



# 500

## WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SCHOOL





Here are 500 tips you could consider to improve your school.

Please don't view them as a panacea for school improvement; they are simply ideas that have worked for us. Every school is different and what works in one school may not necessarily transfer to another context.

Bearing that in mind, we hope you find some useful ideas!

# Leadership

1. Don't swap the word children for Ofsted – we do things for children not Ofsted.
2. The most important thing the School Leadership Team do is to find, recruit, develop and retain great teachers. You can't play like Barcelona if you've got players from Brentford. All members of SLT must own this and be proactively involved.
3. Be really highly visible around school throughout the day. Never sit in your office at break and lunchtime; it is your job to support everyone.
4. Have one person on the leadership team whose sole responsibility is the development of learning and teaching - it's the reason schools exist!
5. SLT – Disagree behind closed doors but always present a united front publicly.
6. All SLT need to be outstanding teachers who always take at least one exam class and deliver on results... otherwise why should anyone listen to them?
7. Have someone on SLT responsible for pupil premium children. Distribute the children's photos around the leadership team so everyone knows who they are and can have positive conversations with them.
8. Write a differentiated handbook for Middle Leaders. Experienced HODs need the bare minimum – weaker or new HODs need to be told what to do every day, week, half term and so forth.
9. Don't ever use the automatic timetable button – it's a computer... great timetables are written by humans!
10. Get each person on the SLT to individually write down what the school stands for, in other words its core purpose. You are likely to be shocked by how different the answers are! If you can't agree as a group of leaders what will the staff think the school stands for?
11. Be bold! Is there an 'elephant in the room'? Don't ignore it, deal with it. Failing to deal with it sends out the message to all staff that it's okay to be mediocre. Often the elephant is a member of the SLT.
12. Tackle the problems not the whole staff. Always praise in public, admonish in private.
13. Cherish the staff as they are your greatest resource. Avoid giving them any pieces of paper, spreadsheets or pointless emails to fill in that don't have an impact in the classroom. Review what you ask them to do each year.
14. Never allow your school to have a negative or defeatist 'script' - e.g. we can't get good results because we are too near the/airport/seaside/rural community/tower block/industrial estate.
15. Communication is the response you get" - if the staff say morale is low or staff are tired then listen to them and act. Your job is to support staff, not wield power over them.
16. Plan the year carefully – make it flow, make it relevant and avoid pinch points for the staff - don't just do it because you did it last year (e.g. a seven-week spring half term one year may be only five weeks the next year).
17. The trick for good schools to becoming more successful is to stop doing good things and to make time to do even better things. Each time you introduce something new, kick out something old to make the time for the new initiative. Remember, saying no is the hardest but often most impactful part of leadership.

18. Does everyone on the Leadership Team know which teacher takes the key groups in Years 7 to 10 and are they your best teachers? Too many schools concentrate on Year 11 and late interventions.
19. Don't stick to the rule book - if a member of staff wants to go to an event which has personal significance such as a wedding or graduation, let them go. If you do, and pay them, you'll get paid back in triplicate. It's called reciprocation!
20. Have compassionate toughness. Have the compassion to empathise with where staff are but the toughness to get them to where they need to be.
21. Have a 24 hour guaranteed turnaround period if staff request support. Ensure you close the loop within the 24 hours. If staff criticise the SLT it is usually for lack of support when they ask for it.
22. Visit other schools every year - not the big "I am" schools who like to blow their own trumpet but schools in similar circumstances that are outstanding. However, please remember not all ideas travel well; customise them for your context and make sure you visit with others as discussion on the way home is crucial.
23. Find a way to fund the staff Christmas party. It's the least we can do after the hundreds of hours of overtime staff do - it will also ensure more people attend and it's good for team spirit. Personally invite each cleaner - don't presume they find out by osmosis!
24. Thank people every day - not the blanket email but seek out individuals who have gone the extra mile for the students or for fellow staff. Research suggests that a handwritten note is most appreciated form of thanks.
25. For new staff make sure one of the SLT sees them at the end of every day to ensure they are okay. Observe them teaching very early on to see what support they need.
26. Identify everyone's birthday - send them a card or give them a gift. Find something to celebrate at every briefing.
27. Never say "I", always "we", and don't say "my school", it's "our school".
28. Get the Governors to write to staff that have done something good or gone the extra mile or got great results, then post the letters home so they arrive on the first day of the holidays.
29. Ensure that the SLT speak to everyone on the staff every week - devise a system so that no-one is left out. (A great Headteacher knows the names of the Cleaners' children - discuss!) Are you sure someone has thanked the part-time Lab Technician recently?
30. Never put off a difficult conversation - plan it carefully using the seven steps and grasp nettles.
31. Can you guarantee that every child in the school feels owned by a named individual who knows them and their family circumstances and believes in them?
32. Be careful with email, it's for quick communication not for consultation - people still want face-to-face. Ban emails at weekends and remind anyone who breaks the rule!
33. Consider having a slot for two hours every Wednesday that includes everything from Parents' Evenings, CPD, meetings etc. and staff know there will be no other calls on their time.
34. Don't cancel meetings with people you line manage - it shows lack of respect and it gives the impression that you don't think it's important to meet them. Have a regular slot and make it a priority.

35. Make your development plan come alive. Find an innovative way to make a big display of it in the staff room so everyone knows what the priorities are. This year we used the Tesco's wheel.
36. Treat everyone who works at the school with the same dignity and respect and, as a leader, ensure you hide it if you don't like someone.
37. Never ever say "in my last school" or repeatedly use the name of another school you want to be better than.
38. Never allow parents to abuse staff. Have a procedure regarding what staff should say and do if it happens and train staff in it. It is incredibly stressful for a young member of staff if parents shout at them. Make sure you know the rules. Heads run schools, not parents, so don't allow any "my child doesn't do after school detention" nonsense. A really good way round a parent who refuses to let a child stay is to offer to take them home yourself....when you leave work at 7pm. It's surprising how they are suddenly able to get home alone.
39. Don't use jargon and avoid acronyms! Keep language very simple. Why do schools over-complicate everything?
40. Write a planning cycle for the year on one page so everyone knows when the Governors' meetings are taking place, budget written, when to advertise for jobs etc.
41. Never communicate in anger - stay calm don't panic - every problem has a solution. If you are really angry with a member of staff or a child, go home and sleep on it - the situation always looks different the next day.
42. Laugh a lot - no-one likes a miserable leader! Look after yourself because leaders set the emotional climate. Are you a radiator or a drain? A radiator exudes positivity whilst the drain saps energy and sees problems all around.
43. Locate the decision making at the most appropriate point. Who is in the best place to make a decision? E.g. in one school we supported, the Deputy decided which exam syllabus each department followed.
44. Don't appoint if you know it's wrong. There is always a solution eventually! Be really flexible on contracts e.g. let people pick up their children and miss last lesson or let people go to four days per week.
45. Ensure at least one person on the SLT knows the name of every child in the school (I think the Deputies all should).
46. If you have a great NQT, write to their parents at the end of the year to tell them how proud they should be.
47. Treasure your Heads of Maths and English! You could argue at the moment that these are the two most important members of staff. If you can't appoint you may need to think about Assistant Heads and add something whole school to the role.
48. Use the SLT meetings for each of the Leadership Team to say what they've done that week to earn their money/improve the quality of what the children receive.
49. Get feedback from the staff. Ask them to say three things the SLT do well and three ways the SLT could improve or give the SLT some advice.
50. Only shut your door when you really have to. Be accessible and have your office in a busy area. Don't hide away as it makes everyone feel you don't support them.



51. If ever you are unsure about what to do over an issue, ask yourself “What’s in the best interest of the children?” You’ll soon find the answer that way.
52. What is your staff handbook like? If it’s huge, dump it, as no one will read it! Keep it as short as possible and use it to get over key messages. An NQT isn’t going to spend hours remembering which door to go out of in the case of a fire alarm but they do want to know who will help them when they need it and what a good lesson looks like.
53. Make expectations clear - there are no excuses for low levels of progress, low attainment etc. Ensure that all the SLT believe the children can achieve and so are not giving out any negative messages. If the leadership team doesn’t believe the children can achieve, the school has no chance.
54. Ensure everyone on the SLT really understands the data/raise online etc. If someone doesn’t - the message to staff is that it isn’t important.
55. Explain what you believe in to everyone and do it often in simple language - what is your school’s mantra? “The children come first” etc.
56. Be punctual to meetings. If you are late the message is that it isn’t important to you.
57. In the best schools the in-school variation is very small. What’s the difference between your best and worst department? Do they know? What are you doing about it? If you are ignoring it you shouldn’t take your salary - you are paid to ensure the children get a good deal in all lessons not just the progress 8.
58. Send an individual letter to all the Year 6 children who are joining the school saying you are really looking forward to them coming. Post the letters home.
59. If parents tell you they are happy, ask them to go on the Ofsted Parents’ view.
60. Employ an external bid writer (who knows all the jargon!) to write bids for you in order to generate income. There are lots of opportunities out there that schools can benefit from; this creates a stress free and effective way to access them!
61. Build time for reflection into your meeting calendar. It’s important to take time out to lift your head above the parapet.
62. If you are struggling to recruit, bite your tongue and get in touch with your local independent school - they are often very generous in their support.
63. If you are really stuck for staff ask the part-timers to teach extra when they are in school and give them their non-contact time on their days off or pay SCITT trainees per lesson.
64. Have a word for the year which is a mnemonic for what your priorities are (an example I saw but don’t advocate was BALLS- Boys, Achievement, Literacy, Languages and Science. It doesn’t make a great poster in the reception area).
65. Ensure you have non-school conversations with at least three children every day.
66. Take sweets/chocolate/fruit around to your break duty team. A really positive way of checking everyone is in the right place.
67. The majority of school’s deal with staff being absent. Try to change your thinking to ‘why are people off sick?’ The more pressure we put staff under, the higher the absence rate, so we need to do everything possible to minimise stress on staff and as a consequence improve attendance. If a member of staff is frequently off then make sure you follow up every single time and make a big deal of it.

