

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

SUPPLEMENT TO TEN TRENDS 2017/18



International mindedness: how can international mindedness be developed in schools?

In this supplement, **Russell Speirs, CEO and Founder of RSACademics**, expands on the research published in our Ten Trends 2017/18 report which looks at how international mindedness in children's education could be encouraged.



We are indebted to Elly Tobin, Founder of the College for International Citizenship in Birmingham and Principal and Chief Executive of Joseph Chamberlain College, for sharing her ideas and experiences – many of which feature in this supplement alongside our own research.

TOPICS COVERED:

- USING SOURCE MATERIAL FROM AROUND THE WORLD
- RECRUITING MORE INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS
- ESTABLISHING A FAIR TRADE GROUP
- ESTABLISHING OR DEVELOPING FURTHER THE MODEL UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME
- FOCUSING ON LANGUAGES
- INVITING INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS
- CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAKING IT MORE INTEGRAL TO THE SCHOOL DAY
- ESTABLISHING AND PROMOTING LINKS WITH AND VISITS TO OTHER SCHOOLS ABROAD
- BUILDING PEACE AND GLOBAL AWARENESS INTO THE CURRICULUM
- RUNNING AN INTERNATIONAL DAY
- FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL TRIPS



This Guide is a supplement to the **Ten Trends 2017/18** report, **Trend 3 'The Internationalisation of Education'**. For more information about the full report, visit our website [here](#).



International mindedness is an inherent part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme but for other schools who do not offer the IB, how can the same aims be met? How can children acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will prepare them to be successful and contribute positively to an increasingly complex and interconnected world?

USING SOURCE MATERIAL FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Teachers can always bring into the classroom more examples of diversity and global perspectives. For example, Jaya Bhavnani at the IB Conference of the Americas in 2013 cited the following:

- Using statistics and data about different nations and economies as the basis for teaching maths
- Use different currencies as the basis for practising calculations
- Using fables, folk tales and legends from other countries for reading practice or to inspire creative writing
- Using relevant, international online resources, such as [The Hungry Planet video](#):
 - Compare the amount of money spent on food each week in different regions and countries
 - Discuss similarities and differences
 - Notice the number of people fed for the same amount of money
 - Rank countries by cost of food
 - Conduct research to find out the average daily wage and calculate the percentage spent on food
 - Introducing students to the varied geopolitical perspectives of different world maps.

RECRUITING MORE INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

One Head of a large, all-through day school in London told us that he had some great maths teachers from Eastern Europe: *"Having diverse staff recruitment is beneficial, not to just have a staff room that are from the UK. Because otherwise, cultural homogeneity results which can be unhelpful."*

ESTABLISHING A FAIR TRADE GROUP

This encourages students to:

- Develop an understanding of where their food comes from, who produces it and the conditions in which it arrives in our supermarkets
- Learn about other societies, about business and about the world food trade.

ESTABLISHING OR DEVELOPING FURTHER THE MODEL UNITED NATIONS (MUN) PROGRAMME

The [MUN programme](#) enables students to:

- Investigate in depth the political and social perspectives of other nations
- Develop research, debating, teamwork and public speaking skills
- Meet students from other schools and backgrounds.

FOCUSSING ON LANGUAGES

Despite its general decline in the UK, many argue that foreign language learning is key to international mindedness. It allows students to converse better with each other and to understand, in a more informed manner, different cultures.

'While we are very lucky to have English, British children may be hamstrung by the complacency of their parents. We need to focus less traditional language curriculum choices and introduce languages such as Arabic. The world will move on and we will be left behind. Children are fascinated by change and difference and we can build on this'.

– Head of a day school

'Different languages allow different ways of thinking, and are at the core of national stereotypes'

– Head of a boarding school

Ideas for rejuvenating modern foreign languages might include:

- Running conversation classes in other languages without the pressure of tests and exams can also enhance students' understanding of other cultures.
- Mandarin, Korean and Japanese can be very popular when linked to the pop cultures of the orient.

