development element to the many observations we carry out as part of our work." Assistant headteacher, special school, Surrey.

See www.gtce.org.uk/learningconversations and www.gtce.org.uk/peerobservation for more information.

The Connect newsletter also provides network members with an overview of the latest developments in CPD. The newsletter supports the network members by signposting research and resources. Information on national developments from a range of organisations is collated and presented in an accessible way.

"This is the only place I know where all of this information is put together in one place. Thank you Connect!"

All copies of Connect newsletters can be accessed through the website at www.gtce.org.uk/connect.

Connect members have used the website to develop their own networks. Members have been put in touch with each other, shared their practice and visited schools around the country. Two teachers from Cornwall visited a teacher in Bristol to develop ideas for mentoring and coaching strategies. All three were contacted by another teacher from Kent after she read about their work. All the network members involved in this "mini network" described how the relationships they developed through Connect supported their own professional development as well as their leadership of professional development in their own schools.

Visit www.gtce.org.uk/connect to see the website for yourself and to complete online registration.

Workforce Remodelling in Small Schools

NSSF Comment

Issue 19 carried an article about workforce remodelling and PPA. Since then the NAHT has pulled out of the National Agreement but the government says that it will be implemented with no further finance. We know how the situation for small schools has been particularly difficult with many still not clear about how PPA time can be allocated without prejudicing the quality of provision. Others have found short term solutions but some have creatively found positive and sustainable ways, notwithstanding falls in numbers on roll. Circumstances vary so much there can be no single advice. However, the National Remodelling Team has a small schools section headed by Mark Long, who has listened and tried to provide support and advice, following an investigative meeting in early spring. (Minutes from this are available from Mike Carter) NSSF has tried to promote more consideration and the NRT agreed to provide:

- *More small schools case studies,*
- *Develop an approach for small schools wishing to form a cluster,*
- *Highlight the benefits of clustering/networking to LEAs*
- *Develop tools on culture change in small schools,*
- *Small schools ideas log,*
- *Support/encourage innovative activity within small schools,*
- *Clarify legal positions regarding support staff and trips etc,*
- *Develop more effective links between learning networks and NRT/Remodelling,*
- *“Badge” content as being relevant to small schools,*
- *Develop training on mixed age classes,*
- *A lead cluster head close to remodelling to work within the cluster,*
- *Strategy for communications over support to small schools,*
- *Empathise more!*
- *More network training events for small schools.*

Action on most of these is done or in progress. Let us know how helpful you have found these. Below is a resume of the team's sources of guidance. We are grateful for this article. We still want to share useful guidance while accepting that there is no one way. Please let the editor have your thoughts.

NRT and small schools

From the NRT small schools' team

“Within its remit of supporting all schools through the remodelling process, the NRT is keen to offer support where it is needed most. Following on from its small schools workshop held in February, the NRT has developed a much better understanding and empathy with the difficult circumstances that some small schools find themselves in, especially in respect of PPA time. A series of case studies has recently been created by the NRT that focus entirely on PPA strategies within schools. This project, although not solely focused on small schools, managed to capture many examples of good practice strategies that schools were currently employing to free up PPA time. Links to case studies that focused on small schools are listed below:

http://www.remodelling.org/resources/case_studies.php

In addition, there are several other small schools case studies on the NRT website that provide a broader view of remodelling in general:

One of the other outcomes from the February workshop was the development of an approach for small schools seeking to develop some form of cluster/networking structure by highlighting examples of where such initiatives have delivered significant benefits. While recognising that clustering and/or closer collaboration is not a panacea for all small schools issues, it does seem to work for many others. An article on clustering is close to being published. This will contain brief summaries of six very different clusters around the country ranging in size from three to eight schools each. Information includes how schools work together, the benefits gained as a result and future plans and activities.

As you know, there are many LEAs around the country with their own particular strategies or approaches with regard to small schools issues. Where it can, the NRT has been networking with them and as and when information becomes more generally available, this will be shared with all interested parties through links on the NRT website.

