

## **Empowering Learners 2017**

## EMPOWERING LEARNERS 2017

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## Introduction from the Headmaster

The quality of our Learning and Teaching is a top priority at Merchiston. Indeed, over a period of time we have really tried to concentrate on how to teach boys and how to ensure that they do as well as they possibly can in their academic work. The document includes information gathered over the years. We are always endeavouring to develop and improve as practitioners of the learning and teaching of boys. So, for example over the course of the academic year 2015/16, we did great work on what constitutes the difference between 'outstanding' and 'good' teaching. This project is ongoing and in time will be distributed to all relevant audiences. We are inspected by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate on a regular basis. You can read (and download) the Education Scotland Reports on Merchiston in 2005, 2010, 2014, 2015 and 2016 by visiting the Education Scotland website ([www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)), and the Care Inspectorate reports on an annual basis from 2005 to 2016, by visiting the Care Inspectorate website ([www.scswis.com](http://www.scswis.com)).

## Quality of Learning and Teaching at Merchiston

First, I wish to introduce our most recent examination results. These results indicate that the School continues to achieve a very high standard of learning and teaching for our boys.

Table 1: Current data – examination performance Summer 2017

<b>GCSE Cumulative % by grade, all subjects</b>			
	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>*Male</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>36.7</b>
<b>*Female</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>46.8</b>
<b>Merchiston</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>82</b>

<b>A Level Cumulative % by grade, all subjects</b>				
	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>*Male</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>75.3</b>
<b>*Female</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>79.2</b>
<b>Merchiston</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>

\* From data published by the *Joint Council for Qualifications* for all UK Candidates for all subjects by grade and by gender

## Empowering Learners

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As a School we aim to SUCEED (Support, Understand, Collaborate, Enable, Evaluate, Develop)

- Support learners to embark on journeys of self-belief, enrichment and achievement where they are motivated to embrace challenges, to have high aspirations and to continue with lifelong learning.
- Understand all learners to ensure they are equipped and ready for learning, and engage learners in deepening our understanding of effective practice.
- Collaborate with learners to develop skills and knowledge that are relevant, flexible, transferable and will encourage independence as well as further enhancing our culture where learners understand rights, respect and responsibilities.
- Enable all learners to make informed choices regarding their future pathways.
- Evaluate our teaching pedagogy to support the achievement and progress of all learners.
- Develop our outstanding practices through a collaborative approach and to develop our understanding of coaching and collaborative learning.

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## Rationale behind empowering learners

Evidence from the pupil and parent questionnaire of 2014/2015 suggested that the School needed to further empower its learners. Figure 1 is useful for explaining how the School views effective teaching (Hattie).