68. Try to run your school so that it follows the maxim of “high challenge with low stress”.
69. Ensure the first and last message a student receives is positive. Be on the gate in the morning and evening giving the positive messages.
70. Have a brief starter in HODs meetings to introduce new ideas that may benefit all departments. It is good to get a new HOD to do this to boost their confidence and profile.
71. Sign your aspiring middle and senior leaders onto courses with the National College. As well as improving their practice, it boosts the culture of learning at the school. Ensure project addresses something in the school development plan. Invite them to discuss their findings or projects at HODs/HOYs/SLT meetings.
72. Make sure all new HODs have a buddy who is an experienced HOD/SLT and make time for them to meet every week for the first term.
73. Have fortnightly meetings with all those you line manage and plan them well to hold people to account.
74. Take a photo of the Year/Form and put it into a key ring as a good-bye gift to each student, with a message on the other side - ‘You are special, we will miss you’.
75. Be creative about appointing staff if you are in an area where it is really hard to get teachers. If you find two brilliant History teachers and can’t find a Geography teacher swap the curriculum around for one year and give KS3 less Geography. There are lots of History teachers out there so advertise for History/English if you can’t find English teachers. A good History teacher with a Year 7 class is infinitely preferable to an agency teacher who is hopeless and likely to leave at the end of term! There are hundreds of PE teachers so advertise for PE with Maths.
76. If you have excess staff in a specialist area like PE or Music, write to all the primary schools and ask if they want to buy half a day a week etc. Similarly, if you are short, could the local secondary school help out?
77. When appointing staff, speed date through interviews after you’ve seen them teach, it takes less time, it makes the candidates less nervous and you get more points of view. (If you are fortunate enough to have a choice, which we don’t often get in the South East).
78. Become a SCITT or get involved in one. Growing your own teachers is a great way to recruit and to have an extra pair of hands for a year.
79. Get stuff in newspapers. You’ll only have a 30% strike rate, if you are lucky but it makes everyone feel proud when it happens. Get a member of the support staff to be press officer, not a teacher with a hundred other things to do.
80. Ensure no one working in the school is treated as a second-class citizen. In some schools the site staff aren’t allowed in the staffroom and don’t get invited to the Christmas party etc.
81. Design a really nice school card that you can use for lots of different things. It’s personal; and promotes the school (remember to make them small so you don’t have to write too much to fill them).
82. Find ways to involve the staff in the future direction of the school without creating extra work for them e.g. have a staff meeting about the Development Plan - get staff to sign up to one section they are interested in and just brainstorm ideas of how the school could move forward in that area or put a whiteboard in the staffroom that anyone can put ideas on or post-its.



83. Put water on every table for parents' evenings etc. and take round tea and biscuits and sweets each hour. Put polo mints on every table.
84. Pair up the current Year 7 with the incoming Year 7 - get the current Year 7s to write to each Year 6 child in June and post the letters home - the Year 6s love it.
85. Get someone to visit every single child who is coming to the school in Year 6 in their feeder schools in June or July - not just the blanket visit. This really helps those children who are coming to the school but may be the only one from their feeder schools. It also gets parents on side very early on as if you go to this much trouble they know you will care for their children in the years ahead.
86. Always have lots of milk in the staffroom - many staff bring cereal and eat breakfast at school.
87. Give more time to English and Maths because of the increased volume of work in the new specification GCSEs.
88. If you are short of teachers, give the children more PE, healthy bodies, healthy minds.
89. The very weak students will not cope with the demands of the new curriculum in the new GCSEs, have you got something suitable for them e.g. VCerts, Level 1/2 BTEC, ASDAN, COPE etc.
90. If you put weak/non specialists' teachers in Year 7 in Maths and literacy you are storing up problems for the future.
91. Timetable a dedicated SPAG lesson once a fortnight for Year 7 and 8/9 if you can!
92. Don't observe TAs as part of performance management they will turn it on, ask the students.
93. Every time you see a lab technician or a member of site-staff not working, challenge them!
94. Don't ever 'Velcro' a TA to a child, a change every now and then is best for both parties.
95. Ensure there is a balance between admin and development at HODs meetings e.g. share an article, a book, feedback from visits to an outstanding school. HODs meetings should foster discussion and sharing of best practice.
96. Make sure everybody knows page 8 on RAISE online, what percentile are you for progress 8?
97. Compare your progress to the 55 similar schools listed on the performance tables, go and visit the number 1 school in your group of 55, to see what they're doing that you're not with the same intake.
98. Has every member of the support staff had a CPD opportunity this year, what impact has it had on their work?
99. If you have a café or common room in 6th form have a list of banned children (who are behind with their work) that SLT have to chase when on tour.
100. If you are fundraising, make sure the SLT take part.
101. Give English teachers a period a week extra to mark.
102. Ensure every 2nd SLT meeting is development not just admin e.g. share an article, a book (Legacy, Peak Performance, Blink, High Challenge, Low Threat are a few good ones) feedback from a visit to an outstanding school.
103. Get a booklet with all staff photos, jobs and contact details ready for the first of September each year.

104. SLT to have photos of in year admissions so they can make them welcome (staff and students).
105. Make a video and put it on your website with 20 reasons why staff should come and work at your school.
106. Dress smartly – have a dress code for staff and sixth form that says suits only.
107. Have someone in charge of Oxbridge and extended projects, both payment by results.
108. Have students study 3 rather than 4 A levels and give them more lessons.
109. Set up collaborative networks both internally and externally. Choosing the same syllabus, a partner school shares the workload of resource planning and provides opportunities for moderation.
110. At least once a half term at an SLT meeting discuss and feedback the impact of work being done in line managed departments to improve the quality of Learning and Teaching Department.
111. Try and get as many students into the sixth form as possible – each brings £10K so 4 extra will pay to overstaff your maths department and reduce class sizes or buy all your staff an iPad etc.
112. Don't make your year 11s apply to come to the sixth form as it makes them think about leaving, meet with them in the January of year 11 with their parents and discuss the courses that they *are* going to study when they start year 12 in September.
113. Have your best teachers running intervention groups, not non-specialist TA's. Never take children out of class for intervention.
114. Give all your HODs the opportunity to visit a primary school in the summer term to observe the Year 6s in their subject so that they can see what they can do/produce – I've seen Yr 6 Geography students produce reams of written answers, then they come to us in September and we praise them for 5 lines!
115. Different teachers need different types of performance management so tailor the process to individuals needs e.g. those coming the end of their first year in a new role will required different to experienced practitioners).
116. Never send weak teachers out on a course to improve it's generally a waste of money – tailored support provided in-house is far more effective.
117. Sit all your UPS staff down and discuss with them what they do to support the wider life of the school – as a rough guide, UPS1 = 2.5 hrs per week extra, UPS2 = 3.5 hrs per week, UPS3 = 4.5 hrs per week as % of directed time 1265 hours). If they don't earn their money take action!
118. Someone on SLT should own all staff undertaking their NPQML/SL qualifications to assign the most suitable coach and ensure project links to SDP.
119. SLT meetings with every year 11 parent and their child in the Jan of year 11 provides the opportunity for a face-to-face discussion about the final push to GCSEs. Ask parents and students for feedback on their best and worst teachers then thank staff personally and respond to the issues raised.
120. Make one person on the SLT in charge of all new staff – welfare, induction etc.



121. Don't expect staff to come to evening events and teach well the next day - have fewer compulsory evenings but agree on non-negotiable evenings: staff meetings, CPD, Parents Evenings. HODs/HOYs, DM, YM.
122. Put all late night evening events like parents evening, open evening etc. on a Thursday so that staff only have one day until the weekend.
123. Create a tick list of 'UPS activities' like running DofE, running a sports team (if they're not a PE teacher!), whole school assemblies, running staff CPD, research project, voluntary lunch duties etc.
124. Ask yourself - can every member of staff say what their school stands for? If not, why not?
125. Make someone on the SLT in charge of visitors so that you always make a good impression.
126. SLT take new staff on tour in first few weeks so they can see the expectations and have a chance to highlight key messages on the way round.
127. Try and recruit undergraduates on their placement year as LSA's and then try and recruit them into SCITT training.
128. If you see an LSA not sitting with a student in a lesson when on tour challenge them - they are there to work with and support the children so make sure they are.
129. Make sure you involve the appropriate people when you make appointments. Some Heads don't let the Head of English be involved in appointing an NQT in English!
130. Know who is teaching your most challenging students/classes and make sure that SLT/HOY visit those lessons frequently to ensure the class teachers feel supported. If you have to sit in the back of the classroom doing work to facilitate learning then do, you might even get a chance to clear your inbox
131. Have a "you said... we did" board to follow up from surveys etc. It gives feedback and shows you have listened. Same in the Staffroom.

