

TPM⁴Schools Newsletter

Summer 2017

Diocesan Offices, Clayton House, Walker Office Park, Blackburn, BB1 2QE.

For all enquiries, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **TPM Office: 01254 958850**

Fax number for Job Requests, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **TPM Fax Number: 01254 695975**

Email address for attention during office hours, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **info@dbeservices.co.uk**

Emergencies outside office hours and Bank Holidays **01254 958858**

Visit our website at: www.tpm4.com

Balancing Needs!

I often reflect that I have been involved in Education for almost forty years but if you add the time that I was at school and university, it's not that far off sixty years!!

Over Easter I was reflecting with a few friends and colleagues about the issues facing schools today not least the pressure on teachers and the financial pressures. In some ways in the last sixty years nothing has changed and in other ways everything has changed. Education, like the Heath Service, has always been underfunded except for that decade from the end of the 20th Century into the 21st Century when Blair and Brown threw money at the public sector, which subsequently we discovered was money we never had and we now have to face the consequences.

Teaching has always been a vocation and for many a very fulfilling vocation. It has also been perceived by many, who are not teachers, as being quite a cushy number simply because of the perceived number of holidays. Like most professions much of the joy and the fun has been squeezed out of people by ever increased regulation, inspection and hoop jumping. In all professions, if it can't be entered on a form; identified by a three-letter acronym; or recorded on a league table, it has probably been banned. Not long ago I was quite taken aback when a head teacher pointed out to me that if I had been at school today I would have ticked so many boxes having been adopted; had a parent die when I was a child; eligible for free school meals and, had it existed, I would almost certainly have been diagnosed as dyslexic.

If you add to that the fact that I was taught in a junior school that had fungus growing out of the walls and the playground which was simply coal shale, it is probably remarkable by today's standards that I ever learnt anything. Well I did learn something, and I have very fond memories of my school days. There are a number of reasons for that but two in particular - parental support and loving, caring teachers, who met my needs educationally, socially and spiritually. There were some things I was good at and some not so good. I was removed from the maypole team because I could not dance in time and my art teacher wrote on my school report "this boy is hopeless at art". It didn't need referencing to levels as it was true then and still is today and those who know me well would vouch for the fact that no amount of money would get me on Strictly.

When I was at secondary school, my parents took me out of school because the only time my father got off from work was when the mill shut for the Wakes Holiday and the school didn't happen to close for those two weeks. I don't think that was ever detrimental to my education but it was vital for family life. At primary school, I did endless tests mainly in Maths and English. I knew what I scored, the teacher knew what I scored and my parents were given a resume at parents' evenings. This information was used to help me and support me, not to beat the school over the head or satisfy a system that leads to everything being reduced to a statistic.

Announcing the appointment of our new Acting Deputy Chief Executive



We are delighted to announce the appointment of **Nicole Onslow** as Acting Deputy Chief Executive of DBE Services.

Nicole joined the company in 2013 and has looked after all servicing and contractual arrangements for our scheme members since that time. In this new role, Nicole's ability to resolve contractual matters in a friendly and pragmatic way will ensure that both Schools and contractors have access to decision making at the top level.

Similarly, in secondary school we had marks for all sorts of different pieces of work and were formally examined at the end of every term but that simply translated into a report that went to my parents. I'm simply not sure whose needs we are meeting by translating school tests into league tables.

For some with whom I had this discussion, my views were close to heresy and there may be many reading this who think that I am stuck in a time warp. Maybe it is heresy, or I am simply a "grumpy old man" but many of my discussions with teachers, parents and children don't encourage me that all the pressures on today's schools and children is meeting needs. I don't believe parents want their children to spend hours over the Easter holidays doing practice SATs tests. I don't believe parents should be threatened with being criminals because they want to spend time with their children and it doesn't happen to be in a school holiday. Given the way school holidays fall these days, if you have more than one child, or you are both a parent and a teacher, it might be impossible to find two weeks when you can all be together - unless you break the law.