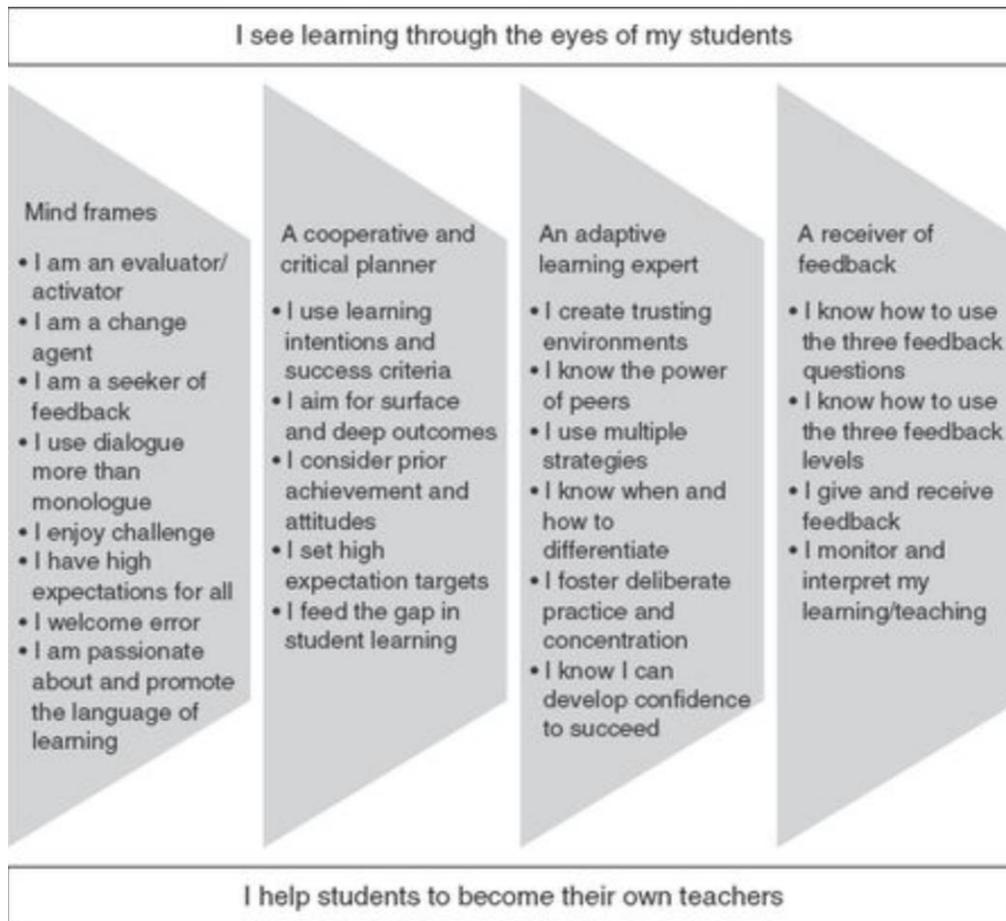


Figure 1.

The School also recognised that it needed to heighten awareness of the effectiveness of pupil voice if it is to be truly effective: the more aware that the boys are of the impact they can have, the more willing they will be to collaborate in increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The aim of empowering learners is not to downgrade the role of the teacher, or to suggest that current teaching is ineffectual, but rather to recognise that the core attribute of lifelong learning or self-regulation, and of the love of learning, is most likely to be developed in an environment where students learn to become their own teachers.

An excellent school will have major impacts not only on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, but also through the formation of academic, moral, civic, high-performing characters, with resilience and 'grit'. These goals are achieved through the development of critical evaluation skills, the nurturing of which requires educators to develop their students' willingness and ability to assess what constitutes effective practice and argumentation. An empowered student will not only recognise himself/herself as such, but will take responsibility for their learning and will work collaboratively with the teacher to raise attainment. All of this depends on subject matter knowledge, because enquiry and critical evaluation is not divorced from knowing something. Teachers and school leaders need to be critical evaluators of the effect that they are having on their students.

Empowering learners does not necessitate flipped classrooms or the abolition of teacher-led activities, but instead the creation of a culture whereby students are cognisant of their learning needs, comfortable in discussing effective strategies with their teachers and confident that they will be implemented. In many cases an empowered learner will wish to have a teacher led lesson so as to improve their listening skills or because their independent study has not led to the requisite level of understanding.

An effective teacher is one who is able to supply an uncomprehending student with a range of learning strategies, who can provide direction and redirection in terms of the content being understood through maximising the power of feedback, and who has the skill to 'get out the way' when learning is progressing towards the success criteria. If learning intentions and success criteria are shared with, committed to, and understood by the learner, he/she can then experiment with the content in a trusting environment without fear of 'making no progress'.

In the largest empirical study of effects on learning, John Hattie concludes that "the remarkable feature of the evidence is that the greatest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching, and when students become their own teachers."

For information on Merchiston's approach to differentiating between excellent and good teaching, please see Appendix 1.

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## How Learners are empowered at MCS

Learners at Merchiston play a key role in the formation, execution and review of all initiatives.

### **Formation**

The School Student Forum, incorporating pupils from all year groups, meets regularly per term and has the opportunity to raise issues of concern or for improvement. The profile of this body has been raised considerably recently in recognition that empowerment only truly occurs when the student body is aware of their entitlements.

To augment the work of the School Student Forum, the Pupil Learning Council was established by two members of the Upper Sixth in September 2015 to investigate how teaching and learning can be improved at MCS. This body contains students from every year group in the School and meets once per half-term. In order to raise the profile of this group, the leaders report on recent developments in the Headmaster's assembly, the meetings are recorded and the minutes are circulated to parents. In addition to raising areas of concern, this group is also sharing good practice and helping create the School articulate its learner-centric focus. The ALT is required to engage constructively with the PLC in achieving the improvement identified by the latter body.

The School recognises that the views of the SSF and PLC must be shared with all stakeholders (learners, staff, parents, SLT, governors) if the School is to be truly accountable in ensuring that empowering learners is at the centre of the MCS academic ethos.

