Stephen Lane
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Beyond Wiping Noses

Building an informed approach to pastoral leadership in schools

Praise for *Beyond Wiping Noses*

Beyond Wiping Noses is a book that is refreshingly readable and actionable but also evidence-based and rigorous. As Stephen says, the journey of becoming more informed – 'of moving away from mere practice towards deliberate, thoughtful praxis' – is an interesting and intelligent one.

Professor Samantha Twiselton, Director, Sheffield Institute of Education, and Vice President (external), The Chartered College of Teaching

Stephen Lane has rightly identified the paucity in research on the pastoral side of working with children in today's schools. In *Beyond Wiping Noses* he shepherds us through a wide-ranging tour of his thoughts on matters pastoral, challenging the long-held sense that it is best undertaken only by those with the instinct and feel for how best to support the welfare, wellbeing and emotional development of children. Colleagues in schools, and those entering the profession, will find this book a thought-provoking and stimulating read.

Jarlath O'Brien, author of *Better Behaviour: A Guide for Teachers*

An engaging and thought-provoking journey through the multifarious aspects of pastoral provision, offering readers a plethora of practical suggestions which may support classroom teachers to promote higher levels of school wellbeing.

Sarah Mullin, deputy head teacher and author of *What They Didn't Teach Me on My PGCE*

Amongst the clamour and noise surrounding cognitive science, evidence-based practice and knowledge-rich curricula, little to no mention has been made of the pastoral dimension to education. Despite the slow emergence of the academic side of teaching into the light of research and evidence, pastoral work seems rooted in folk wisdom and gut instinct. This remarkable work by Stephen Lane bridges that gap, tying together these different worlds in a clear and well-researched book. Lane's breadth of reading is truly impressive, and he writes with authority on a range of thinkers and academics, distilling with ease ideas from Foucault, Biesta, Kirschner, Counsell and more.

Beyond Wiping Noses should be the starting point for everyone involved in pastoral work – and, accepting the argument that Lane makes from the outset, that means all of us.

Adam Boxer, Head of Science, The Totteridge Academy

Before reading *Beyond Wiping Noses* I was completely in the dark about the research available to help teachers inform their pastoral practices in school. This book helps to cut through the confusion and mixed messages over the kind of pastoral care that schools can and should offer, and places it into a wider context of curriculum and pedagogical thinking that teachers and school leaders may be more familiar with.

Beyond Wiping Noses needs to not only be read by pastoral leads but by all teachers and school leaders who play a role in helping the children in their care through the trials and tribulations of school life.

Mark Enser, Head of Geography and Research Lead,
Heathfield Community College, *TES* columnist
and author of *Teach Like Nobody's Watching*

Stephen Lane gives hope and strength to anyone who feels that schools can sometimes forget to relate to the whole child or leave some children behind in the drive for academic results. He approaches a fundamental but somewhat neglected area of school life, and shines a light on these vital issues with rigour, sensitivity and reference to evidence-based practice. In doing so he has created a bible for any teacher or school leader whose concern is the wellbeing of their pupils. A particular strength of the book is the way he marries a comprehensive overview of the theory with practical suggestions for day-to-day school life. I would urge all schools to have a copy of *Beyond Wiping Noses* in their staffroom.

Peter Nelmes, school leader and author of *Troubled Hearts, Troubled Minds: Making Sense of the Emotional Dimension of Learning*

Beyond Wiping Noses is a comprehensive exploration of what pastoral care is in schools. It also offers a detailed and balanced examination of how a pastoral curriculum could become an evidence-informed provision in schools, something which is often neglected in discussions around pastoral provision.

Too often, evidence focuses solely on teaching and learning and neglects the pastoral. This book very effectively bridges the two:

showing how research evidence can be applied in pastoral care, while also exploring a range of interesting sources of research that all pastoral leaders need to know about.

This is a must-read for anyone working in or aspiring to pastoral leadership. It is also important reading for anyone aspiring to senior leadership, where a balanced and nuanced understanding of pastoral provision is essential.

Amy Forrester, Director of Pastoral Care –
Key Stage 4, Cockermouth School

What is clear about this book by Stephen Lane is that there is an overdue need for all those involved in pastoral care and leadership to question what is right, what is needed and how to create schools that place humanity and the safeguarding of children and young people at their heart.