Many small schools are still seeking information on the regulations and finer details concerning PPA. The NRT website now has a section devoted entirely to PPA support where schools can find the information they want: http://www.remodelling.org/programmes/na/ppa_intro.php

Concern was also expressed about health and safety issues and guidance on school trips. More specifically, this is about whether school staff, other than teachers, can supervise and be responsible for taking groups of children on

school trips. In principle, this is a matter for the headteacher's professional judgement and whether (s)he believes the person involved has the knowledge, skills and competence to undertake such a task. In making this judgement, the headteacher should take careful note of the risk assessment. However, since LEA guidelines and insurance policies vary across the country, schools are strongly advised to seek guidance from their LEAs on these matters.

More up to date guidance from the DfES is expected to be produced at some time during the summer. Current information on this subject can be found at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthandsafety>

There is further guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). The guidance is called: 5 Steps to Risk Assessment, Health & Safety. Please telephone 0541 545500 or write to HSE information centre, Broad Lane, Sheffield, S3 7HQ.

Finally, the NRT would like to direct those schools with particular problems to the local support offered by their own LEA Remodelling Adviser. These people should be the first line of approach when looking for guidance and support on workforce remodelling issues. The NRT also stresses that its website is a good place to start when looking for additional support on issues concerning implementation of the National Agreement.”

Some relevant opinions:

The NFER carried out a survey about the employment and deployment of teaching assistants in England and Wales. The research was summarised by Karen Whitby and concluded:

“The new workforce agreement will mean that teaching assistants of the future will be deployed in more varied ways. However, the demographic background of teaching assistants at the moment reveals that the current workforce is not expecting to remain in their posts in the long term. Given the current lack of career structure for teaching assistants, the chance of attracting people who are will to commit to the profession in the long term may be slim. To make assisting in the classroom a viable career option, LEA, and school managers need to contemplate teaching assistants career development, training, and role in the school environment seriously.”

Whitby K, *The Employment and Deployment of Teaching Assistants*. In Topic, Spring 2005 NFER

At a LGC conference the remodelling advisers for Leicestershire said:

“Our work with the early adoptors and the first tranche allowed us to begin to explore the area of debate that the remodelling process encouraged. It is perhaps worth stating at this point that the remodelling team was and remains committed to the process of remodelling, the change management process and the objectives of the National Agreement. However, we are also committed to the belief that successful and sustained remodelling will only be achieved if it does not compromise the professional standards of all involved. It is this tension that has run throughout our programme to date and it is this tension that is underlying the particularly critical period we are in at the moment as we approach the third stage of the agreement.”

David Brown and Martin Furniss Leicestershire in the LGC conference handbook. April 2005

The Times Educational Supplement reported a recent survey of 471 primary schools and 74 secondary schools in which they found that:

31% of primaries felt that PPA time would raise standards whereas 24% felt it would lower them. In over 70% of the schools teachers would be used to cover PPA time, in 44% TAs are to be used with 20% having HLTAs, senior staff and specialist teachers would also be used in under 30%. Many schools would run a mixed economy. In primaries, PE is the subject most likely to be “handed over”. Overall, the survey found that in 88% of schools PPA time had been planned to be available from September 2005, but only one in five could currently see a way to do this in the following year.

Times Educational Supplement p.4. 03 June 2005.



NATIONAL SMALL SCHOOLS' FORUM

Aim: To Promote High Quality Education in Small Schools

www.nssf.co.uk/

INFORMATION PAGES

About the NSSF

Registered Charity Number 1096234

The **NSSF** is an independent, member organisation with charitable status, which seeks to promote the continued development of good standards of teaching and learning in small primary schools. Its 1000+ members include individual schools, heads and teachers, governors, LEAs, LEA advisers, independent consultants and groups of schools in the United Kingdom.

Our aim to promote high quality education in small schools is implemented via the termly meetings of the **FORUM**, Journal & News, publications and papers, a website and an annual conference which keep members in touch with one another, with research into the work of small schools and with developments at national and local levels. We do not, however, engage in campaigns on behalf of schools that have been identified for reorganisation by their local authorities beyond calling attention to the evidence about the high standards attained by pupils in small schools.

Our definition of small primary schools includes schools of up to about 100 pupils in nursery, primary, first, infant, junior, middle-deemed-primary and special settings. Because recent government grants for small school projects included those of up to 200 pupils, we have in membership a number of these larger enterprises. We also have a few large schools whose heads welcome our emphasis on high quality teaching and learning and on slim management systems. We welcome this diversity.

