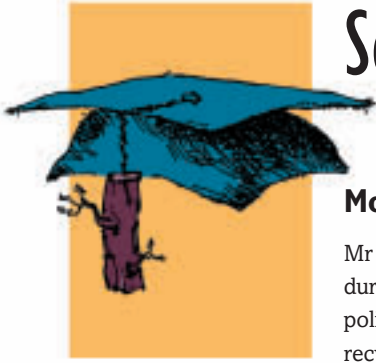


September 1912



Headteacher's log

Monday 16

Mr Peel, I find, has got into all sorts of trouble during the summer break. He's in trouble with the police because a bottle was found in his green recycling bin. This will give him a criminal record, which makes an unhappy statistic in the annual report to parents. We could tough that out if his professional record was immaculate. Unfortunately, during one of Ofsted's TellUs2 workforce surveys, he refused to state his inside leg measurement. This is classed as professional misconduct. We may have to let him go, but I sincerely hope not.

Tuesday 17

Something unusual happened in a Y4 spelling test today. James Thuggitt, one of our less able pupils, scored 9 out of 10, which was the same as the very able Janice Bluetooth who was sitting on the other side of the room. Moreover, they made an identical mistake. Was there communication between them? If so, was it by visible signals, hidden wire or some psychic powers? If the method was psychic, all sorts of complications are involved. Since the case of Pedro Lascar v Loamshire County Council, the use of psychic powers for any purpose by a Romany is deemed to be an expression of culture and religion. Punishment for its use is *prima facie* discrimination. But neither Janice nor James are Romanies. Most mysterious is the reason for Janice helping James at all.

Wednesday 18

The Bluetooth-Thuggitt crisis has escalated. The children's class teacher, Miss Bounder (Advanced Skills) has written a report on the incident. In giving the background of the children's recent learning, she mentioned that Janice was part of a fast-track group who had been given a project on genealogy. This involved a visit last week to the county records office during which, Miss Bounder thinks, Janice might have discovered that James Thuggitt is her brother. Can you imagine parental reactions if that comes out? Janice has never been punished before, so her punishment now will take a lot of explaining.

Thursday 19

Ofsted inspections now give no warning, and are carried out by undercover inspectors who give no hint of what they are looking for. So when a 'school-seeking parent' visited me today and asked about badgers in the school grounds, the plums served for school lunch, and the most popular tunes whistled by our boys, I knew what was going on. The visitor, wearing dark glasses and an obviously false beard, was Professor McSpreader of the University of Loamshire, our regular lead inspector for several years.

Friday 20

Yesterday's visitor turned up today, sitting at the back of the hall for assembly; clean-shaven, with permed hair, wearing a long kilt and speaking in a high croak. S/he was, without a doubt, Professor McSpreader. Thereafter, my yesterday's insight unravelled. This was no Ofsted, but a naturalisation test, another of the professor's jobs. Our bishop, Dr Potsmoker, is taking British nationality to enable him to speak in the House of Lords. 'Gee Len,' said the bishop as we walked onto the stage, 'I sure wish I had a simple job like yours, teaching young children.'

After singing Land of Hope and Glory as a solo, the bishop recited a passage by Tennyson beginning: 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. For what are men better than sheep or goats that nourish a blind life within the brain, if, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer, both for themselves and those who call them friend?' Amen.

■ Leonard Bookman