## Learning & Teaching

132. Focus on this because, although most say they do, very few schools do. No school can be better than the quality of the teacher so energies must go into improving the quality of lessons for all students.
133. Don't use observations to improve learning and teaching. Most teachers can turn it on for these. Identify what everyone's default teaching is like then have a bespoke plan to improve every teacher in the school each year.
134. Many schools make the mistake of thinking student voice is exclusively about activities which take place outside the classroom. This usually disintegrates into chips and toilets. The most powerful use of student voice is in giving feedback to teachers on their learning and the quality of lessons. How does this happen in your school?
135. Encourage your HODs to conduct a survey asking students asking for feedback on things like how they learn best in lessons, do they always know how to improve, ideas for how lessons could be improved. Our History department asked KS3 and as a result they made 4 key pledges to the students that they displayed in the corridor - the numbers opting to take it at GCSE went by 45%!
136. When you interview a teacher get trained student observers to assess potential candidates on interview day as they will make non-biased and highly valid judgements. Ask the rest of the class 'Did you enjoy the lesson?', 'Would this teacher push you?', 'Would you like this teacher to work here? In my experience the students don't get it wrong.
137. Ensure that every staff meeting, department meeting, HODs meeting is about learning and teaching and sharing good practice - make it the first and only thing on the agenda!
138. Have an agreed 'non-negotiables' for lesson delivery, which identifies characteristic features of an outstanding lesson. For example, the "St Paul's seven "... "The Woolmer way..." "The Marist Learner".
139. If there is any department/area in the school you are concerned about, get the LA/Inspector to do a formal review, or a local school, it gives you all the evidence you need.
140. Have an induction day just for new staff in September before the induction day for all staff to train them on learning and teaching expectations, culture etc.
141. Run parental intervention courses for low achievers in English and Maths in years 7-9.
142. Get NQTs in early in the summer to fully brief them on expectations. Pay them £50 for each day they are in rather than start their contract early.
143. If you still have student planners make sure there is a page that is a proper whiteboard. RAG cards are also really useful.
144. Ensure each department has learning and teaching targets that feed into the school improvement plan.
145. Run bespoke Maths CPD for your primary feeder schools to ensure the quality of the teaching before they get to you.
146. Ensure there is a whole school understanding and language around progress and teaching for mastery across the curriculum (many schools have carried on as before and this will not yield good results down the line).

147. Learning Support Assistants – make sure they are value for money! Train them really well so they can have maximum impact on learning, observe them regularly to ensure they develop professionally, make them accountable for the progress of the children they support. Attaching them to departments is a good way of making sure they are really “owned”.
148. Get your Maths department to link up with the primary feeder schools to bridge learning. We’ve created a programme of 15-20 maths lessons for them to deliver post-SATS to their Year 6s in order to help prepare them for Year 7. Primaries love the support, and we get greater consistency.
149. Whilst focusing on developing their pedagogy, get NQT+1s to focus on a department L&T project as this enables them to have an impact on the school.
150. Ensure that everyone in the department has access to good schemes of work and resources at their fingertips in a format that is easy to understand and online. Remember those days when you were an NQT and had to go home exhausted and prepare six lessons from nothing for the next day!
151. Try to get ‘cool’ Sixth Formers on their gap year to be LSAs or advertise for LSAs who potentially want to teach. Then ensure they are inducted well; not hidden in the back of a classroom on their first day! Another option is to employ undergraduates on a placement year from the local University.
152. Use the right language as a school; focus each lesson on what the children are going to learn rather than what the teachers are going to teach or what children are going to do.
153. Ensure all NQTs have their own teaching base, no split classes, difficult Year 9s etc.
154. Provide advice and support about the layout of classrooms to maximise learning. NQTs can make big errors here.
155. Have a list of activities not allowed in your school e.g. copying, dictation, word searches, drawing posters and colouring.
156. How do you decide on the use of INSET days? Don’t let it be adhoc! Use your observations to identify general weaknesses and put together a coherent programme. Focus on a few key themes each year rather than the scattergun approach as this won’t change everyday practice.
157. At the end of each INSET day give staff something to take away (bookmark, app, or credit card with a summary of ideas) as a memorable reminder of their experience to increase likelihood of impact.
158. Have a positive observation week - pair up staff to go to each other’s lessons and point out “three things I liked about the lesson and one thing I will try in my lessons” or ‘take a risk’ observation week. It’s a great way to share ideas!
159. Put together an observation team of the best teachers. Get them to work round the departments, observing and writing a report. What is the department really good at? (Individually and collectively) What are the areas for development? (Individually and collectively). This feeds into whole school CPD plan. Revisit the next year focusing solely on the departmental areas for development.
160. Have an INSET day where everyone goes to a really good school. Send people in twos and threes so they can discuss what they’ve seen. Alternatively send volunteers who are integral to ‘championing’ learning and teaching to the rest of the staff.
161. Can you hand on heart say that every teachers’ classroom practice has improved by the end of the year? Don’t waste time doing higher order thinking skills if 20% of your staff are agency staff or can’t teach! Identify and target intervention/CPD to take good teachers to outstanding and satisfactory teachers to good.

162. Done properly, live coaching can be very successful - we use IRIS.
163. Make sure your teachers have easy access to learning and teaching tools like timers, random name generators, music and images etc. – Your VLE or our Learning Tools app (free on iTunes) are good places to start.
164. Does every teacher in your school know what an outstanding lesson looks like? If not get them to see one ASAP. Show videos of outstanding lessons in staff meeting and get them to grade them. (Good DVD called “STEP UP”).
165. Create an “ask the experts” website, blog, app with video clips of the best teachers of a particular skill e.g. questioning, AFL... It’s a resource for staff to dip in and out of and gives them a list of teachers to see for support.
166. Remember that there are lots of staff changes each year and you need to keep revisiting the basics to bring new staff up-to-date. Ensure all new staff have a coach and attend key CPD so they are aware of the basics.
167. If a teacher is struggling, get them to observe a teacher with a similar personality and style. – not a whizz bang outstanding teacher that they can never aspire to be.
168. Ensure learning and teaching INSET is practical with quick strategies that staff can share/try tomorrow. Always build in time to reflect and take action.
169. Ensure a variety of staff (subjects and experience) deliver on INSET – not just SLT.
170. Work with students to devise 10 principles of what outstanding learning behaviours are and display them in every room and link the reward system to achieving them, so students are responsible for their learning behaviour as well as teachers.
171. Has every one of your teachers seen a video of themselves each recently? Very powerful and adds another dimension to their development journey.
172. Seek advice from students re what makes a good lesson; get them to take a staff/NQT meeting, run a CPD session, go to department meetings etc.
173. Use L&T bursaries to get staff to do personalised research projects, linked to the development plan for your school to move you forward (£500 each) e.g. differentiation at KS5.
174. Ensure the learning group has a representative from each dept. and use those staff to trial the new ideas etc. to see what works. Make sure there is a practical strategy for them to take away each time as a buy-in for attending.
175. Focus on, and so talk up, learning and teaching rather than behaviour. Better behaviour will come once teaching is more engaging. Have an agreed language that the SLT use all the time (e.g. “what are you learning”? not “what are you doing”?).
176. Provide training for your LSAs on how to be an outstanding LSA and then observe them regularly.
177. Make it part of the support staff’s role to tidy the classroom and do some displays.
178. Have a fun gimmick/competition to keep staff focused on Learning and Teaching at the end of the Autumn term with ideas to revive lessons i.e. advent calendar.
179. Don’t leave revision to the end of the course, interleave prior learning throughout the course e.g. Throwback Thursdays, Feedback Fridays