Membership

Membership is open to individuals (eg heads, teachers, governors, LEA personnel, colleagues in HE etc), schools, higher education establishments, groups, clusters, and local education authorities. Individual persons or schools join for £10 per annum; groups, clusters and education authorities join for £4 per school plus £4 per adviser or officer who may also wish to receive our mailings, subject to a minimum of 6. Membership brings the benefits of three Journal & News each year, attendance at meetings of the **FORUM**, access to the members' section of the **NSSF** website and preferential rates at our annual conference.

The membership year is from 1 April. The individual membership fee remains at £10 but we have reluctantly increased the group/LEA discounted fee to £4 per school/adviser/officer for 2003/4 on. This is still very good value at only 40% of the individual price.

For membership details visit the **NSSF** website or contact the membership secretary, Jim Cork, 19 Clinton Way, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln LN10 6QW (phone: 01526 353848; email: nssf@care4free.net)

Member Education Authorities and Groups

In addition to our individual members, the following groups and education authorities have joined their small schools. These groups and LEAs benefit from greatly reduced subscription rates, in return for one person acting as the point of contact who also distributes our Journal & News and conference information. Details of this scheme and an application form can be found on our website or by contacting Jim Cork (see Membership above).

Membership for 04/5 comprised

Name	LEA/Group	No of schools
Aspatria Group (Cumbria)	Group	6
Barnsley	LEA	27
Bromley	LEA	7
Buckinghamshire	LEA	92
Devon	LEA	138
East Lothian	LEA	11
East Sussex	LEA	80
Flintshire	LEA	22
Herefordshire	LEA	36
Isle of Wight	LEA	11
Kirklees	LEA	28
Leicestershire	LEA	69
Milton Keynes	LEA	14
Norfolk	LEA	139
North Ayrshire	LEA	11
Nottinghamshire	LEA	100
Renfrewshire	LEA	6
Shropshire and Wrekin	LEA	63
Somerset	LEA	79
South Gloucestershire	LEA	8
Staffordshire	LEA	63
Upper Wharfedale Cluster	Group	7
Walsall	LEA	18
Worcestershire	LEA	69

NSSF Papers and Reports

NSSF Papers offer guidance to small schools on matters of policy, management and curriculum. They take the realities of life in small schools into account and reflect the need for slim and effective systems.

NSSF Reports are digests of research and other studies, articles that have appeared in the NSSF Journal and News, and reports of conferences.

Paper no:	Title All but P14 – P14c can be downloaded from www.nssf.co.uk All can be emailed	Price	Postage required	Envelope Size
P1	Required policies and documents; a guide to the law (Updated March 2002)	Free	A	C5
P2	Checklist: Content of the governors' annual report to parents; a guide to the law	Free	A	C5
P3	Checklist: Content of the school prospectus: a guide to the law	Free	A	C5
P4	Development planning; keeping it short and simple	£1.50	B	C4
P5	Development planning forms (Word disc or can be sent free of charge by email)	£5	B	C5
P6	Time tips for busy small school heads	Free	A	C5
P7	A matrix of monitoring suggestions	Free	A	C5
P8	Differentiation	£1.50	B	C4
P9	Towards a policy for boys' attainment	Free	A	C5
P10	The curriculum; coverage, balance and teaching time: (Updated October 2002)	Free	A	C5
P11	The head's report to the governing body	£1.50	B	C4
P12	A code of conduct for school governors	Free	A	C5
P14	Planning for Mixed Age Classes: YR/Y1 Numeracy and Literacy	£2.00	C	C4
P14a	Planning for Mixed Age Classes: Y1/Y2 Literacy	£2.00	C	C4
P14b	Planning for Mixed Age Classes: Y2/Y3 Literacy	£2.00	C	C4
P14c	Planning for Mixed Age Classes: Y3/Y4 Literacy	£2.00	C	C4
P15	Cultural Education in Small Primary Schools (2003)	Free	A	C5
P16	A Model Complaints Procedure (2003)	£1.00	A	C5