From behaviour management, bullying and restorative practice to computational thinking, cognitive load theory and much more, this book is jam-packed with gems of brilliance. A balanced critique of literature and educational approaches to ways of supporting children and young people is crucial, and this is Stephen's mission: getting us to reflect on what we offer and how we offer it, and suggesting ways to develop an even better pastoral care system in our school. His support of the four Cs – care, curriculum, cultivation and congregation – will resonate in my heart and mind for a considerable time.

Beyond Wiping Noses is a gem of a book. Read it and make use of it to question the pastoral care system in your own school and how you can ensure it meets everyone's needs.

Nina Jackson, education consultant, Teach Learn Create Ltd, author,
mental health adviser and award-winning motivational speaker

Beyond Wiping Noses is a much-needed and wonderfully refreshing, thought-provoking and uplifting read. Such a careful and intelligent explication of the theory, philosophy and policy that lie behind pastoral practice is an essential resource for any school leader, and indeed all staff, involved in pastoral work.

Lane weaves together strands from key thinkers such as Dewey, Biesta and Foucault to present a model of pragmatic pastoral praxis – providing substance to an often ill-defined area, giving shape to what research-informed pastoral work might look like, and offering an

inspirational and deeply human call to 'extend beyond the utilitarian to develop a hopeful optimism'. In this unhiding of the pastoral curriculum, Lane challenges us to reflect on the nature of our assemblies, form time, everyday interactions with pupils, the curricular links between these elements, and the links with other subjects such as PSHE and SMSC.

The reflective, intentional and integrated approach manifested throughout *Beyond Wiping Noses* is an invaluable contribution to the education literature and will undoubtedly contribute to something of a revolution in the way pastoral work is thought about and enacted in our schools.

Ruth Ashbee, Assistant Head Teacher – Curriculum,
The Telford Priory School

Beyond Wiping Noses carefully navigates the paths through the pastoral life of a school leader and weaves theory with practical suggestions for a wide scope of issues – including bullying, behaviour systems, the pastoral curriculum and character education, as well as many other relevant and contemporary pastoral issues.

Stephen Lane explores the pertinence of educational research but acknowledges its limitations, especially when applied to truly human contexts. He is also insightful in his appreciation of contextual differences and the challenges that these may present. Although the text is often grounded in the debates and discussions seen on edu-Twitter, this need not alienate those who do not tweet, for the issues raised in *Beyond Wiping Noses* are pertinent and the Twitter debate is often reflected in 'real life' staffrooms nationally.

This book is detailed, thoughtful and very *human*; there's a sense of the person behind the writing, and an appreciation of the human behind the eyes of the reader.

Sarah Barker, English teacher, Orchard School Bristol,
writer and blogger

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Contents

Acknowledgements ... *i*

Foreword ... vii

Safeguarding ... ix

Introduction ... 1

Chapter 1: Pastoral Roles ... 7

- Introduction ... 7
- The Form Tutor ... 8
- Head of Year ... 10
- The School 'Chaplain' ... 15
- Head of Wellbeing ... 16
- School Counsellor ... 17
- Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health (DSLMH) ... 18
- Conclusion ... 19

Chapter 2: What Research? ... 21

- Introduction ... 21
- The Gold Standard ... 22
- Effect Sizes ... 23
- Being Critical ... 26
- Where Can I Find Pastoral Research? ... 34
- CLT and Rosenshine ... 36
- Conclusion ... 38

Chapter 3: A Knowledge-Rich Pastoral Curriculum ... 39

- Introduction ... 39
- PSHE Education, Citizenship and SMSC ... 40
- Relationships and Sex Education ... 46

The Hidden Curriculum 49
The Book of Common Prayer and the Golden Rule 51
Self-Knowledge 54
Conclusion 55

Chapter 4: Bullying 57
Introduction 57
Conflict and Relational Bullying 59
Systemic Bullying 62
Cyberbullying 64
Intervention Strategies 66
Conclusion 68

Chapter 5: Wellbeing, Mental Health and Attachment 71
Introduction 71
The Role of Schools 73
Sadfishing and Social Media 75
Direct Instruction, Project Follow Through, Self-Esteem and Praise 78
Attachment Theory 81
Conclusion 83

Chapter 6: Behaviour 85
Introduction 85
Approaches to Behaviour Management 87
No Excuses for Zero Tolerance 88
No More Exclusions 92
Restorative Practice 93
Warmstrict 96
Practicalities 97
Conclusion 100

Chapter 7: Character 103
- Introduction 103
- Defining Character Education 105
- Doing Character Education 106
- Looking for Rubies 111
- Watch and Punish 112
- Conclusion 117