For children for whom English is not their first language, it is essential they receive tuition for their mother-tongue, many international educators would argue.



There is more about the challenges of language teaching in the chapter on Curriculum in our full [Ten Trends 2017/18 report](#), **Trend 1 'What are schools teaching? How is this changing? Is the curriculum providing the future skills our students require?'**.

INVITING INTERNATIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS

As other worlds collide with us daily it is vital that we create the space to discuss the issues that therefore arise. Inviting guest speakers with experience of living and working in other cultures can give an insight into other worlds of experience. Consider inviting:

- Aid workers supporting NGOs
- Ambassadors
- Successful business executives
- Asylum seekers and refugees, many the victims of oppression and torture.

CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAKING IT MORE INTEGRAL TO THE SCHOOL DAY

- Having the international news constantly streamed into communal areas makes the point that we always need to be aware of the world around us
- Building time into the day to discuss current affairs and global issues
- Establishing a club or society for those with special interest.

ESTABLISHING AND PROMOTING LINKS WITH AND VISITS TO OTHER SCHOOLS ABROAD

A great many independent schools in the UK have established links with overseas schools in developing countries, which provide the opportunity for students to visit, learn from the cultural exchange and spend some time providing service to others.

At Oakham School, there are several well-established links. The Headmaster, Nigel Lashbrook, told us:

“We have a link with other schools in very different circumstances – two in Kenya, one in India and one in Philippines. We have raised a considerable amount of money and every year a group of students go to Kenya, this year 32 of them. They will spend time teaching and helping with the building and repair of classrooms. It is the same in India where we are working in partnership the Doon school on a social project, developing a new school in an area where there is a lack of provision”.

For more information, see the Kenya Trip Blog 2017 at www.oakham.rutland.sch.uk

BUILDING PEACE AND GLOBAL AWARENESS INTO THE CURRICULUM

At Sidcot School, they have established a Centre for Peace and Global Studies, which came from looking at the way the school expresses its Quaker values and how it could more strongly embed those values into the curriculum. Peace and conflict resolution are ‘relevant to Quakers and to everyone’ and provide the bedrock for much of what the Centre does.

The aim is to 'create a learning environment where students and staff are able to explore and understand how we embody the qualities of peace in the way that we engage with each other across the school community...and to help students make sense of the world around them'.

Throughout the year there are talks, films and cultural activities which enrich the curriculum and offer students an opportunity to think about social and environmental justice. The school year culminates in a Festival of Peace which combines music, craft, poetry, story-telling and debate on such themes as internationalism and collectivism.

At Bedales, every student studies Global Awareness as part of the PSHE programme. The new [Bedales Assessed Course](#) in Global Awareness started in September 2016 with 51 students. Since introducing Global Awareness in 2013, Bedales has used the Harvard Education School / Asia Society definition: *"Using 21st Century skills (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration and communication) to understand and address global issues."*

The Global Awareness BAC connects to many other subjects but occupies its own place and addresses issues that have traditionally been absent from the secondary curriculum. The emphasis is on Politics, Economics and Law, making this both an excellent introduction to the global mindset so greatly sought by universities and employers, and a useful foundation for A-Level subjects such as Politics, Economics, History and Geography. Topics include human rights, the arms trade, the status of indigenous people, peace and conflict and social entrepreneurship.

RUNNING AN INTERNATIONAL DAY

Philip Dixon, Deputy Headmaster of Kingswood Prep School, Bath who previously taught in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, has been running an International Day for 12 years now. From an article in International School magazine, he describes it as follows:

"The aim of the annual KPS International Day is to help promote amongst our children respect for and tolerance of other countries, races, religions and cultures by providing them with an insight into, and understanding of, other parts of the world. It is also an opportunity for us to value the diversity of backgrounds in our school community and to celebrate our differences.