But I do understand, because I was taught averages at primary school, by a wonderful teacher, that when the system believes, as David Blunkett so famously said when he was Secretary of State for Education that "the great aim is to ensure that every child is above average" it's about time that those who think or believe that, went back to being taught by Miss Riley who knew, just like drawing a straight line, that it is impossible.

Of course, it's a balance. I am however sure that all the pressure on teachers, pupils and parents is not fulfilling the needs of society which needs children to be developed academically, spiritually and morally to be rounded individuals who have developed their gifts to help them both have a fulfilling life and make the world a better place. I can hear the cries of some that there is nothing we can do about it because schools have to jump through the ever-increasing number of hoops set by OFSTED, Government and others.

I do understand the constant pressure that is on teachers and heads and the feeling of being powerless to stop the drive for constant improvement and change. However, I have never forgotten what my Physics teacher told us. If we never remember anything else, we should always be prepared to question even that which is to many unquestionable. Much of the scientific developments of the last 100 years may never have taken place if Einstein had not been prepared to challenge the view that Newton could not be wrong.

I hope you have a very positive and enjoyable term despite the pressures and external assessments.

Best wishes

Peter

Health & Safety Service to Schools

A low cost, valuable service for schools which offers:

- Information, advice and guidance on all aspects of health and safety as it relates to your school
- Support with policies
- Audit of health and safety policies and procedures
- Review and development of risk assessments
- Email updates of any changes in legislation
- Telephone helpline and email support
- Access to on-line training
- Access to occupational health
- Support with accident reporting

The annual cost for a primary school is £625 and a secondary school £1200

For further details please contact Peter peter@dbeservices.co.uk or telephone 01254 958850



Site Supervisor contact details

Many of our schools have provided contact numbers for their site supervisors and this is particularly useful when works are being planned or undertaken during school holidays, or before/after the school day. This enables us to liaise quickly with the school regarding any issues that may arise at these times, or to arrange works when the site supervisor advises that they are available.

If you have not already done so, please would you consider providing a contact number for the site supervisor for our records to info@dbeservices.co.uk



Hip Hop

Or more accurately Hip Op! Peter will be away from the office at the beginning of May for a couple of weeks following a hip operation but, if history repeats itself, he will be back at work within a very short time indeed! In the meantime, our newly appointed Acting Deputy Chief Executive, Nicole will be on hand to look after any queries you may have. Please contact Nicole at nicole@dbeservices.co.uk or 01254 958850

Please help us to help you!

When you need us to provide a contractor, we rely on the best information you can give us so that we can send the correct type of engineer out to address the problem. You can help us greatly by providing the most detailed information you can.

To illustrate, if we receive a form simply requesting an engineer to attend to a leaking water boiler, this could be interpreted in a number of ways, each potentially requiring a different type of engineer. In this case, a brief but more complete description could be: "The wall mounted water heater over the sink in the staff room is leaking from the pipe leaving the boiler. It is a Myson xyz boiler"

Clear but brief descriptions will always assist us to get someone to you as quickly as possible without having to call you back to clarify what the problem is. When the work has been done we will ring the school office to ensure that the work has been carried out and completed. It would help us greatly if office staff could be advised when the work has been completed so that they are able to pass this information to us.

If you need a contractor Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm, telephone us on 01254 958850, submit the request form which can be found on our TPM4.com website, or email info@dbeservices.co.uk For emergencies outside office hours or on Bank Holidays please our emergency telephone number 01254 958858



Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

One of the most frequent requests we receive is for information regarding the contractors we use and their DBS status. We can confirm that we ask all our contractors to do checks and give training to their employees to ensure they are aware of the requirements for working in schools. In addition, all contractor staff should carry identification.

There is no legal requirement for a contractor to provide evidence of their DBS check/s regardless of what school policies may require and we cannot uphold such requests where our contractors only have occasional access to schools and may not in fact meet the criteria to apply for a DBS check in the first place. DBS checks, as with all personal information is also covered by Data Protection.