180. Set up a YouTube channel and post videos of excellent practice that all can access, it should also have a positive impact on recruitment!
181. All formal observations IRISed (videoed) and watched before feedback session, it makes for a much more powerful self-reflection and informed feedback meeting.
182. Get NQT+2 to be part of the whole school L&T development programme by undertaking a project that spans beyond their department. Give them a coach to support them.
183. Make sure CPD is individualised and staff can opt into sessions that are relevant to them.
184. Ensure all HODs set clear L&T targets for their departments that link to the school development plan. Make sure any department reviews focus on identified priorities for the department.
185. Build in a sense of competition to INSET/CPD/SM etc. i.e. treasure hunts, clues, prizes won.
186. Close the loop following INSET days by providing an opportunity for staff to reflect on and share the impact of strategies either whole school or within their departments.
187. Ensure staff joining part way through the year still receive a full induction programme and are assigned a coach. If there is more than one, then get them in on the same day before they start so they can meet each other – pay their cover if you have to!
188. Create opportunities for teachers to observe more experienced teachers – NQTs should be doing it once a week, NQT+1s 4/5 times a term, NQT+2s 2/3 times a term to keep them focused on development of classroom practice.
189. Never let anyone teach A Level for the first time without full induction and make sure they have an experienced buddy to work alongside and receive CPD/further advice on supporting students with exams.
190. LSAs should never do intervention without subject specific training – their methodology must mirror that of the class teacher.
191. Is there someone on the SLT who can verbalise CPD needs of every teacher in the school?
192. Ask yourself - Is every teacher a better teacher in July rather than September, how do you know?
193. Never have one-off staff INSETs, link them together across the year so that staff have the opportunity to revisit and develop based on a coherent theme.
194. If you can't get Maths teachers, go to your local Maths Hub and see if there are any recruitment initiatives you can take advantage of – TSST courses are a great way to train non-specialists to teach year 8 maths.
195. Make sure your Maths department engages with their local Maths Hub and are taking advantage of the training and development opportunities available through it.
196. Make sure your feeder primary feeder schools are fully engaged with their local Maths Hub and are seeking to embed 'teaching for mastery' as this will help improve the quality of students coming up to year 7 - your GCSE results will not go up if you are not teaching for mastery!
197. With the new exams coming, we need a big push on extended writing. Implement a whole school literacy strategy to train the students throughout the school (e.g. "Talk, model, write"; "PEEL" point explain, example, link to question).
198. Create a 'route map' or overview of all the professional development opportunities available to your teachers, it supports succession planning and aids retention of great staff as they can see how their career could progress.

199. Invest in coaching! Staff at all levels find it invaluable and it's a great development opportunity for everyone involved.

200. Ensure someone checks the progress 8 for every child to make sure that they are on the right courses. A child doing 6 subjects they can achieve in will be happier at school, more successful, and have the added bonus of giving you higher progress 8 score.
201. Don't give teachers a raft of information about students - just the grades they need to deliver on and then make sure they know them and use them. Always make sure that the grade you set is aspirational.
202. If a teacher in your school doesn't deliver on results does someone look them in the eye and tell them it's not good enough? You would be surprised how uncommon this is. In some schools a HOD will write a report excusing poor results and that report will be filed rather than be the beginning of the discussion.
203. Does everyone know which class teacher; department and students didn't make expected progress last year? (3 levels in old money!) Be brave and publish it. We are running a service not a charity!
204. Have photos of SEN children in the staffroom with strategies to get the best out of them.
205. Make revision material available online to students and parents - for them to use it, it needs to be easy to access on their tablets and phones.
206. After the mocks give every classroom teacher a list of their students coloured in red, amber or green (below, on or above target) - it's very powerful to see the colour overall and teachers can't argue with a sea of red.
207. Heads of Year should visit their year groups lessons in their free periods and do lunch duties.
208. Make sure at least one member of each department attends examiners feedback meetings, these are invaluable in providing insight into specifications and securing improved student performance next year.
209. Call back all your GCSE Maths and English papers this year so you can properly analyse the results of the first new specification exams.
210. Get successful Sixth Formers, Year 11, the silver brigade, local business and local footballers to mentor lower school students with low aspirations.
211. Have a one side of A4 executive summary of your data, different groups, pupil premium etc. Don't wait for Raise to see if you have any gaps.
212. Ensure the Year 6 into 7 transition catch up is thorough. Work with primary schools e.g. start the weaker students in July at your school and have intensive numeracy and literacy for three weeks. Those children also start back in September feeling much more part of the community already.
213. In the Learning Support Department put up photos of famous people with learning difficulties e.g. Jamie Oliver and Keira Knightly.
214. Have a huge display in every department with the key words that students need to know and their definitions. Put them on the plasmas, behind toilet doors etc. before exams.
215. Use FFTAspire for benchmarking and as a starting point for target setting - make sure you use the % band that is one above where your school is currently working at to ensure targets are aspirational.

216. Be really careful with Year 10 and Year 12 options that you aren't setting a weak child up to fail. Who is in charge of making sure this doesn't happen in your school? A boy with low levels of literacy or concentration choosing History because he liked the teacher in Yr 9 can disrupt the entire group in Year 10 and 11 plus make the child feel inadequate. Does someone check that every child is only on courses they can achieve in?
217. If you have a small enough number, put the most difficult students all in one group and ensure they have the most outstanding teachers for every lesson. It saves hundreds of hours of leadership and pastoral time spent mopping up after a weaker teacher.
218. Similarly put big numbers in your top sets (35 if you have to) to make space for smaller groups lower down.
219. Try to find the money for smaller groups in English. Thirty essays take forever to mark and to give good quality feedback on.
220. Ensure someone looks after the 'grey' students, sending positive letters home and their achievements are noted. When reports come out send these so-called 'grey' students to the Headteacher or SLT for praise. Have two grey students per week to focus on.
221. Ensure there is a system whereby every child is spoken to about their progress. It takes minutes to ask how things are going but it is important that 100% of students get asked.
222. Always promote "keep up rather than catch up" and ensure this is the message filtering through you to middle leaders and all teachers.
223. Involve parents where you can – they spend the most time with their child, give them ways of supporting them e.g. Intensive literacy programme over the summer before joining in Year 7, homework, reading etc.
224. Get your HODs to form a support group with local schools teaching the same a level specification; this will be invaluable in light of the forthcoming curriculum changes.
225. If a teacher is struggling with a Year 11 set – get one of SLT to sit in front of class doing their own work. Everyone wins as the SLT member gets peace to answer email - hopefully!
226. Please don't decide what grades your class will get before you ever meet them. "Set 4 only ever gets Ds" etc. Students are capable of great things if the teacher believes in them. I worked with a teacher in a secondary modern school whose mantra was 100% can (and they did).
227. Don't let the timetable dictate the curriculum. If you only have three reasonable Maths teachers, you have to split Year 11 in half and not have all the groups being taught at the same time.
228. Hound parents who don't come to Parents' evening, 'we were so disappointed' and so on - don't let them off the hook – visit them at home if necessary.
229. At Parents' evening have a big screen with a rolling presentation of photos of the children in that year group enjoying their time at school or at primary school.
230. Parents are a huge untapped resource. Have an evening for them and give them resources to use at home. Most parents want their children to do well but the majority don't know what to do except nag about revision. Give out booklets for each subject like "Five questions you need to ask your child".
231. Have a window of time where teachers know there will be no interruptions to lessons e.g. no trips or staff out of school from February half-term to May half-term.



232. Don't get too hung up on curriculum. It should be right for the students but it's not the answer to everything. A child is far better getting a C/4 in a subject with a great teacher than U in Health and Social Care where you couldn't appoint so made the PE teacher teach it.
233. Put your mock results in an envelope and model the real thing.
234. Put lazy able boys in for Higher Maths. They need a lower % for a 4 rather than on Foundation where they make daft mistakes.
235. Run a nurture group for the weakest children in Year 6 with the students having only about five teachers instead of ten. It makes for a smoother transition to secondary education.
236. Add 5 points to everyone's KS2 score or one grade to everyone's target and don't tell the teachers! It would amaze you what children can achieve if the teacher believes they can.
237. Interview all students (with their parents) in Year 11 and Year 13 individually after their mocks to find out how they are getting on in each subject. It's very time consuming but well worth it and all the self-evaluation you need!
238. If you have a subject where the results are weaker, get a few schools together and pay for the Chief Examiner to attend. Its £1000 well spent. A cheaper way is to contact all the local schools, find one that has an outstanding HOD and ask them to provide some support in that subject area. These schools are really willing to help (especially if you pay).
239. Does someone 'own' the children in Year 11 with regard to achievement across the board? If the answer is the Form Tutor, then it's not happening or at best it's variable. The Head of Year 11 is such a crucial role and should be a coveted job that staff aspire to. Have you got the right person in the post?
240. The A Levels are going to be much harder from now on. How are you preparing the staff to teacher weaker students? As part of Sixth Form induction have essay-writing workshops run by English Department - it's very useful for the new exams coming our way.
241. Try and persuade staff to become examiners if you have an area of weakness.
242. If you have any one-man departments, ensure you pair up with another school so they have someone to work with and if necessary pay for it. It's worth it as they can swap ideas and provide support.
243. At staff meetings show photos of children in danger of underachieving so everyone knows who they are - make it humorous with some music. (We've used 'Help' by the Beatles and had each one to hold up a whiteboard giving a message to staff.) Our most difficult child wrote "I know I'm a pain but I do want to do well, please HELP!".
244. Check that the departments divvy up the classes fairly. Some Heads of Department hog the top sets or the A level and don't develop the staff in their department.
245. Don't stick with a syllabus because you've always done it in the past. If you are thinking of changing, visit another school that does it. This will save hours and schools are really generous with resources.
246. As a Head of Department you need to model the behaviour you want by teaching the key groups in Year 11 and fighting your corner with the timetable so that your subject gets what is needed to raise achievement.
247. Make sure every departmental meeting and HOD meeting is focused about learning and teaching and sharing good resources.