Chapter 8: Remote Pastoral 119
- Introduction 119
- Homeschooling 121
- Conclusion 122

Conclusion 125

References and Further Reading 127

About the Author 142

Foreword

I loved being a form tutor. I had the same group throughout their progression through the school from Year 7 to Year 11. As I was a newly qualified teacher (NQT) at the time, I felt I grew up professionally with them. They taught me a lot. I became aware quite early on, however, that while I'd had pretty good support both as an NQT and early career professional as far as my subject was concerned, the same did not hold true for my pastoral role. When I asked the senior leader who 'led on CPD' (and who discharged his responsibility for this aspect of his work by putting the odd flier about subject-specific courses in our pigeonholes) whether there were any courses on being a form tutor, he looked surprised and said that he didn't think there were as he hadn't come across any, before also commenting that it was probably a good idea. Nothing further was heard or done about it.

This was the early 1990s and there was no internet, certainly not in schools, so if it didn't land in your pigeonhole, your sources of information were pretty limited. Fortunately, there were good folk I could call on, compare notes with, and I generally bumbled through – but there was nothing systematic that I could draw on. A further indicator of the fact that this role was not taken seriously was that being a form tutor did not come up in any of the professional conversations and appraisal of my teaching work. It was as though it just 'happened'.

And it turns out that not a huge amount has changed in the decades since. At the end of a webinar with school colleagues yesterday afternoon, there was a question about further professional reading, including whether I could suggest any texts that could develop the role of pastoral leaders. Fortunately, I was able to recommend Stephen's book, but it has to be said that there is a dearth of literature on this important aspect of school provision. And it is for this reason that *Beyond Wiping Noses* is very welcome.

As Stephen notes, the status of the form tutor has not really been discussed for over twenty years, either formally or informally (on social media or otherwise). It is a shame that this role which has the

potential to make a difference to young people has been neglected for so long. Ofsted's (2019b) *Education Inspection Framework* might help to open up conversations and more opportunities for tutors to reflect on this aspect of their work. In the personal development judgement it refers to the extent to which the curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their resilience, confidence and independence – fertile ground I would suggest for thinking about this in relation to the role of the form tutor.

Stephen provides some fascinating insights as he gets to the heart of what a pastoral role entails, and in considering the role through a range of different lenses – from the 'golden rule' to character education to cyberbullying – and offers us ways in which we might amplify this aspect of school provision. And, in doing so, he makes the case for building an informed approach to pastoral leadership in schools.

Having established that the pastoral role is a remarkably under-researched area of provision, Stephen considers some of the insights from cognitive science and learning research which might throw light on pastoral work. These are particularly fruitful, and it is good to see that decades-old wisdom – for example, from Michael Marland's (1974) classic work *Pastoral Care* – is referenced in this book. And it is Marland who was one of the founders of the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE).

Each chapter concludes with some top tips to help embed this work – for example, the exemplary advice from Bill Rogers and others in encouraging teachers and form tutors to think in advance about their responses to challenging behaviour and to prepare a 'script' which could be used to frame these difficult conversations.

Ultimately, *Beyond Wiping Noses* will take us some way towards opening up discussions about what a pastoral role might entail. This is important because for much of the sector it is a 'hidden' curriculum of social practices and expectations – and in becoming more deliberate about our work in this area, we will enhance the status of this aspect of pupils' experience in school.

Mary Myatt

Safeguarding

Before we begin, a note on safeguarding. If you have not received any recent safeguarding training in your school, go speak to your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) right now. If you don't know who your DSL is, go speak to your head teacher right now.

Safeguarding policy is the single most important thing that all those working with children and young people need to know. If you are working in schools in any capacity then you are required to at least be familiar with the publication *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Department for Education, 2019c).

It is not within the intended scope of this book to discuss the topic of safeguarding any further than to insist that you ensure your safeguarding training is up to date and that you have read the key documents. If you are a school leader, you must ensure that your staff – all of them – have read these documents and received the required training. If you are reading this book in school right now, stop. Email a copy of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* to all your staff with a read receipt request. Get your HR person to check the records to ensure that everyone on staff has received the required training. If you are reading this after hours, have safeguarding as your first action point for tomorrow. Put safeguarding on every meeting agenda. Put safeguarding at the heart of every conversation.