We appreciate that schools do not always have time to accompany contractors around school but we would never recommend that possession of a DBS certificate should be taken as authority to allow any contractor unsupervised access.

We understand that there is significant confusion surrounding this issue and we are seeking further information which will be uploaded to our website TPm4.com shortly, to clarify this for our schools.

Who can join the TPM4 Schools Scheme with DBE Services?

DBE Services was originally set up to assist church schools but, in fact, any school can join our scheme regardless of their designation.

If you know a head teacher of either a church or a non-church school who is looking for an alternative approach to their building management, please let us know or pass our details on to them. Don't forget there is a reduction on your management fee should the interested school join our scheme.

For further information on joining the scheme please contact Nicole or Peter on 01254 958850

Preparing for Summer



The glorious summer holidays will be with us before you know and this is the time of year that many schools like to get their building maintenance jobs done. However, this is also the Contractors' busiest time of the year. Realistically, it is essential that work is booked in early to avoid disappointment.

If you think you may need works done over the summer holiday, please let us know by the May half term, particularly where quotes may be needed for those larger jobs. We cannot guarantee that contractors will be able to oblige without reasonable notice, despite our best persuasive efforts!

Portal progress

The TPM School portal has now been in operation for almost 12 months and, early teething problems aside, it has proven to be very successful and a highly useful tool for the majority of our schools. All invoices, for payment by the school, are now uploaded to the portal for payment, along with important school information such as servicing reports, so the school has immediate access to this information when needed. Very handy when an inspection is imminent!

When something is uploaded to the portal, school will receive an automatic notification to the email address we have on file for you - if you would prefer to change this email address, to ensure the notification goes to the correct person, please let Nicole know.

Please ensure that all invoices are processed for payment promptly after upload to your portal, as you will no longer receive them by email. We do ask for all schools' support by ensuring that contractors are paid within 30 days of school receiving the invoice, wherever possible. This will help to ensure that services with our contractors can continue seamlessly.

If you have annotated your invoice records so that we can see they have been processed for payment, we will be able to advise contractors who are seeking payment dates. However, if no such date is present, we will advise contractors to contact the school direct. If you get such a call please do not ask the contractor to send copy invoices, as we will already have told them that these are on your portal. This may lead to additional charges that will be passed on to schools and is particularly frustrating for the contractor who has completed the work but then find that their invoices have been on the portal for several weeks or even months without being processed!

As always, if you have any queries or problems accessing the portal, please let us know so that we can assist. We can even come out to see you if you would prefer some one-to-one help to get you started with the portal.

Recalls are not always free!

In general, a recall to a job will only be free of labour charges if the original visit was the result of an act or omission by the contractor at the original visit, or if parts fitted at that visit prove to be faulty within a reasonable time frame.

There are many circumstances where a recall may, on the face of it, appear to be directly related to a previous job. However, this is not always the case. For example, where roof repairs have been undertaken but 'the roof is still leaking in the same place.' We know that roof leaks are notorious as water can seep through the roof in many places but will track to where it can escape, or pool in the roof void. This does not mean that the roofer has been negligent in any way as the leak may be some distance from the original roof repairs.

A similar example may be that a part was fitted to rectify a boiler problem but, later, the boiler is not working again. This does not necessarily mean that the fault is connected to the original fault/repair. If the engineer finds that the issue is not connected with the original fault, a new job number will normally be issued against which to invoice.

Paradoxical Commandments: found written on the wall in Mother Teresa's home for children in Calcutta:

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centred. **Forgive them anyway.**

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. **Be kind anyway.**

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. **Succeed anyway.**

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. **Be honest and sincere anyway.**

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. **Create anyway.**

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. **Be happy anyway.**

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. **Do good anyway.**

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. **Give your best anyway.**

In the final analysis, it was never between you and them. It is between you and God and doing His will not their will.