248. Put posters around school, even on the back of the toilet doors. For example, 'Ten things I need to know to get a grade 4 in Maths'.
249. Talk about a 'grade 5' being a good pass with the majority of students to increase aspirations.
250. Go through mock papers with a fine toothcomb to see which children performed badly on which questions. Never just "go through the paper" over a few lessons as no-one benefits and you are asking for behavioural issues.
251. Tell Years 11, 12 and 13 they are the best year you've ever had and all the indications are that they will beat all previous records (even if they are the worst year ever!)
252. If you have a child with poor attendance, ensure that when they do arrive they aren't pounced on by five teachers who want work from them. Try to get someone else to have the overview of anyone who is struggling and ensure everything is channelled through that person.
253. Ensure the Heads of Year teach lots of their Year group so they get to know the children well.
254. Don't label children as school action plus etc. Call them the diamonds, golds etc.
255. Take action over students who perform really badly in Years 7-10. Have a four-week graduation trial period where if they fail to improve keep them down a year or at least for the month of September. It's a great deterrent to those on the brink but obviously this doesn't work if there are 100 of them.
256. Now that the A Levels will be harder we need to ensure all students are on courses where they can be successful. Have bridge tests after two weeks in Sixth Form. Teach a topic then give students A Level type questions. If they fail, the bridge test move course e.g. from Geography to Travel and Tourism.
257. Always make sure teachers know where their classes slipped up; make sure they have access to the enhanced results analysis on the exam board websites to see how or where students underperformed on an individual basis.
258. Have Year 12 exams in June and make it clear to students that if they fail then they will not be allowed to continue into Year 13, then give them the opportunity to do a resit in the first week of Year 13. If they pass they can continue, if not they leave the Sixth Form or resit Year 12 doing different subjects.
259. Exam success needs a lot of work now that the system has changed particularly in Sixth Form and for GCSE Maths and English. Have a plan as a school and implement it now, for example when will you do mocks, is it still worth doing early entries? etc.
260. Ban lessons where children just work through past papers, for 90% it is a waste of time.
261. Always read the Examiner's report! You'll learn a lot. Get staff to be exam markers.
262. Don't run any open revision classes - the wrong students come and they make the weaker students feel inadequate. Target each revision class for 7/8/9 and 3/4 etc.
263. Give the students you need to see an individual personalised timetable of when they need to be in school and send a copy to their parents asking for support.
264. Make a large display of exam language and what it means. For example, show, prove, evaluate, and find the value of. Agree school common definitions for each of these...
265. Have a revision website with all dates etc. but also forums, revision material for each subject, blogs and top tips.

266. Rename revision classes e.g. The Priory School in Shropshire uses 'pimp my grades'. Make them attractive, bring a mate, buy pizza, give out sweets etc.
267. Write a personalised card to all the Year 11 and 13s wishing them luck in their exams
268. Write home following revision classes "delighted you came...." or "we really missed you".
269. Don't run revision sessions for months on end as students will come to rely on them. When they are run, get a member of the support staff to ring parents of students not in revision classes as it is happening and bring them back if possible - then loads of praise when they get there.
270. How do you use Year 11 form time from February to June? It's a lot of hours that can be wasted. Have dedicated revision sessions for very small groups with breakfast.
271. Write to the Prime Minister and lots of famous people and ask them to write to Year 11 to wish them luck in their exams.
272. Have a revision evening for Year 11 parents to give them key dates and ideas to support rather than nag their children. Give them a booklet of revision activities and tips from HODs to actively enable them to support.
273. Divide Year 11 into gangs e.g. All Stars (Grade 8/9 students) BBs (Bubbly Boys) KCs (Kick & Cuddles needed). Give each gang a leader who the gang will like and meet your gang regularly to ensure you give them the appropriate messages/rewards for attendance etc. Have special gang assemblies.
274. Ensure every child has a progression route so this can be tied into questions about their progress. Make sure there is a named person in charge of progression routes.
275. Publish past papers, mark schemes, teacher's worked solutions and examiners' reports on the VLE so students can see just what makes the difference between A/B and B/C etc. Have videos of the really difficult questions and how to answer them.
276. Use displays in the classroom to really highlight command words or relative key words/exam strategy linked with the forthcoming papers.
277. Get A level students to write mark schemes for each other in order to fully understand examiners requirements.
278. Get A Level students to record their progress in relation to past papers for homework (paper, year, score, question got wrong and still need help with).
279. For A levels, analyse student performance on assessments by question type - get students to be aware of any patterns and therefore revision needs.
280. For A levels, build in 'assessment training' opportunities at as many points as possible i.e. plan an essay, write a model paragraph, mark a model paragraph and write the next one or an improved one, underline where skills (assessment objectives) exists in an answer.
281. Put overall 'cheat sheet' guide to a topic as a mind map to fill in (in case they have nothing else) or create iTunesU resource or eBook to make revision more interactive.
282. Create your own acronyms to help students remember tips in their exam or exam technique e.g. GET LEGLESS in your Geography report, RISKS PAY in your Maths exam.
283. Use resources to support their literacy in exam technique. e.g. Connectives mat to help develop essay writing skills. This will be a huge issue under the new exam system... are you ready?

284. Share reading age scores each year to ensure staff are aware of the students who are working below age related levels; run interventions for all students below age related levels and monitor impact of these programmes.
285. Most schools phone home now when children are absent but how about texting or phoning those who are persistently late at about 8am to make sure they are up.
286. Set up electronic exam paper trackers using things like GoogleDocs so that students can enter their marks/grades and you can keep track of how they are getting on.
287. Train Sixth Formers to act as pastoral or subject mentors. If the pairing is right, it can have a huge impact on everyone involved. Use trained mentors within English, Maths and Science to support student intervention.
288. Attach Sixth Formers to every department. They are a great help particularly as free LSAs with weak students and dare I say it better role models.
289. Attach a Sixth Former to a Year 7 form and give the Year 7 the Sixth Former's email address so they can email them any worries.
290. Get the Head of English to explain to the SLT what changes they have made to the curriculum and their teaching to support the changes to the primary curriculum.
291. If you put weak/non specialists' teachers in Year 7 in Maths and English you are storing up problems for the future – quality teaching from day 1 will reap rewards at GCSE 5 years down the line.
292. Most homework is a waste of time, just have Maths and SPAG/Reading at KS3.
293. Have a spelling log book in KS3 where students keep track of their tricky words.
294. Send home a termly spelling list to year 7 parents and ask them to support their child in learning them. Include subject specific terminology as well as more general words.
295. Assign LSAs to departments, give them a list of children that they are responsible for. Get the LSA to move from room to room to support to ensure the individual children are ok rather than getting stuck in one room.
296. Make sure weak Year 12 students study one BTEC subject.
297. What have you put in place to monitor the progression of students over 2 years with no AS's e.g. end of Year 12 exams, January mocks in Year 13, extra assessment lesson every fortnight.
298. Put Core Maths as an AS option and encourage your Scientists, Psychologists, Business and Economics, Geography students to do it if they don't do A Level Maths as it will have a positive impact on their other subjects.
299. Ensure somebody owns the disadvantaged children post-16 and is responsible for those children's progress
300. Make sure teachers seat all vulnerable children in front 2 rows for every lesson.
301. Make sure your KS3 HOYs understand the monitoring data and take responsibility for both achievement/progress as well as behaviour.
302. Get your HOYs to come to a SLT meeting after each round of monitoring to present their data and highlight key strengths, students to watch out for, challenges etc. and to demonstrate their ownership of achievement.
303. Following monitoring/mocks, have a measurable target to feedback to HOD's that will have an impact on headline figures e.g. raise 3 A Level C's to B's

304. Have a target for %A-B for A-Level and then work out how to fulfil it e.g. it must start with a 7!
305. Make sure all exam group teachers do all past papers themselves under exam conditions so that they have a better understanding of the pressure the students are under as well as the challenges in the paper.
306. Moderate in departments e.g. each teacher writes a model answer, marks it and then it's moderated by someone else, or work in triads write, mark, moderate.
307. The HOD should get hold of all examiners reports in Sept and then report back to their SLT line managers on what they found and how it's going to impact department practice.
308. Recall at least 2 top, 2 middle and 2 bottom papers from every exam group and see what went well/wrong.
309. Make sure every teacher has a face-to-face discussion about exam results with a member of the SLT in the first two weeks of September – congratulate or challenge, it reaffirms high expectations.
310. Hound the exam boards for support with new specs – one of our HODs sent them a model answer she had marked and asked the exam board for feedback on whether she was accurate or not, they came back with useful feedback and guidance.
311. Make up questions and agree as a department what 20/20 looks like – all teachers must be able to write a full mark answer for every question they set!
312. Seek clarification from exam boards on the structure of model answers if you are unsure.
313. When teachers are creating model answers make sure they do it in real time – there's no point in creating a model answer that takes you 3 hours if the students actually only have 30 minutes in the exam!
314. Ask yourself - 12 mark questions: can every child verbalise what they need to do to get 12 marks?
315. Identify students in Year 7 who would benefit from a transition programme of intensive Maths and English for the half term and put one in place within the first week.
316. Start vulnerable children in the May half term, so they know the school and the teachers when they start.
317. Get the new Year 7 data in July before they start so that your HODs English and Maths can do some SAT's analysis.
318. Get all Year 13 teachers to do all the past/specimen papers and bring them to a department meeting attended by the SLT line manager to discuss challenges – SLT must look them in the eye and ensure they have all done it!
319. In some schools the head sees every teacher in the school in September about the results and looks them in the eye.
320. Don't make children do a language/combined science for the sake of it, doing really well in a basket 3 subject will improve their progress 8 score and their motivation.
321. Ensure somebody goes through the curriculum for every individual child to ensure they can be successful rather than simply hit the progress 8 criteria.