Chapter 5

Wellbeing, Mental Health and Attachment

Introduction

There are growing concerns in the popular educational discourse around both children's and teachers' mental health and wellbeing. On the one hand, we see frequent reports of children and young people experiencing increasingly worrying mental ill health, often attributed to their time in school as well as the negative impact of social media. On the other hand, we read of the struggles that schools face in retaining teachers and we can see from various emotionally charged television adverts that teacher recruitment is equally difficult. Each of these situations is regularly referred to as a 'crisis'.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the apparent rise in mental health problems amongst young people reflects an increase in incidence or an increase in diagnosis, reporting and general recognition of symptoms. In 2017 the NHS found a 'slight increase over time in the prevalence of mental disorder in 5 to 15 year olds' (NHS Digital, 2018). The numbers were, according to Professor Tamsin Ford, '"not huge, not the epidemic you see reported"', despite the fact that the number of children seeking help from CAMHS had 'more than doubled over the past two years' (Schraer, 2019b). There appears to be a disparity: a rise in self-reported conditions, but no 'equivalent rise in the numbers showing signs of psychological distress when given a formal psychiatric assessment' (Schraer, 2019b). Schraer suggests that this disparity might reflect children and their parents being better able to recognise difficulties: various mental health awareness campaigns may well have had the positive impact of … raising awareness!

Nonetheless, that there has been a rise in reported mental ill health in teenagers is undeniable. Whilst many commentators point to

social media as playing a significant part in this, it would be disingenuous to pretend that schools are entirely blame free. As one young reporter points out, the education system puts great pressure on teenagers to perform academically, and ultimately generates a sense of dread for the future: 'Universities as well as schools repeatedly tell teenagers that we are not good enough because our grades are not good enough, and no matter how hard we try, we're taught that any perceived academic failure could affect the rest of our lives' (McCarthy, 2019). This personal account echoes many concerns expressed elsewhere around the data-based, target-driven examination culture that is perceived to permeate the UK education system. Different commentators point to Gove's GCSE reforms, Ofsted judgements, league tables and so on. I suspect that these are easy scapegoats, and that some senior leaders may well be generating some of the pressure felt in schools out of their own fear of the consequences of poor results on their own careers. I've heard stories of Year 6 children being expected to attend SATs 'revision' classes during their Easter holidays. This is deranged. My own daughters' school does a residential trip to Paris during term time instead. This seems a much better way of helping 10-year-olds to prepare for SATs in my mind – a cultural learning experience well beyond the narrow confines of Key Stage 2 examinations, giving the children positive memories that they will carry with them into adulthood.

Meanwhile, as the mental health crisis unfolds, 'One in four children and young people referred to mental health services in England last year were not accepted for treatment' (Weale, 2020a). Apparently, treatment was refused on the grounds that 'children's conditions were not suitable, or were not serious enough to meet the threshold' (Weale, 2020a). The inevitable question then follows: what happens to these children? Must they simply wait for symptoms to worsen before they can get help?

There is clearly a need for schools to think about student mental health by asking three equally important questions:

1 In what ways are we supporting students' mental health?
2 In what ways might we be contributing to students' mental ill health?

3 What can we do better?

The Role of Schools

As noted in Chapter 1, the Department for Education (2016, p. 6) recognises the 'crucial role' that schools can play 'in helping to support good mental health and in preventing and identifying mental health issues in children and young people'. There is a clear dual aspect here – prevention and intervention. This aligns with two of the key elements of school-based counselling identified by BACP (2015). The government's commitment to addressing youth mental health issues was reaffirmed in a joint green paper from the Department of Health and the Department for Education (2017, p. 4), which promised to 'provide children and young people with an unprecedented level of support to tackle early signs of mental health issues' with an approach consisting of three key elements:

1 Incentivising every school to identify a DSLMH.
2 Funding new mental health support teams.
3 Trialling a four-week waiting period for access to specialist mental health services.

For schools, the first of these is particularly significant. I hope that all schools embrace this new role: having a designated mental health lead will help them to interrogate their policies and practice to ensure that the second of my key questions is being addressed: in what ways might we be contributing to students' mental ill health? The holder of this role would act as a crucial advocate for students. The green paper is clear that the DSLMH should also act as a link between schools and other services to 'provide rapid advice, consultation and signposting' (p. 4). In order for this role to be effective, the green paper recognises the need for specific training, and it insists that 'We will ensure that a member of staff in every primary and secondary school receives mental health awareness training' (p. 5).