## **Execution**

A school which involves pupils in the planning process but not the implementation of initiatives is not empowering learners. Key to empowering students is ensuring that teachers view it as essential for effective learning. Whole School initiatives must be known, understood and implemented at departmental and house level. To achieve this, MCS has run various InSET sessions over recent years which touch on areas related to empowering learners. These include:

- April 2016: Feedback on the “Excellent vs Good teaching” group
- April 2016: The very latest in Assessment for Learning (Lisa Ashes, external provider)
- January 2017: Dylan William - Formative Assessment (Hannah Williams and Lorna Wellingsclare)

The School has recently assessed the way in which it self-evaluates and responds to learner voice, and the PRD system for teachers is now based around regular feedback from students as to the effectiveness of work in class and prep. PRD targets for teachers are based on the feedback forms from the pupils. To supplement this, the ALT and SLT started to conduct regular learning walks in the Autumn Term of 2015, with a specific focus on reviewing how well the pupils are engaging with their learning. These learning walks are not aimed at reviewing classroom practice, but rather opening a dialogue about the way in which teachers are empowering learners and critically reviewing the effectiveness of their techniques. The learning walks have adopted the Education Scotland technique of spending short amounts of time in many different classes and engaging with the learners. The School has also adopted the East Lothian Learners' Entitlements as its way of collecting data on the effectiveness of, and trends in, teaching and learning at MCS. The ALT will review the data collected on a termly basis and discuss the extent to which the impressions revealed by the learning walks are synchronised with the thoughts of the Pupil Learning Council.

Learners are also the key drivers of curriculum change in the School. Every pupil in the Fourth Form and Fifth Form is consulted on subject preferences on an annual basis before the column structure for GCSE and A Level choices is determined. The combination of possible subjects is then chosen to allow the greatest possible number of learner to follow their desired programme. The School will frequently commit substantial resources to minority groups in order to allow Students to study the subjects they are most passionate about.

The greater empowerment of learners has also been aided by recent improvements in the standard and use of technology: Moodle, Wikis and the School laptop/iPad policy have encouraged a greater proliferation of flipped learning classes, research based preps, learning forums, self-assessment and target setting.

Students are also key contributors in the formation of leadership positions within the School. Staff appointments are made only with the blessing of Student interview panels. The School's prefects (House, Academic and Sporting) interview prospective candidates for the following year and the Headmaster consults with each prospective prefect on the areas they view as essential for School improvement.

The School has also reformed the way in which the School tutor system meets the needs of learners. Tutors are now asked to look at both academic and pastoral matters with tutees, and we ask that Tutors are kept up to speed with all issues relating to tutees so that they can support them and the Housemaster. Cyclical guidance is given to tutees and Tutors to provide a framework for discussions, although this is flexible to meet the needs of tutees. Booklets are in place to encourage a record of reflection on discussions, and target setting where appropriate. Additionally, Tutors move through the House system with tutees in the Middle School where possible, in order to provide better continuity. In the Senior School tutors are now expected to meet their tutees once per cycle to discuss the progress made in completing their self-assessment document. This document is designed at getting pupils to critically self-evaluate their own progress and also to research post-School pathways. The role of the academic tutor is to provide advice and support rather than direct the meetings.

Empowering learners is not just a philosophy espoused in the classroom, but is well embedded into the House system. Housemasters have run house forums designed to identify the needs and desires of the boys for many years, but have recently prioritised increased awareness of their impact through the prominently displayed "you said, we did" displays.

## **Evaluation**

Without evaluation there can be no development. All evaluation at MCS should be in terms of how effectively learning is being enhanced. This does not just refer to academic learning, but also of character, resilience and citizenship. Evidence can come in three main forms: data, student feedback and observations.

The main form of evaluation is in the questions that a good teacher asks her/his class every day: 'what did you learn from this activity?', 'which exercise did you find particularly effective in helping you achieve this particular learning objective' etc. These do not have to be formalised or there is a danger of questionnaire fatigue amongst the learners, but if it is happening then a student will be able to articulate how they are driving their learning, and how the teacher is responding to the learning needs.

More formally, the whole School questionnaire provides an opportunity to analyse trends and identify where the wishes and needs of the pupils are not being met. This questionnaire has now been split into three with one conducted per term: academic, house and Co-Curricular. The results of the questionnaire are discussed in the relevant student for and both areas for improvement and action plans are devised in consultation with the SLT.

