

SCHOOL UTOPIA

work in progress v1 april 2020



school utopia

How exactly are we preparing our children for 2030 and beyond? Are they leaving school with the life skills and social adaptability they will need to do well as adults? Are they happy, confident and well-rounded individuals? Do all children have the same opportunities to thrive & grow?

Our education system has remained largely unchanged for decades. This despite the unimaginable differences that we have seen in just one generation – in technology, politics, social justice, and more.

The current system simply isn't working. You only have to look at the statistics for absence & exclusions, the experiences of marginalised pupils (those in the SEND, Pupil Premium and ethnic minority groups) and read about the rise in offrolling and 'non-elective' home education. It's not working for children and families, and it's not working for school leaders and teaching staff either.

There are some great examples of innovative education out there, and a hunger for change. If a 17 year old can mobilise a whole generation to fight for climate change, surely we can do this? This document asks some important questions – will you help us define the answers?

overarching principles

children who are **happy** & **able to** access learning, with their **rights promoted**

accessible to all, in the **mainstream**, & including **marginalised groups**

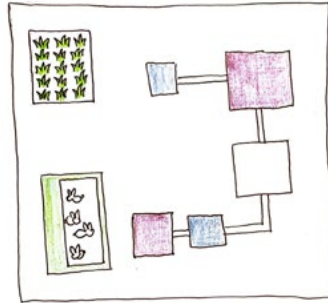
bringing together those who are **innovating**, for the **benefit of all**

a sustainable **framework**, not an individual school

preparing children for **today's world** & **tomorrow's future**

inextricably linking education & industry to create **relevance**

1 the physical space



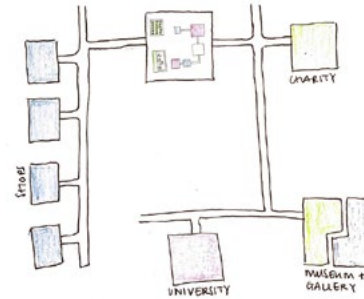
Consider our **physical school buildings**? Should they be schools, or should they be **multi-functional community spaces**?

Do we need them **24/7** for the whole **calendar year**? Could we make better use of them? What role should they play?

What value do **new, carefully designed buildings** add? Do they represent value for money? Could we make better use of **existing buildings**?

Do we need buildings at all, or could learning be **entirely virtual**? And if so, how do we ensure tangible links with **local communities**?

2 links with the local community

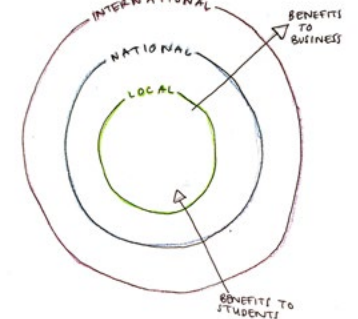


To what extent should a school be **embedded** in its **local community**, to create **close links** with **families** and the **wider community**?

How **different** is each local community and how much **flexibility** is required to forge these links? How can this be done within a **consistent** framework?

Are there **mutual benefits** for both 'school,' and local community? If so, can these extend beyond **buildings** and **facilities** to include **human resources** and **expertise**, and **employment** opportunities?

3 a partnership with industry

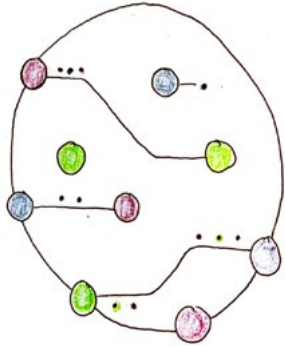


How do we ensure that students are ultimately **employable** and in jobs they enjoy? Is there a way of involving **business** (local, national & international) in **shaping** the **curriculum**? Can industry be the '**pull**' that **effects change** in our **mainstream** education system?

Is there a **partnership** which provides schools with **funding**, **expertise** and **relevance** in return for students with **better life-chances as adults**? Would businesses be interested in a **free test-bed** of their **future consumers**? Would a completely **industry-funded framework** provide **maximum freedom**?

4

the role of technology



How can we use **technology** as a more integral part of learning? Could it **support** students better? **Alleviate staff** of more **mundane tasks**? Facilitate more **rigorous data analysis**? Could technology help us **reallocate precious resources**?

What role should **online learning** play? Could **gaming** help engage some students? Should we be thinking of **Edublocks** – a learning currency which represents a student's skills, & has monetary value?

How are we preparing students for a **world** which is **increasingly technology-centric**?

5

personalising the curriculum



To what extent can we **personalise** the curriculum, to suit different **talents, passion, learning styles** and **pace of learning**? With an integrated Attachment and Trauma **ACEs-** aware approach?