The green paper goes on to claim that 'Nearly half of schools and colleges already have specific mental health leads' (p. 19). This is a claim that I find difficult to recognise in my own experience of working in schools, so I ran a poll on Twitter, which revealed that 35.9% of respondents' schools did have a specific mental health lead, whilst 64.1% did not.[1] This poll only received 295 votes, so I can't claim that it is a truly representative sample! Even so, I was pleasantly surprised by the suggestion that even a third of schools do have a member of staff leading on mental health. What was unclear was whether or not they held this role in addition to other duties.

What is essential to the success of such a role is, of course, time. A concern might be that schools award the title of mental health lead to a keen member of staff without investing properly in either the training or the directed time necessary for that person to make a significant impact. However, the schools would still be able to claim that action has been taken because, 'Hey, we have a mental health lead.'

The green paper also commits to developing mental health and wellbeing as part of the curriculum through PSHE education. Indeed, this commitment was echoed in 2019 when the Department for Education announced that 'All students will be taught about mental and physical wellbeing' from September 2020 as part of the push for schools to deliver health education across all phases, relationships education for primary students, and RSE for secondary students (Department for Education and Hinds, 2019a). This is codified in (draft) statutory guidance which outlines the content which is to be delivered in different phases (Department for Education, 2019e).

With this increased focus on the importance of mental health awareness and intervention in schools, teachers and school leaders will be seeking resources to assist in their delivery of this new element of the curriculum. The PSHE Association offers guidance on teaching about mental health and wellbeing, along with teaching resources such as lesson plans and associated PowerPoint

1 Twitter poll, 11 January 2020. Available at: https://twitter.com/sputniksteve/status/1216128507056664578?s=20.

slides.[2] Whilst some of these can only be accessed by members, some are freely available.

Raines (2019, p. 1) offers evidence-based approaches to addressing mental health issues in schools, acknowledging that 'schools have become the default mental health providers for children and adolescents'. Whilst his focus is on US schools, where it is possible to find school-employed mental health practitioners who are state licensed or state certified, his book might nonetheless offer UK school leaders useful information with regard to a range of mental health issues that students may face.

Glazzard and Bancroft (2018) provide a useful set of tools to assist schools in developing an informed approach to mental health issues. Their book outlines key risk factors and provides guidance on identifying and supporting young people with a range of issues, such as anxiety and depression, conduct disorders, self-harm, LGBT+ related concerns, and so on. With the increased governmental focus on addressing mental health issues in schools, I hope that more resources like this will soon follow.

Sadfishing and Social Media

Amid growing concerns about the mental ill health of children and adolescents, there have been particular alarms raised about a disturbing trend known as 'sadfishing', in which young people use social media to make '"exaggerated claims about their emotional problems to generate sympathy"' (Coughlan, 2019b). This, inevitably, makes it even more difficult for young people who are facing genuine mental health issues to get help, due to a reluctance to speak up for fear of being accused of attention seeking.

Underlying this phenomenon is the fact that young people are increasingly turning to online platforms to express their distress, rather than speaking to someone in school or at home. Perhaps there is a perceived safety buffer at play: it's easier to say

2 See https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-teaching-about-mental-health-and.

something from behind a screen than it is to say it face to face (a factor that causes a good deal of trouble with social media generally!). These apparently attention-seeking pleas for help are perhaps a crucial outlet for young people (and, indeed, adults). Within the edu-Twitter community I have seen a number of tweets which seem to be cries for help, with the community rallying around to offer support. However, this use of the platform can be a cynical ploy by influencers to gain followers and build a brand (Jargon, 2019). Young people who see this kind of online behaviour may be encouraged to follow suit, using social media to articulate their mental health issues and thus gaining support from peers and strangers alike.

However, this form of disclosure can open them up to accusations of sadfishing and make them more likely to be victims of cyberbullying, which could spill over into the real world of daily school interactions. Imagine the scenario: a teen posts on Instagram that they are feeling depressed, anxious or even suicidal because of bullying at school. The next day, they find that the post has been shared around the school by their peers, and the bullying intensifies.

It seems that adolescents who spend three or more hours per day on social media 'may be at heightened risk for mental health problems, particularly internalizing problems' (Riehm et al., 2019, p. 1266). Furthermore, the nature of social media activity both appeals to adolescents and risks influencing their behaviour, for good or ill. Teenage brain development is understood to leave individuals prone to peer influences, which plays out online as well as in face-to-face social settings. The behaviour of friends can significantly promote the adoption of risky behaviours that are detrimental to mental health, but this is also true of the behaviour of friends of friends of friends – 'up to three or more degrees of separation' (Lamblin et al., 2017, p. 61). Young people tend to be more susceptible to online influence than adults, and social media can increase a teenager's exposure to risk-taking behaviours which appear normalised amongst peers. However, as Lamblin et al. point out, social media could also offer 'new opportunities for treatment and intervention in adolescent mental health' (p. 64) through the development of new apps and the tailoring of online

social networks to provide an alternative to traditional therapies. However, 'Given that social media helps to normalize adolescent moods and behaviors, ensuring that teens are exposed to reliable information, positive influences and supportive environments within their online worlds can promote resilience and mental well-being' (p. 64).