322. Do not equate 9 to A\* as you will set many children up to fail (we made this mistake because very hard-working children end up appearing to underperform)
323. Have an evening for parents of students in year 10 and 12 to explain the new changes to the grading system (particularly when the children get a mix of numbers and letters).
324. Make feedback on line managed departments data and subsequent actions a regular part of SLT meetings – particularly important post Yr 10, 11, 12 and 13 mocks.

## Behaviour

325. Your behaviour policy is only as successful as how the weakest member of staff implements it. It's the consistency that counts. How do you induct new staff and staff that join mid-year to ensure they follow the policy?
326. Ensure every child's photo is displayed somewhere in school. The most important aspect to behaviour is that every child feels that they belong to the community. Do 100% of your children have a member of staff who knows them really well?
327. Give prizes to students such as phone apps rather than things 10 years out of date like WH Smiths vouchers!
328. Make sure you engage with all non-English speaking parents. We took over a school where Year 11 Polish Parents hadn't set foot in the school for five years because of language difficulties. There are so many people out there willing to act as free interpreters.
329. Catch the children being good. At the same school as above I sent a letter home to the parents of a Year 11 boy saying he was working well in DT. His Mum 'phoned to say it was the first nice letter she had received about her son in 12 years of education - what a sad indictment of that school (and we had the added bonus that he then stopped setting the fire alarm off!).
330. Find a way to recognise children's birthdays - the easiest way is to run the happy birthdays along the bottom of the plasma screen each day - it can be set up for the whole school easily. Alternatively create a display for all form tutors to write children's names on easily. Maybe both.
331. Appoint a tenacious member of support staff to be responsible for improving attendance of PP students.
332. Have a staff briefing each week which focuses on students who need TLC, have difficulties at home, good news children.
333. If you have really good behaviour have split lunch. It frees up all the specialist rooms and makes timetabling so much easier.
334. Ensure it's 4:1 in favour of rewards - have a very simple way for staff to reward students that takes less than five seconds e.g. email rewards@.....send a list then a member of the support staff writes home etc.
335. Have a fortnightly SLT focus that you strive to pull students up on e.g. lateness to lessons, skirts, earrings, trainers etc.
336. When a new child joins the school mid-year, ring home after one week and again after two weeks to make sure they have settled in properly.
337. Never remove a child's fig leaf in public.
338. If a group of students get 1's for attitude and homework in every monitoring of the year send them on a trip as a reward - a group of year 8's climbed the O2 last summer!
339. Do assemblies and use them for core positive messages. Never give blanket negative messages in assembly and make sure the children leave feeling good about themselves. Find unusual individual achievements, which may be 'off the wall' to celebrate.
340. Language is very important - never blame the children. Use positive language - be optimistic, promote belief "this is what we believe in..."

341. Ensure rewards are appropriate. Everyone likes praise but cool Year 9 boys hate being singled out in Assembly, though like priority for lunch, a visit to Chelsea or doughnut days.
342. Make a big deal of attendance etc. in Assembly - do a PowerPoint with a bar chart and the bars creeping up to the sound of the X Factor music, finally announcing the winner.
343. If you really want to get rid of trainers - buy a supply of those horrid blue plastic shoes you can get at the swimming baths to put over any trainers worn to school.
344. Ensure that all FSM students are in a club or do something to feel involved e.g. pay for them to have guitar lessons etc.
345. Be explicit in telling teachers that behaviour in their lessons is their responsibility and they must sanction children themselves before passing it on. If there is poor behaviour in most of their lessons the problem is the quality of their teaching not the students - it's important this message is driven home regularly.
346. It's so important to try to get parents on side. Investing the time early on saves hours later. Many hard to reach families have had a bad experience of school themselves so make sure their first experience is positive - if necessary visit them. People are very rarely rude to you in their own home.
347. Have a system to ensure that 100% of children get a positive phone call/email/letter home every term. This will have a huge impact on behaviour.
348. Ensure everyone is in a House. E.g. governors, catering staff etc. Get them all badges. Create a sense of identity.
349. Have a phone in school that can't be traced - hard to reach parents will often not pick up when they see the school number coming up on the dial.
350. Ensure that House competitions have a wide range of activities so every child has something they can contribute to, not just Sport e.g. Family Fortunes, Egg Heads.
351. Put photos up at the start of the month for each subject in curriculum areas. Some departments use Photoshop e.g. superimposing students' faces over Einstein for Scientist of the Month, Oscars in Media etc.
352. Use the plasma screens around school for praise, football match reports, photos of trips etc. rather than reminders or nags.
353. Allow the students to decide what charities to support during the year, they will work harder to fundraise for them. Then take them to the charity if possible to see the impact.
354. Provide PE equipment, footballs, hoops, ropes, at break and lunch - it saves arguments and gets that excess energy run off. Outdoor basketball hoops and table tennis tables work really well.
355. Try to get a link with the football club(s) that the students support, get players to visit, photos, tour of grounds etc. as prizes.
356. Have regular House competitions for teachers and support staff. They are great fun and build community.
357. Use your parents for connections to get prizes the children will like - we managed to get a signed photo of Lewis Hamilton. Everyone knows someone!!



358. Have a celebration breakfast/lunch with leadership team/Head for children nominated by the Head of Year or those who get all 1's on their monitoring etc.
359. Give the SLT photos of persistently absent students so you can ensure you have positive conversations with them and they feel included.
360. As a HOY, grab grey children who work hard - see them individually and tell them you are proud of them. It takes minutes and they feel ten feet tall. Get the Leadership team to do the same.
361. Ensure your behaviour policy is simple, understood by everyone and displayed everywhere using language as positive as possible. Some poor schools have a policy where the staff fill out bits of paper and if they are lucky someone will come back to them in a week. This causes stress and resentment leading to staff absence etc.
362. Spreading children out at breaks dissipates possible problems. Invest in a trim trail around the school playground/field (a great success at Paddington Academy). Let student's book outdoor table-tennis tables, tennis courts and football pitches at lunchtime. Put chairs out in circles in the hall. Get dining room tables with fixed chairs. Weydon School in Surrey have done this well.
363. Do everything you can to minimise the downtime at break and lunch and hence minimise problems. At a school in special measures, I knocked five minutes off the lunchtime and the end of the day - nobody noticed much so I knocked another five minutes off!!

## Working Environment

364. If you have any dark corners or no-go areas put very bright lights and Artwork on the walls there.
365. Get rid of bells – it is really stressful going to a school that still has bells, but thankfully it's rarer now.
366. Get huge photos of the cool kids in perfect uniform up on display. The bigger the space, the bigger the photos. 8' x 6' looks great in a hall!
367. Manage the site effectively - repair any damage, especially graffiti or vandalism, within 24 hours. Make all the support staff accountable not just the teachers.
368. Have a clean desk policy starting with the leadership team. Buy everyone cupboards to put the rubbish in.
369. Get staff to see the best learning environments by having meetings in the best room and then give staff lots of notice as to the next meeting being in their room.
370. Use a staff meeting to send teachers to go and sit at the back of their room and see what the children see every lesson and the messages this gives.
371. Have a week where every member of staff walks the school and goes into all the classrooms to see what others do by way of displays etc. - or buddy up staff to be critical friends of each other's learning environment. Hide clues within the displays around the school for them to find as a competitive challenge!
372. Get DT A Level students to design and make useful displays for around school e.g. car parking signs.
373. Get a skip at least twice a year and make people de-clutter! Those 'O' level papers from 1972 won't ever come in handy!!
374. Think HSBC. Would HSBC have this standard of display? Cleanliness? Tidiness? etc. in one of their banks? If the answer is no, then a great school learning environment shouldn't have it either.
375. Have a central store of eye catching materials for displays e.g. bright paper, hanging hooks, plastic covering.
376. Encourage glass paints and displays on windows. They can look amazing and are really easy to do and light up when the sun shines.
377. Are you confident the girls' toilets never run out of paper? Have an email address 'maintenance@.....' so that all staff and students can let the site team know that a job needs doing.
378. Demand the same standards from your site team that you do from teachers - don't accept poor standards in any aspect of their work and don't use the excuse that you can't get caretakers. Most schools have accountability for teachers but not for LSAs, cleaners etc.
379. Take photos of each form group and blow them up to display in September.
380. Decide what you want on the form notice board and get a member of the support staff to set up each board so they look good and consistent round the school.
381. Have staff photos in each department on a welcome board - make them fun like a magazine interview, top trumps, something you didn't know about Miss Blogs... three truths and a lie etc.