Report No:	Title All but R1 can be downloaded or emailed	Price	Postage required	Envelope Size
R1	The Small Rural Primary School and its Community: Educating Together, by Ronald Arnold (Published jointly by the NSSF and Action for Communities in Rural England [ACRE]) (NB not available by email)	£1.50	B	C5
R2	Small Schools: Big Future: report on conference held on 3 October 2003	£1.50	B	C4
R3	What are small schools' advantages and disadvantages for pupils' learning, by Mike Carter (from NSSF News 16; 2004)	Free	A	C5
R4	Small School Headship: Part 1 – Are there enough applicants? Part 2 - NSSF Study of what heads find rewarding, by Mike Brogden (from NSSF News 13 & 14; 2003)	£1.00	A	C5
R5	Review of research into small schools: some annotated references (Part 1) by Mike Carter (from NSSF News 12; 2002)	£1.00	A	C5

There are three ways to obtain copies of NSSF Papers and Reports:

1. Download from the members' section of the **NSSF** website (except for P14 – 14c and R1). This is free of charge.
2. Email mike.carter3@tesco.net with your requirements (except for R1) to be sent as Word attachments. Also free of charge.
3. Send for copies by post to: Mike Carter, 6 Butterwick Drive, Herongate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3XE.

IF REQUESTING BY POST PLEASE NOTE:

- **Official orders are not accepted: a cheque must accompany orders for priced items** (This is because we don't have staff so pre-payment saves a lot of the volunteers' time.)
- **SAE essential (see above for size and stamp)** with note of your requirements (this is also because we don't have staff).
- **Envelope codes:** C5 holds A4 folded once; C4 holds A4 unfolded.
- **Postages on SAE:** up to 3 papers at A = 20p (second class) or 28p (first class)
4 or more at A = 34p or 42p
1 paper at B = 34p or 42p
2 or 3 papers at B = 46p or 60p
1 paper at C = 46p or 60p
2 papers at C = 80p or £1.01
3 papers at C = £1.25 or £1.56
4 papers at C = £1.68 or £2.10
Other combinations: please use best guess!
- **Cheques** to the **NSSF**, please.

Regional Representatives

Our regional representatives provide informal links between the **NSSF** and their areas. We don't define "regions" so we're very happy to have several reps in an LEA area. Regional reps are invited to the termly meetings of the **FORUM** and to bring or send us news of small school issues in their regions. The news is added to the minutes of the meetings and summarised in this Journal & News at intervals.

Contact details for the regional reps can be found on the **NSSF** website.

Vera Ballinger	Nottinghamshire	Jean Ennis	Derbyshire	Dot Charlton	Northumberland
Lucy Davis	S. Gloucestershire	David Chaplin	Devon	Julia Matthew	Northumberland
Gill Deakin	Worcestershire	Tessa Pemberton	Essex	Merle Lippitt	Shropshire
Lesley Mason	East Sussex	Chris Williams	S. Gloucestershire	Mike Carter	Shropshire
Liz Howe	Market Harborough	Celia Smith	Kent	Peter Kemble	Somerset
Geoff Lee	Northumberland	Marilyn Thom	Kent	Bob Lambert	Staffordshire
Jane Morris	Cornwall	Alison Pile	Lancashire	Janis Jenkins	Staffordshire
David Cornwall	Cumbria	Paul Weston	Leicestershire	Anne Keig	Surrey
Jim Cobbett	Devon	Jim Cork	Lincolnshire	Gill Ellis	Yorkshire
Sue Davies	Dorset	John Harris	Norfolk	Carol Tosh	Buckinghamshire

NSSF officers and committee

There may be changes made at the 2005 AGM

Name	Role	From	Phone	Email
Mike Carter	Chairman	Shropshire	01743 233893	mike.carter3@tesco.net
John Harris	Vice-chairman	Norfolk	01603 433276 x123	john.harris.edu@norfolk.gov.uk
Carol Tosh	Secretary	Buckinghamshire	01296 383522	ctosh@buckscc.gov.uk
Jim Cork	Membership secretary	Lincolnshire	01526 342349	nssf@care4free.net
Chris Williams	Treasurer	S. Gloucestershire	01454 313682	cwilliams0@btinternet.com
Mike Brogden	Committee	Shropshire	01584 841649	mike.brogden@virgin.net
Janis Jenkins	Committee	Staffordshire	01782 796214	offices@swynnerton.staffs.sch.uk
Julie Grainger	Committee	Northumberland	01620 882207	admin@cornhill.northumberland.sch.uk
Vera Ballinger	Committee	Nottinghamshire	01427 880342	veraballinger@yahoo.com