For schools, it is important to develop a good understanding of the psychology involved in teen social media use, as well as of brain development and how this can impact on mental health and wellbeing – especially at a time of increasing pressure from school workload, GCSE option choices and the focus on preparing for exams. Through adopting a pragmatic approach informed by continual engagement with reliable sources of information, teachers and leaders should ensure that they are aware of the ever-developing nature of social media and its appeal to adolescents and young people. The latest craze of children using TikTok is another reminder that age restrictions on social media apps have very little enforceability. Whilst TikTok has an age rating of 12+ in the Apple app store, and an age limit of 13 in the company's terms and conditions,[3] younger children are using it to film and upload videos of themselves, which can be viewed by anyone, dependent upon the account settings. We must be alert to the ways in which children and teenagers can potentially make themselves vulnerable through these technologies.

But we must also ensure that our knowledge-rich pastoral curriculum includes as many opportunities as possible to discuss the online world with our students, engaging with them to discover what apps they are using and guiding them to sources of reliable information about appropriate usage.[4] Social media has an overwhelming appeal, and we won't be able to stop young people accessing and using it. So we must help them to understand it, and to develop strategies for keeping themselves and their peers safe.

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3 See https://www.tiktok.com/legal/terms-of-use?lang=en#terms-eea.

4 For example: https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/help-me-out-staying-safe-online; https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/; http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/; and https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/how-to-stay-safe-online/.

Direct Instruction, Project Follow Through, Self-Esteem and Praise

It may seem strange to have a section about direct instruction in a chapter about wellbeing and mental health. However, I think that the startling results of the horribly named Project Follow Through have ramifications for our discussion here. Project Follow Through was the largest education experiment ever conducted, and it took place in the USA during the 1960s and 1970s. The project measured a range of education programmes against measures of academic attainment, self-esteem and problem solving. As the website for National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIDI) states: 'The results were strong and clear. Students who received Direct Instruction had significantly higher academic achievement than students in any of the other programs. They also had higher self esteem and self-confidence.'[5]

I am not going to mount an argument here for the highly scripted lessons involved in Engelmann's model of Direct Instruction – in capitals here as it refers specifically to the Engelmann model – as promoted by NIDI, but it is important to note the high impact that the Direct Instruction programme had on students' self-esteem, especially when programmes which were specifically designed to improve self-esteem had little – or sometimes even a negative – impact upon that very measure. In other words, programmes designed to improve self-esteem failed, whilst Direct Instruction – which was targeting improvement in academic outcomes – had the largest positive impact upon academic measures *and* self-esteem. The implications of this finding for schools are clear: if we want students to have high self-esteem, then we must do all that we can to give them experiences of academic success from an early age. There is clearly a link between self-esteem and good mental health. Given what we have already said about teenage brain development, and what we know from observing how teenagers develop socially and emotionally, it is vital that we provide children with academic success before they hit those troublesome teenage years. It is equally important to ensure that teenagers are given the

5 See https://www.nifdi.org/what-is-di/project-follow-through.

opportunity to succeed academically as they move through Key Stages 3 and 4 in order to make the transition as smooth as possible.

For many students, academic success may not be a significant feature of their school experience. Too often, students can be left feeling as though they are stupid, either in particular subjects or across the board. There is a whole field of work that we could explore here around the negative effects of setting (Hattie, 2008), the Golem effect (Babad et al., 1982) and the self-fulfilling prophecy, but suffice it to say that there are clear, and somewhat obvious, correlations between poor academic outcomes and poor self-esteem that – regardless of the direction of causality – are worth acknowledging. It is therefore important that heads of year and pastoral leaders take a keen interest in students' academic success and progress. Most job descriptions acknowledge this as an important part of the role.