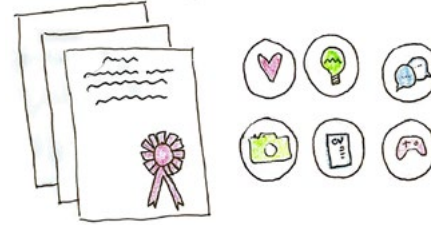
Is there value in a curriculum which has a more **equal balance** of **academic, vocational** and **creative** subjects?

How important are **experiences**, for example journeys to experience other cultures first-hand?

How can we **match business partners** and **students**, for **mutual benefit**?

6

qualifications with relevance



What type of qualifications will have most **relevance** and **value** in the future? **Edublocks, certificates, skills badges**?

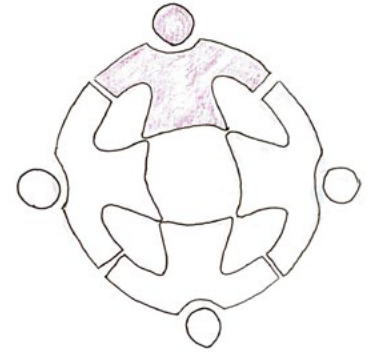
What will help students in their journey into **Further and Higher Education**? **Apprenticeships? Employment**?

How do we **prove** that students of any age have a particular **level of competence** in a **particular skill**? How do we quality assure this so that it becomes a **recognisable standard**?

How do we make it easy for students to **nurture, promote** and **maximise** their skills?

7

teaching & support staff



How do we **recruit** the 'right' staff? And ensure they **understand** and **practice** our **ethos** on a daily basis?

How do we ensure they are **nurtured, protected** and **respected**? How do we encourage them to **broaden their skills** within our organisations?

What role can **parents, the local community** and **industry** play in passing on relevant expertise? How do we ensure this has **value** and **fits with our ethos**?

What **other staff** do we need to ensure that **students** and **staff** have their **wellbeing, mental health** and **social needs** met?

8

the importance
of leadership

How do we ensure **consistently 'good' leadership**? What does 'good' leadership look like?

Is this the key to **consistency**? And how do we balance the need for **local flexibility & autonomy** with **consistency**?

Should there be a **leadership programme** that is a pre-requisite for all leaders in this new framework?

Is there benefit in **home-grown leaders**, who've worked their way up from within?

9

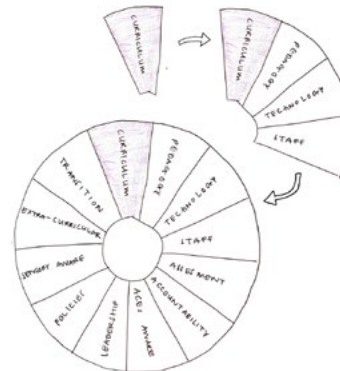
accountability

How do we build much-needed **trust** in our new framework? How do we ensure that all staff **'walk the talk'**, and that there is **accountability** and **transparency**?

Should we run **annual surveys**, with pupils, staff, parents and the local community and **publish them** (unredacted)? Can our new framework develop an **independent inspectorate** and bypass Ofsted?

How do we ensure staff and parents feel confident that any issues will be properly **investigated** and **resolved**?

10

school utopia
kitemark

Can we create a **kitemark** comprising the individual elements of a new framework which other schools could adopt, either as a **whole** or **in part**?

Is there a way of ensuring this kitemark represents a particular **ethos** and **standard** for parents, policymakers and educators?

If this embodies **jointly developed practices**, constantly **updated**, would this be of value to other school leaders?

Could this replace school **league tables** for parents?

challenges

operating **alongside** a government-funded education system

requires a successful **pitch to industry**

balancing the books if not reliant on government funding

will need **vision** and **commitment**

a framework that must be **proven**

sufficient groundswell of **support** to effect change

what next?

Can we turn a hunger for change into something more tangible?

Mobilising the groundswell

There are many great examples of innovators doing, or advocating, changes to mainstream education. The groundswell is growing – can we mobilise it sufficiently to kick-start a tangible change?

Creating industry 'pull'

Business has been arguing for some time that students are ill-prepared for adulthood in this new world. Can industry be the catalyst for change? Would this 'pull' have more traction than a 'push' from inside education? Or should parents or the students themselves lead the charge?

The proof

Can we create compelling evidence of the need for change? A combination of research, statistics and a demonstration of how doing it differently actually works? Is this a documentary in the making?

A virtual brainstorm

Join us for a virtual brainstorm which brings together all those advocating for change. We need a range of expertise, a willingness to share, learn and work together, and some out-of-the-box thinking. Will you join us?



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