382. Employ full time cleaners - it's easier to find them and they have more pride as they feel they are part of the school community.
383. Put carpet in the corridors - it makes them so much quieter - but make sure you buy the stuff that you can remove chewing gum from.
384. Get the toilets checked after every break to ensure they always have soft paper, soap etc. and are as well-kept as yours at home.
385. Get someone to write to all the local garden centres and ask for free plants to enhance the school site.
386. First impressions are important. It's like selling a house - people make decisions within eleven seconds. One Inspector told me that he makes a judgment within a minute and is rarely wrong. What does your reception say about your school? Put one of the reception staff in charge of the reception area e.g. keeping plasma updated daily etc. Is the receptionist really smart and friendly and representing your values?
387. Have inspirational quotes everywhere - particularly ones by people students admire e.g. David Beckham, Chris Froome.
388. Don't make students enter the school by a back door because it looks as though you are ashamed of them. Everyone enters the 'posh' way.
389. Get GCSE/A level PE students logo shirts with names on the back - the students love them! Do the same with everyone in the production crew for the play.
390. Buy sloping lockers as they can't have stuff put on top of them.
391. Use the laser cutter in DT to make door signs etc. easily - if you don't have one, get one if you can!
392. Clear the staff room tables every Friday night. Staff soon get used to it.
393. Fill every place on the wall either with giant photos (really cheap from Prontaprint) or with Artwork. If displays get vandalised buy the lockable display cabinets.
394. If you do a great display, put it up but don't date it so it will last. Use LSAs and support staff to help.
395. There is money out there. The Football Foundation, Sport England, Farmington Trust, Wolfson Foundation - we just never have time to look or to bid - could one of your support staff have two hours per week to investigate sources of income etc.?
396. Give all KS3 students a canvas for Art each. You will overnight have hundreds of displays around the school for negligible cost. Get the site manager to put them all up in the summer holidays.
397. Ensure the site team have a uniform with school logo on - the same for cleaners and canteen staff.
398. Raise the profile of your site team by having a display of their photos with caption... "My name is Tony and I help students learn by keeping the school clean". Same for catering staff etc.
399. Invite site team to student council meetings so they hear first-hand of any concerns.
400. Have a green team or eco team of students to water plants etc.
401. Give staff time to clear up and improve the learning environment - cancel a staff meeting and give staff a list of jobs to do.



402. Don't use the term 'Caretaker' - it's out-dated and implies a low level job. Premises Manager, Site Manager, Premises Director are much better.
403. Attach benches to the dining room walls so that students queuing for lunch can sit down and 'shimmy' along. Two schools told me this changed their lunchtime behaviour completely.
404. Show DVDs in hall/around school when it's wet.
405. Get a member of the support staff to be responsible for displays then teachers can just give a memory stick with photos and they can be printed, displayed etc. The same goes for key words for classrooms. Remember a tatty display is worse than no display. What does your worst classroom look like? Do children deserve better?
406. Check your bill and contract for grounds maintenance - some schools pay £20k and only get the grass cut. Ensure one of the site team is responsible for the outside space looking good.
407. Make sure whenever the SLT are on duty that they carry a litter picker/bin bag. It guilts the students into dropping less. We've tried everything and it's the one thing that has worked.
408. Make sure all visitors have a good experience - train reception staff well and give them feedback. I go to lots of schools and sometimes the receptionist doesn't even look up.
409. Ask visitors to fill in a form when they leave, 'Something you liked about our school and something you think we could improve upon', include the question 'Did we make you feel welcome?'.
410. Have Year 11 & 13 photos - one formal one and one daft one - that way you don't spend ages trying to get the formal one done properly (do the formal one first though).
411. Have a rolling programme of re-decoration. Get a full time decorator/handyman, the right person can save you lots of money.
412. Share display resources within and between departments - it saves time, e.g. all our Science labs have some displays that are the same and adapted from the Maths ones.
413. Ensure that the school phone is answered promptly and by someone really friendly. You would be surprised how rarely this happens. Test your own school! If you are short of students, parents will be really put off if they have to press five buttons and finally it says try again later. Ring your school from home and see what the response is.
414. Letters that go home must be word perfect. It's not okay to say we sent 200 letters home and there were only two mistakes. Some parents only have one child and if their name is spelt wrongly the message they receive is that you don't care about their child. Most schools have someone on the support staff who is a good proof reader - or ask for a volunteer - especially if the letters go home in different languages. Also don't use jargon or words that alienate parents from the school. I saw a report where a child was graded for AFL with no explanation of what AFL meant.
415. Get the Student Council to award teachers with the best classroom/learning environment every half-term. Buy an Oscar 'gong' to be presented in assembly.
416. Get rid of flipcharts by buying flipchart paper that sticks to the wall. Its brilliant [www.magicwhiteboard.co.uk](http://www.magicwhiteboard.co.uk) Alternatively paint one of the walls in your office with whiteboard paint ([www.smartwallpaint.co.uk](http://www.smartwallpaint.co.uk)).
417. Give the Student Council a reasonable budget (£1,000) to spend on improving the school environment. Get the Student Council to take staff/NQT meetings to tell teachers what works, what doesn't work. Some feedback we had is that they hate going from lesson to lesson hearing about expectations at the beginning of September - they prefer inspiration and activities that start the year positively.

418. Have large posters around the school written by students all starting with “We like it when.....” e.g. “We like it when teachers have a fun starter”, “We like it when teachers set homework on the right evenings”, “We like it when the teacher plays music to make us work faster” etc. Have them made professionally.
419. There are some great school catering companies now, we have recently changed ours and it has made a huge difference.
420. Have student input into all new projects from canteen furniture, refitting the medical room, changing sports kit, changing the rewards system etc.
421. Don't let any classroom/office doors be kept shut or even worse with coats coving the panel of glass – it's so 70'
422. Make sure all artwork on display around the school has plaque with the school logo and name/year of the artist.
423. Put glass doors on the toilets – we stole this idea from another school we visited and it's made a huge difference to lateness to lessons and mess that is left.
424. Ensure the signage around the school is clear and concise and corporate – it all needs to have the same look!
425. Vinyl wallpaper pictures and aluminium sheets look really impressive particularly on large walls.
426. Make sure HODs take ownership of their department corridor displays and they are kept up-to-date and fresh.
427. Buy a load of high visibility vests – students on gate to help parking at parents evening, gives a great first impression.
428. Make sure each room has at least one new display ready for September.

429. Don't spend time doing things for Ofsted. Write one side of A4 under the four headings. 20 reasons why we think we are outstanding/good/requires improvement/inadequate for 'Quality of teaching, learning and assessment'.
430. Don't reinvent the wheel – get ideas and resources from others. Many schools have all schemes of work etc. online and we are very willing to share.
431. Don't waste your pupil premium money on fads/IT/trips etc. when you could use it to employ another teacher to have smaller sets for the weaker students. Look at each child individually and decide what is best for them not what looks good on your website or for Ofsted.
432. Ask the staff what you can abandon. What does the school do that does not impact on the children? Do what's right for the children, not what's right for Ofsted. In my view too many schools have replaced the word children with the word Ofsted..." We are doing this for Ofsted"
433. Buy the 'peripheral' policies on the internet or pinch them off another school's website. Don't waste precious time labouring over documents that are only there to cover your back. (Epsom and Ewell High School is great for policies).
434. Have Standard Operation Procedures that are really quick and easy to complete. Is everything really simple? E.g. IT works, staff have keys, and the reports are easy.
435. Have as few meetings as possible - every meeting means time not spent with students or teachers not preparing lessons. What is the minimum number of meetings you can get away with whilst still ensuring sufficient high quality support and development? If a meeting isn't needed - cancel it!
436. Run yoga/pilates/cross-training every week for staff - make sure it's free!
437. Ignore fads! Don't jump on bandwagons: learn to say no more often. Schools in difficulty engage in a lot of initiatives that are not followed through and have little impact. Avoid gratuitous INSET like "get that bloke in to talk about co-operative learning".
438. Most people don't read the prospectus but they do look at the photos. Small ones don't work; have a look at yours, what are the key messages? Are the photos of smiling children in perfect uniform? Save money - give the prospectus out as a QR code or USB stick on a wristband, or maybe just put it on your website!
439. Consider providing services that staff find difficult to organize during a busy week, for example, internet shopping delivery, dry cleaning, sports clubs, reduced membership for golf or health clubs, car valeting, discounts for local restaurants, cheap MOTs, having cars collected and returned to school, fetching prescriptions etc. All the stuff we can't get done during the school day. Our most popular is Amazon parcels delivered.
440. Minimise the paperwork; bin the stuff yourself rather than putting someone else's name on the top and passing it on.
441. Get rid of written teacher reports to parents, it takes teachers ages to write, they often done badly, it's a pain to spell/grammar check them - we got rid of ours and 99% of parents didn't even notice!
442. Have strict rules on meetings - how long are they? What's the purpose? Do the children get a better deal as a result of the meeting? Ban meetings being longer than an hour.