Intervention programmes are typically provided for students in Year 11 who find themselves falling below their target grades, but I wonder about the extent to which similar interventions are conducted for students in Key Stage 3. Where they are, what data is used to identify students who might need the intervention? I'm very uneasy around any kind of target grading. In my context, teachers are asked to provide half-termly data on attainment and attitude to learning (ATL), and our interventions are based upon ATL scores. We employ a range of strategies, mostly following a coaching approach that develops along bespoke lines depending upon the identified needs of the student. If we can help students to cultivate a more proactive and positive ATL in Key Stage 3, then perhaps they will not need the extensive academic intervention that would come in Year 11. In any case, an effective intervention and mentoring programme should seek to acknowledge the link between self-esteem and academic success.

But, equally, it is important for class teachers to acknowledge the positive impact on wellbeing and self-esteem that can be wrought by academic success, as indicated by Project Follow Through. Crucially, this need not be solely related to test scores. In an average day, there are potentially hundreds of opportunities for

teachers to create positive academic encounters: little successes in the smallest moments of the lesson.

In his increasingly popular paper, upon which an entire education publication industry appears to have rapidly been built, Rosenshine (2012, p. 17) highlights the importance of students obtaining a 'high success rate during classroom instruction'. This is to ensure that errors are not repeated, and thus that correct information is secured in long-term memory. He tells us that the research 'suggests that the optimal success rate for fostering student achievement appears to be about 80 percent' (p. 17). When Rosenshine talks of things being optimal, he is talking about the optimal conditions for learning – a high success rate in lessons leads to higher long-term retention of material. Rosenshine does not talk about self-esteem. However, it is obvious that these small classroom successes, if acknowledged by the teacher, will have a positive impact on self-esteem and wellbeing. A verbal acknowledgement of the success might give the student a positive view of the encounter, a sense of recognition and, more importantly, a sense of achievement.

I need to be careful here though. Didau (2015) outlines a range of problems with giving praise, citing Kohn and Hattie along the way. He points out that studies show how teachers' use of praise can have minimal, or even a negative, impact upon learning. Meanwhile, Kohn (2012) suggests that 'praising them for the effort they've made can also backfire: It may communicate that they're really not very capable and therefore unlikely to succeed at future tasks'. Of course, Kohn (2018) wrote an entire book about why rewards are a bad thing, which recently enjoyed a 25th anniversary edition. His basic thesis is that rewards are a function of authoritarian adult control and that they ultimately do not work. Elsewhere, Kohn (2005) has written about the necessity for children to feel unconditional love that is not predicated on the expectation (or hope) of extrinsic reward. However, praise has been found to be effective as a behaviour management intervention (Moore et al., 2019), and Dewar (2019) gives several examples of research pointing to the positive impacts of praise.

Pragmatically, as a pastoral concern, I would argue that in place of *praise* we should perhaps talk of *encouragement* – an air of unrelenting positive regard, and what Dix (2017) calls 'deliberate

botheredness'. Within this, class teachers should aim to create ample opportunities for students to enjoy lots of successes in order to aid the long-term retention of information, and to recognise these successes briefly – not as praise, but as acknowledgement to aid in the consolidation of positive self-esteem.

Attachment Theory

If we were to judge solely on the dichotomous nature of edu-Twitter discourse, attachment theory is either one of the most important things that teachers should be trained on or an over-applied model that has no relevance for the vast majority of teachers or classroom settings. In pursuing a pragmatic praxis, it is necessary to explore the space between these binary positions.

Attachment theory begins with Bowlby (2005 [1979], 2008 [1988]; Holmes, 2014), who explored the early bonds formed between an infant and its primary caregiver. In normal development, the primary caregiver becomes a secure base for the infant; without this secure base, the infant is likely to become fearful and less likely to explore. The work of Bowlby was extended by Ainsworth (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 1978) and others during the final quarter of the twentieth century, with different categories of attachment disorder being identified and described. The theory maintains a significant place in psychology – for instance, a recent title considers how attachment theory can be employed to develop our understanding of psychosis (Berry et al., 2020).

What are the implications of this for teachers? Well, according to Rose (2019), there are none. In his article for researchED, he suggests that 'there's nothing a teacher can do that they shouldn't already be doing'. He points out that teachers are not in a position to diagnose attachment disorders, nor should they engage in therapy with children who may have such disorders. The strategies that they are recommended to use when dealing with such children are, according to Rose, the very same that they would employ when faced with any form of challenging behaviour.

However, Rose's argument is related to rare cases of diagnosed attachment disorders in young children and seems not to take account of more recent work on attachment that suggests it is 'important across childhood, not just in toddlerhood' (Bergin and Bergin, 2009, p. 142) and that highlights the importance of secure attachment not only to parents, but to teachers and schools. Rose (2019) warns that 'Teachers should not confuse their role in loco parentis with being the primary caregiver for a child', but that view seems to overlook more contemporary work on attachment, which reveals a much more complex relationship between teachers and students.