About 40 countries have been represented over the years. Workshop highlights have included playing piñata in Colombia, ribbon dancing in China, coffee making in Ethiopia, fruit carving in Thailand, kite making in Bhutan, and representatives from the Uzbek Embassy in London running an interactive workshop which involved sampling different foods from their fascinating country.

Our children will become global citizens who will hopefully contribute towards creating a world where there is greater tolerance and understanding of other



peoples and nations. Education has to be the key to combating the ignorance and intolerance that have given rise to so many of the problems our world is currently facing.

It is not only international schools, in my experience, that can make these important contributions to opening the minds of the global citizens of tomorrow."

Excerpts from: Dixon, P., (2014) "An international day in a national school context", published in International School 2014, Vol 17, Issue 1.

FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL TRIPS THROUGH ORGANISATIONS LIKE NOMADIC TOURS OR BUFFALO

There are plenty of agencies and operators to help schools organise international educational trips, whether these are to the Art Galleries of New York or to help with a marine conservation project in Indonesia. And, of course, many schools will have a member of staff who has developed the expertise and experience to organize a trip to a particular destination, perhaps built up over many years.

Two operators we have come to know well from international school conferences around the world are Graham Harper, from Buffalo Travel's Educational Travel Asia and Mark Stallwood from Nomadic School Tours. Buffalo Educational Travel aims to ensure that its educational tours contribute to communities in ways which are sustained long-term as effective poverty reduction and community development initiatives. They partner with select agencies, schools, universities and adult groups worldwide and they work with partners to provide educational experiences including:

- Service learning
- Mindfulness through outdoor education
- Community health education
- Experiential learning
- Charity challenges
- Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

Nomadic School Tours offer custom-made school tours to China, Costa Rica, Iceland, Morocco, Namibia, Northern India, Peru, Rwanda and Tanzania and has been operating for 19 years. Their expeditions and visits are designed to increase international mindedness and they "aim to capture the magic and mystery of the countries we visit and introduce a new perspective on the world for our students". We met up with the Managing Director, Mark Stallward, and asked him for his own explanation of how the tours work and why such experiences are important for students to gain:

"Many years of travelling have helped shape my view of the world and my understanding of my place in it. I prefer to consider myself a World citizen.

It is with this background and motivation that I saw an opportunity with our company to develop a portfolio of destinations that might inspire and



transform the perception of our World in the minds of our young students. You do not have to stray very far from our 24-hour news channels, social media platforms and newspapers, to see yet another generation potentially growing up with fear and prejudice.

Morocco is a perfect destination to illustrate how, through exposure to the exotic, something different and to a religion we might have become fearful of, we can break down these barriers and see people for what they are, good or bad, not just their ethnicity or religious persuasion. You can see how edgy and anxious our new student arrivals are of this unknown, carrying also some of the baggage of a negative narrative on such countries, pre-populated before arrival. Things settle down very nicely after a relatively short time and guess what? We start to feel normal as if we were in London or Birmingham. Seeing ordinary folk go about their business just as we do, parents trying to provide for their children, children going to school, some people clearly very wealthy and others on the breadline. The similarities are all there with our own life, but just a different environment.

What is particularly rewarding for me to see, is when our students (and teachers) mention that they have experienced things that you can't really touch or quantify, a feeling of being welcomed, accepted and respected. People who have very little materially, offering what they do have as a welcome and meaning it. The exposure to landscapes such as the Sahara Desert, something a million miles away from say the British countryside. It is a gradual awakening, I suppose, inside many students, where prejudice and fear can be broken down and the blinkers can come off.

I remember so well the comment of one 14 year old girl, who said "I will no longer view the world through the eyes of my TV at home, I will no longer take for granted my comfortable life in the UK. This trip to Morocco has literally been a life changing one. Thank you!".

If just 10% of our students felt that way at the end of their trip, then I will have achieved something."



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A graduate of Sevenoaks School, Oxford University and The European School of Management, and a Governor of a 3-18 (K12) school in Europe, Russell has a passion for

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Find out more about our services for schools: www.rsacademics.co.uk

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