## **Evaluating and Improving the Learning and Teaching of Boys**

As a school, we continue to provide in-service training for all staff on Learning and Teaching techniques for boys and young men. Furthermore, Merchiston is a member of the International Boys' Schools' Coalition ([www.theibsc.org](http://www.theibsc.org)) and over recent years, we have been fortunate to welcome visiting speakers, namely Dr Michael Thompson, Dr Leonard Sax and Dr Abigail Norfleet James, who have supplemented our in-service training in this vital area. When such eminent speakers visit Merchiston, we lay on seminars for the boys; an address to the whole school; seminars for parents and, finally, seminars for the leaders and teachers of other independent and local authority schools as well as our own staff. Indeed, we repeated this exercise when Dr Leonard Sax made his most recent visit to Merchiston in May 2013 and on this occasion, he addressed the following topics with the boys, staff and parents of Merchiston and teachers from other Schools: *Managing stress, building resilience and learning humility without being humiliated; Beyond resilience, or, how to become Anti Fragile\**; and, *What kind of man?*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>\* Copies of these documents are available from the School. See page 15 for details.

### **Dr Sax presented research to us that shows that:**

- Males tend to extract information from context while females tend to pay attention to context in a study or problem.
- In considering moral reasoning, or other problem solving, males tend to take analytical rule-based approaches while females tend to take a holistic approach and emphasize empathy.
- Males tend to be more hasty, impulsive and willing to take risks while females exercise more care and deliberation.
- Males tend to attribute success to their own efforts and failure to external factors, while females show the reverse; the perception of personal failure may inhibit subsequent performance.
- Interactions among males, including their discourse, are marked by competition while females appear to prefer to work in cooperation; their discourse is relational with reference made to the previous speaker.

### **Research indicates that boys do well if:**

- Their teachers have good subject knowledge and display this enthusiastically and with a good sense of humour.
- Their teachers set clear limits and have high expectations of them.
- They are set short term tasks which can be tackled in stages.
- Their teachers provide prompt, detailed and constructive feedback when marking their work.
- They are not afraid to make mistakes.
- There is a non-macho culture of learning.
- They feel valued by an ethos that celebrates achievement.
- A strong sense of community exists.

### **Moreover, we sought advice from Dr Sheila McKilligan, now a retired HMIE representative. She played a lead role in inspecting Merchiston in 2000. She indicated that:**

- There should be significant interaction between teacher and learner, as opposed to lecturing/chalk and talk.
- There can be interaction with groups and individuals but also interaction between groups and individuals.
- Pupils should be given the time to reflect and respond to questions whether this is in groups or as individuals.
- Research suggests that one of the most important teaching skills is knowing how to ask questions and how to respond to answers. There are two dangers: that any wrong answer is right, and seizing on the wrong answer, in the wrong way could destroy the self-worth of the child.
- One should not treat children like empty vessels into which knowledge is poured by the teacher. However, there must always be an element of 'children learn and teachers teach'.
- 'The best teachers tell you things' so there must always be a compromise in the classroom between direct teaching to groups and individuals, and at the same time, good didactic teaching.

We have used this research and advice from leading speakers to guide us in evaluating and improving the Learning and Teaching of boys at Merchiston. In the following sections you will see reports from our lesson observation programme and the in-service events. These reports are presented in date order from 2004 to 2014.

## Inspiring The Boys

Members of staff attended a one-day course, held in Edinburgh in March 2008, by pmgeducate entitled *Inspiring the Boys* and the following notes on boys' behaviour are also of interest. They are simple but effective 'anchor points'.

### Qualities ...

- Sincerity, lack of guile: it's easy to see round boys and outmanoeuvre them.
- Conversationalists: boys need to feel a personal rapport and will use wit/'chat' to achieve this (rather than intimate discussion of feelings).
- Energy and competitiveness: boys can be easy to engage, motivate and will show enthusiasm.
- Open-minded: boys don't usually bring much 'baggage' to classroom activities, and are rarely judgmental or grudge-bearing.
- Gamesmanship: boys will work willingly in activities if they understand the 'rules' and see them as fair.
- Team working: because camaraderie matters to boys and they seek group acceptance they will happily work in groups.
- Innovative, sparky: boys will often think laterally/tangentially and enjoy taking risks.
- Solution-orientated: boys can respond well to clear goal-setting, including the 'Personal Best' approach, and they appreciate boundaries and clear purpose.
- Quirkiness: boys can be obsessional about facts (the 'Top Trumps' phenomenon) and pastimes, which makes them intriguing, surprising.
- It's rarely dull teaching a boy!