Riley (2011) argues that attachment is foundational in understanding human relationships, not just in children but also in adults. He states that when applied to the classroom and the staffroom, attachment theory 'helps to explain the variance in classroom behaviour by teachers, students and school leaders when other factors are accounted for' (p. 38). Riley's account of the theory around attachment raises significant implications for teachers and school leaders that could radically alter the ways in which we think about behaviour and other pastoral concerns. The dynamic interactions between teachers and students can be seen as a reciprocal attachment which Riley suggests could be called alloattachments, and an awareness of this complex relationship could be operationalised into a more pastoral-centred approach to policy and practice in terms of creating a positive school culture and dealing with issues as they arise. This includes raising school leaders' awareness of the attachment needs of their staff as a crucial element in improving their wellbeing, which would inevitably lead to an increase in student wellbeing, as teachers are secure and happy in their work. Teachers' own attachment needs, as manifested in their relationships with students, are also explored extensively by Riley and this presents an interesting perspective upon issues such as behaviour management, where a consideration of the attachment needs of the teacher might result in a modified approach.

In addition, attachment theory has potential in helping us to understand the complex interpersonal dynamics at play in relational conflict and bullying. So, as pragmatic practitioners, we should be reluctant to dismiss attachment theory out of hand. Rather,

classroom teachers, pastoral leaders and senior leaders should engage with the literature on this topic and at least consider the question *what if?* What if it does offer a different lens through which to view the complex human dynamics at play in the classroom, in the corridors, on the playground, in the changing rooms and in online spaces? What might it offer in terms of developing a more nuanced approach to staff leadership? Could line managers become caregivers? Could they, indeed, become care seekers? Attachment theory is not just about the diagnosis of rare attachment disorders; it is, potentially, a useful descriptive model for understanding the complexities of the human relationships which are at the heart of our work as teachers, and the definition of our work as pastoralists.

Conclusion

The mental health and wellbeing of our students and colleagues must be our primary concern. In fact, it could be argued that this constitutes an aspect of safeguarding and should, as such, be a regular element of our praxis discourse. Senior leaders should constantly be asking 'How will this impact upon our staff?' and interrogating every policy and every initiative. And we should all be contemplating how the children and young people in our care experience school on a daily basis.

It is vital that we consider the braided nature of the academic and the pastoral to ensure that all aspects of our provision are solely focused upon ensuring that students feel safe and happy in school, so that they can attain, and that they attain so that they feel safe and happy. This is the yin and yang of schooling.

Some key suggestions might include:

- Identify a DSLMH, give them time to do the job, and equip them with specialist training that is regularly updated.
- Identify key members of staff to become mental health first aiders.

- Build a positive culture through careful and deliberate use of language, avoidance of labels, and considered deployment of praise.
- Incorporate repeated key messages about social media into your knowledge-rich pastoral curriculum.
- Consider the attachment needs of your students and staff.

Sets out the crucial role of pastoral care as part of the function and purpose of schooling – and shares practical insights on how schools can get it right.

In *Beyond Wiping Noses*, teacher and Head of Year Stephen Lane presents a case for developing a research-informed approach to the pastoral aspect of teaching.

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A book that is refreshingly readable and actionable but also evidence-based and rigorous.

Professor Samantha Twiselton, Director, Sheffield Institute of Education, and Vice President (external), The Chartered College of Teaching

Beyond Wiping Noses needs to not only be read by pastoral leads but by all teachers and school leaders who play a role in helping the children in their care through the trials and tribulations of school life.

Mark Enser, Head of Geography and Research Lead, Heathfield Community College, *TES* columnist and author of *Teach Like Nobody's Watching*

A thought-provoking and stimulating read.

Jarlath O'Brien, author of *Better Behaviour: A Guide for Teachers*

I would urge all schools to have a copy of *Beyond Wiping Noses* in their staffroom.

Peter Nelmes, school leader and author of *Troubled Hearts, Troubled Minds: Making Sense of the Emotional Dimension of Learning*

An engaging and thought-provoking journey through the multifarious aspects of pastoral provision.

Sarah Mullin, deputy head teacher and author of *What They Didn't Teach Me on My PGCE*

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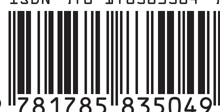

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