Meetings of the FORUM

The **FORUM** meets termly, sometimes as centrally as possible and sometimes in regional areas to follow up a particular issue or contribution. These Saturday meetings begin with a meeting of the committee to sort out **NSSF** business and plans and we are joined by regional representatives and members for the main part of the meetings. The officers and committee conduct quite a lot of business in between meetings via email to enable the **FORUM** meetings to focus on more interesting matters. At each meeting we invite a speaker to talk with us about areas of particular interest to the work of small schools. These include curriculum, management, leadership, LEA issues, research, ideas, successes, practicalities etc. Regional reps tell us about small school issues in their areas and other news and ideas are exchanged. These meetings are much valued and seen as mini-conferences which help to keep people in touch and enthused – Saturdays well spent despite the giving up of increasingly precious "free" time.

The dates for the next **FORUM** meetings are 11 June and 1 October 2005 and 28 January 2006. For further information about the venues and programmes for the meetings of the **FORUM**, please visit the **NSSF** website.

Annual Conference

This residential 24-hour event, normally held in March, offers an opportunity to hear contributions from heads and teachers and from advisers, researchers and others whose experience and studies inform the work of small schools. In addition to the speakers there are group sessions, meals, and coffee breaks which give time to the important business of meeting people from across the UK and exchanging ideas and information.

Details are posted on our website and in **NSSF** Journal & News.

Journal & News

The **NSSF** Journal & News is published at least twice a year and is our main means of keeping in touch with members. Back copies for the past year or so are in the members' section of the **NSSF** website.

Website

Go to www.nssf.co.uk for news and information, NSSF Papers and Reports, back copies of the Journal, conference plans, membership details and the document summary service. A member's password is required for the summary service. Members should please email Jim Cork at nssf@care4free.net with your name, school, cluster name (if applicable) and LEA and a password will be sent to you.

Autumn Forum

Saturday 1st October 2005

At the Premier Travel Inn, (Forest East), Hinkley Road, Leicester. (A47)

Free mini-conference, AGM, and free lunch

- 11.00am Chris Foster GTC
- 11.30am "Roundup" news from the regions (informal discussion),
- 12.00pm AGM
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.20pm Speakers re: networking and federations.
- 2.20pm Residual NSSF business (eg planning National Small Schools Week).

NSSF earnestly hopes you will come to this Forum because there is a need to change the constitution to allow us to be quorate. The spring issue contained details of the AGM agenda and reports etc. these are also Posted on the website. You will also find the Forum refreshing and offers many suggestions to help you and your pupils.

Please contact Mike Carter (mike.carter3@tesco.net or 01743 233893) with a message to say your contact details and that you are coming. You will be sent updated details and a map, etc.

Why not enter our free website competition?

Entries by: 13th April 2006

Enter your school's website for a £100 prize - free entry

All you need do is to e-mail your school's web-site address to mike.carter3@tesco.net and that you want to enter it by 13th April. After this, the judges will access each and decide the winner. This will be announced and presented at an event during National Small School's Week. Criteria for selection are posted on the website and in Journal and News 18 (Autumn '04), which is also available on the website: www.nssf.co.uk
Previous winners' and committee members' sites are not eligible to enter.

Announcing the third

National Small Schools' Week

Week beginning 19th June 2006

In planning for the year, you may like to take account of this. You could link Summer events to the week, or plan for your cluster's get-together then, for example, or - etc, etc. A list of previous happenings was posted in Journal and News 18 (Autumn '04), and is also available on the website: www.nssf.co.uk **The week has good potential to promote small schools and your successes locally and nationally. There will be some national events held with an aim of keeping small school education in a high profile. There will be more suggestions and plans made soon so look out on the website or in the next edition of this newsletter.**