### ... and challenges

- Boys can be poor at basic information-gathering (note taking is a good example) and at tasks that require patient application.
- 'Fancy Footwork': boys' endearing optimism (about their own likely performance) can become irritating self-delusion.
- Personal organization: boys can be 'deadline merchants' and need short-term goals, they rarely are good at forward planning because they live in the moment.
- Concentration span: their low boredom threshold means that lessons must contain variety; fortunately simple bodily movement is enough to re-engage them.
- Some boys pose definite challenges for female teachers: the idea of women in authority can be problematic, others give way to immature sexist or sexual attitudes.
- Peer pressure: the herd instinct has its downsides.
- 'What's the point?': this attitude is easily conquered, however, if boys can be made to see a real-world relevance or necessity to the task in hand.
- Boys are likely to under-perform without 'remorseless support'.
- Task transgression: boys do not automatically respect rules and they enjoy challenging authority.

## How Do Boys Think, Feel and Learn?

Members of staff in 'buzz' groups came up with the following quick bullet points, when asked the above question at in-service training in January 2009, prior to the presentation by Dr Abigail James.

- Like facts
- Order
- Tend to specialise more/choose similar subjects
- Like structure – structured tasks
- Goal/results orientated
- Interested in world affairs; need real world relevance; better with things that relate to daily lives
- Pragmatic – not abstract – must have a point
- Variety due to short attention span (but needs to be well structured); specific (short range) targets; things should be broken up; short bursts – defined timescale
- Activities/practical things – learn by doing/ kinaesthetically – hands-on; multi-sensory; interact visually and actively
- Logical – think in steps
- Take things literally – need clear, explicit instructions; focus on one area at a time; very sequential – finish one job well rather than multitask; poor multi-tasking
- Need to set tasks they can succeed in – experience achievement
- Like quick results; like shortcuts - 'How can I get this done as quickly as possible?'
- Easy option
- Impatient in learning
- Subject must be of interest to them
- When not motivated – tend to do minimum; need to be motivated by others
- More able to compartmentalise
- Spatial awareness
- Need opportunity to get up and move about
- Incentives
- Immediate praise/rewards
- Learn through challenges
- Enjoy trial and error – not afraid of failure – more so in single sex environment; prepared to 'give it a go'
- Ability to demonstrate knowledge; sharing knowledge/experience
- Like humour and interaction with teacher and peers; ideal teacher – "young, sporty, cool, male teacher"
- Don't mind/respond well to criticism but may not act on it! Don't hold grudges so helps learning process; don't feel resentment; forgive
- Inclined to take risks – impulsive – without thinking; can make fools of themselves
- Fairness and consistency important
- Positive peer pressure
- Competitive – status relative to others; value themselves according to achievements rather than others' opinions
- Pack mentality; no boy likes feeling he is the 'bottom dog'
- Shyness in class – hierarchical social structure in class
- Debate only when 'safe'
- Also can be independent, individual
- Tell themselves they can't do things
- Boys can tend to blame a system or machine for failure rather than girls who will look to themselves as the first point of problem; boys and men will assume problem is external
- Misplaced confidence, optimism
- Less emotion/empathy (than girls)
- Less moody (than girls)
- Hide emotion – If emotion called for then will hide/passive; sometimes reserved
- Also, can be emotional – sometimes very emotional
- Less likely to find inward connection to problems
- Not good at sharing information
- Set view – not balanced
- Unpredictable
- Tend to procrastinate; respond well to pressure and deadlines; wait until deadline to do things
- Incentives – work harder towards exam times
- Mature later emotionally and physically
- Not independent learners until later – Implications for starting University
- Not good at organising themselves; not systematic
- Not innately responsible – ownership of learning
- Need outlets/physical outlet for energy

## **A TEACHABLE MOMENT** - An Alternative Recipe

Ingredients:

- Anticipation
- Aspiration
- Activity
- Achievement
- Affinity
- Amusement
- Accord

Mix thoroughly and serve liberally. Note: The proportions of the ingredients can be changed each time!

### **Learning walks from 2015 onwards**

The lesson observation programme was developed in 2015 to incorporate the ability to gather quantitative data to drive improvement. This enabled both qualitative and quantitative data to be collated in order to share best practice and identify areas for whole school improvement. The data from 2015 and 2016 is shown on the following pages.