443. Find ways to get the staff to come to the staffroom e.g. cover in only one place, free coffee, free fruit, free cake, a whiteboard with the day's important notices. It creates more team spirit and digs people out of their cubbyholes.
444. Don't give staff bits of paper to fill in e.g. INSET evaluation or if you must, send them a Survey Monkey. Get feedback all the time but keep it simple e.g. put a flip chart up for anyone to write on WWW/EBI.
445. If you have space, have two areas in the staffroom, one with ICT and one that has no evidence of work where people can relax - make sure the notice boards etc. look good and are up to date. Put photos up of staff enjoying themselves, weddings, babies etc. not ICT policies.
446. Use governors, parents and support staff to go on trips - it saves cover and they enjoy it.
447. Use support staff as form tutors as much as possible and give key staff that time during the day to chase students, e.g. Head of Maths, English, Science and PE etc.
448. If a teacher doesn't have a base, then get all the other teachers in the department who do have a base to move out of their room for one class - that way at least all your lessons with a particular class are in the same room.
449. Find out about your local Maths Hub and engage with them. They offer a huge amount of support, CPD and retraining opportunities.
450. After the Year 11/13s leave, have specific jobs for teachers to do during "gained time" e.g. upload homework on the VLE, improve learning environment, UCAS references etc. Check through line management each fortnight that staff stick to the timetable.
451. Share common resources e.g. quiz show templates and subscription websites for all staff - it saves time.
452. Review the use of tutor time. It costs a fortune (10% of your staff budget if it's half an hour per day). Do SLT visit tutor time? Is it value for money?
453. Most schools phone home now when children are absent but how about texting or phoning those who are persistently late at about 8am to make sure they are up.
454. Minimise the letters you send home - texting, twitter and email are much better these days e.g. 'Looking forward to seeing you at Parents' evening at 4pm!!
455. Give the students an email address 'ideas for improvement@.....' where they can send ideas, suggestions or comments.
456. Sit a big group of students from across the school - say 60 - in the hall and get all the staff to be in there and do a session on things we think could be improved. Organise it like speed dating and record the outcomes.
457. Choose ten students at random and give parents flip videos in Year 6 to ask certain questions. Repeat with the same children every year for seven years (like the '7-Up' programme) it provides great assemblies and memories for Year 11 and 13 leavers' do's!
458. Feed staff healthy food whenever they stay for parents' evenings etc. not beige food like sausage rolls recently defrosted.
459. If possible get students to do all the tours for visitors, Year 8 is a good idea as they are then responsible for them. Just work through the registers - they will do a great job for you if well briefed.
460. Buy a lot of cheap coloured t shirts on the internet for staff so they look smart on sports day - House colours?

461. Elect sixth form house captains to run the house system rather than staff, it's great for their UCAS applications and saves teachers a lot of time!
462. Review the way you appoint your head boy/girl e.g. hustings in assembly all students vote? SLT to nominate interview shortlist? Staff and 6th form have equal votes? Committee nominated by SLT, Head boy/girl nominated by the committee from within?
463. Organise the shared area so that it is easy for staff to find the best resources - make it part of your 'gained time plan' to have a sort out in June/July each year.
464. Don't open post unless it's got your name on it!
465. Get a booklet with all staff photos, jobs and contact details ready for the first of September each year.
466. Use Google Docs, online questionnaires, doodle poll etc. to collect feedback, online job applications, 6th form/year 9 options etc.
467. Consider using Sixth Form students as mentors rather than the leadership team - with some students they often build better relationships.
468. Get into the habit of blocking email domains - it's easy to do on Outlook and it's reduced my inbox from 200 a day to about 80!
469. Sixth formers are a hugely underutilised resource! We use ours as support in year 11 lessons, interviewing staff and for lunch duties. How else could you use yours?
470. If a Year 11 student isn't coping with being in school all day and as a result is 'soaking-up' a disproportionate amount of SLT time it might be worth considering a flexible timetable e.g. one where they aren't on site at lunch time etc.
471. If you have lots of visitors make sure they all come in together on one day - they get a far better experience and it's also less time consuming in the long run!
472. Run twilight Maths for Psychology/Business/Geography/Biology etc. for year 12 students - use a year 13 student, undergraduate LSA or have someone in the Maths department do it as part of their UPS contribution.

473. Don't invest in technology for technology's sake! What is the 5-year plan? Too many schools do things like buying a set of iPads without really planning how they will be used.
474. Appoint Digital Leaders to advise teachers on the best way to embed technology within their lessons, provide training for staff and students and demonstrate to parents how technology is being used in school.
475. Beware of email and blanket communication in the electronic age – ban whole school emails or send them to one of SLT to filter before sending out to all staff.
476. Ensure all possible email groups are set up so staff can email with ease e.g. Yr 7 tutors, HODS, Maths Dept etc.
477. Embrace technology don't fight it. Actively seek feedback e.g. set up a forum for parents to rate the school etc.
478. Build a school app; for example, a staff or student planner app; don't waste time and money on lots of paper. Do everything electronically if you can.
479. Find a system to minimise emails - especially ones that are sent to everyone. Always start the subject box with 'DELETE if you don't teach Year 11' etc. better still, don't send it in the first place.
480. Make sure that all systems are really simple and quick to use e.g. accessing the report system from home and ensuring it is pre-populated with as much data as possible and spell check facility etc. Even better scrap reports and spend time preparing great lessons.
481. Embrace mobile devices - there are thousands of apps which could save hundreds of hours for a stressed NQT.
482. Your VLE – ensure it's not an electronic filing cabinet (most are!) Have a very clear plan about what will be done when and how it will be used to enhance learning and teaching - don't launch it until staff/students can't do without it.
483. Use phones, iPads etc. in lessons as much as possible. Taking photos of the board and dropping into GoodNotes to annotate or uploading to Facebook is far more useful than copying!
484. Who is in charge of your website? Make sure it's updated regularly (or is set up so it doesn't need to be!)
485. Employ a full time web/app/VLE developer to take the burden off staff – if there is slack you can always sell it off buy building other school websites etc.
486. Find some way of having work online for children who are absent or excluded. Teachers get stressed when asked with no notice (or even worse having a lesson interrupted) to set work. Do the same with cover work.
487. You only get one opportunity to launch a new ICT initiative like iPads, VLE etc. Make a plan and then stick to it! I've heard of so many schools who have launched a new VLE only to change it 12 months later - the keen staff will have invested hours in it the first time and won't do it again as "What's the point, it will be replaced in 12 months!"
488. Overstaff your network team so there is enough capacity, then sell off any excess staffing to local primaries.
489. If you're buying in bulk from one supplier because you've set up an iPad scheme there are often opportunities for large discounts – utilise them and play them off against one another.

490. Download the SJB Learning Tools app from app store, it's a great AFL tool and completely free!
491. Set up an annual refresh rate and pattern for PCs/MACs/laptops in school to ensure that over a 5-year period all are being replaced in a cost effective way. Decide your priority areas, they get the new ones each year i.e. the ICT rooms, then the classroom PCs, then the Sixth Form LRC etc.
492. If you're buying all your tech from one supplier, then they will often provide technical support and maintenance as part of the purchase – make sure you're actually using it.
493. Set up a BYOD device scheme in the sixth form and let them buy Apple products through you tax free and pay in equal instalments over the two years – it will save you a fortune in kitting out a sixth form LRC and the students will have a laptop to take to University at the end of it.
494. Attach digital leaders to departments and get them to advise on apps etc.
495. Give staff an opportunity to buy one Apple laptop/iPad through you tax free once per year for “work purposes”, they will save a fortune especially if you've got a good relationship with your suppliers as there are discounts to be had when buying in bulk – the goodwill you get in return is worth all the hassle incurred by the finance team!
496. Employ sixth formers to come in during the holidays and clean all the computers in the school.
497. One of the SLT (ideally one with half a clue about technology, finances and learning and teaching!) to take responsibility for ICT strategy and line managing the Network Team – don't put the power in the hands of a techie as in my experience they don't plan with teachers, students and learning in mind!
498. Think very carefully before buying or replacing interactive whiteboards – how many of your departments actually use them interactively? Most boards are used as expensive whiteboards to project on it, it's much cheaper to just put a whiteboard on the wall instead!
499. If you are planning on setting up a 1:1 device scheme consider buying them all yourself out of your Governors fund and then get parents to pay monthly ‘donations’ for them over 3-5 years rather than leasing as you can claim 25% gift aid on the donations the parents make which the Governors can then decide how to spend i.e. pay for disadvantaged students, staff iPads etc.

And finally... my **No.1** tip for school improvement:

### **Visit every lesson every day.**

It is the top priority for our Leadership Team and we never miss one. Three reasons – the children know you are coming, you are there to support staff if they need it and you are monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in every lesson so know exactly what everyone's “default” performance is like.









@SJBSurrey



[a.magill@sjb.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:a.magill@sjb.surrey.sch.uk)



[www.sjb.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.sjb.surrey.sch.uk)