Learning walks November 2015			
<b>Total lessons observed: 80</b>			
	<b>% Obs</b>	<b>% Not obs</b>	<b>% N/A</b>
intentions are shared in a lesson or group of lessons with reminders as appropriate	69	22	9
they are provided with quality feedback	83	15	2
lessons are summarised within learning sessions	76	14	10
their learning is supported by the use of appropriate questioning techniques	93	5	1
they are enabled and encouraged to make a full contribution	99	0	1
they will be supported to gain independence in their learning	90	7	3
the context for learning is regularly reinforced	86	11	3
they are provided with advice about what to do next to further their learning	67	20	13
they are provided with regular opportunities to give feedback about their learning experiences	58	21	21
their feedback is used to modify, adapt and improve the learning process	50	23	27
their learning is enhanced by appropriate use of digital technology	49	12	39
<b>Content</b>			
learning opportunities which enable them to experience success	100	0	0
opportunities which extend their understanding and competence	93	7	0
content appropriate to their level of understanding and competence	100	0	0
engaging and stimulating learning experiences	88	12	0
a pace of learning which maintains and stimulates interest	96	4	0
breadth, challenge and application within a progressive and coherent framework	81	9	10
<b>Conduct</b>			
rules and expectations explained and reinforced	95	5	0
rules and expectations consistently applied and upheld	95	5	0
actions and decisions being explained	85	10	5
equitable and fair treatment	96	4	0
<b>Learning experiences</b>			
enabled to work and learn as individuals, pairs and groups	81	16	3
encouraged to develop an understanding of themselves as learners	71	14	14
enabled to investigate areas of personal interest	54	14	32
supported to develop research skills	50	17	33
encouraged to be creative and develop problem solving skills	74	17	9

Merchiston Learning walk form 2016-17				
<b>Content</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Not Obs</b>	<b>n/a</b>	
learning opportunities which enable them to experience success	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	
opportunities which extend their understanding and competence	<b>80.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	
content appropriate to their level of understanding and competence	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	
engaging and stimulating learning experiences	<b>80.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>13.3</b>	
a pace of learning which maintains and stimulates interest	<b>86.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	
breadth, challenge and application within a progressive and coherent framework	<b>60.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>33.3</b>	
<b>Learning experiences</b>				
enabled to work and learn as individuals, pairs and groups	<b>86.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	
encouraged to develop an understanding of themselves as learners	<b>66.7</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>20.0</b>	
enabled to investigate areas of personal interest	<b>20.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>46.7</b>	
supported to develop research skills	<b>33.3</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>40.0</b>	
encouraged to be creative and develop problem solving skills	<b>46.7</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>40.0</b>	

## International Boys' Schools' Coalition (IBSC)

Merchiston's membership of this august and world-renowned organisation allows us, as a school, to 'buy into' some wonderful courses in the United Kingdom and, indeed, attendance at the annual International and UK Conferences. With research papers from the IBSC, I nominate a willing Headmaster's Reader from the teaching staff, who presents his or her observations on the paper to the whole staff. So, in our in-service training sessions, such information gleaned through attendance at IBSC conferences and courses, and through research papers is cascaded to a wide audience.

In March 2012, Niamh Waldron (Head of Merchiston Juniors) and Paul Nicholls (Head of Science and Technology) attended a one day course held at The Windsor Boys' School, Berkshire, entitled *Reaching Boys, Teaching Boys – Strategies That Work – and Why\**, a one day course based on the book of the same title, by Michael Reichert and Richard Hawley. The findings of this day, and the strategies that work, formed part of our in-service training in April 2012.

Thereafter, in April 2012, Jonny Timms (Housemaster Chalmers East and English) acted as a reader in disseminating to us an IBSC research paper entitled *Locating Significance in the Lives of Boys\** by Dr Adam Cox. The findings of this day, and the strategies that work, formed part of our in-service training in August 2012.

In August 2013, at our in-service training, Dr Tanya Bower (Geography) shared with us the findings of one of the latest IBSC research papers, *For Whom The Boy Toils – The Primacy of Relationship in Boys' Learning<sup>2\*</sup>*, again by Michael Reichart and Richard Hawley.

In April 2014, Jonny Timms shared with staff at in-service training the ideas presented at the IBSC conference *Dream Big: Helping Boys Succeed and Achieve\**. At this conference the speakers – David C Banks from the Eagle Academy Foundation in the Bronx, and Ian Warwick from London Gifted and Talented – spoke about how to motivate boys to overcome challenges. Ideas included planning ambiguity and complexity into lessons so that pupils learn what to do when they do not understand.

Robin Pyper (Housemaster Chalmers West and PE) attended a course entitled *True Grit – Developing Emotional Resilience in Schools\** and he presented the take-home message to staff at our in-service training in August 2014. We talked about how we can help our boys to respond well to failure; particularly the importance of a supportive community and discussing the value of failure as part of the learning process.

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<sup>2\*</sup> Copies of these documents are available from the School. See page 15 for details.

## Conclusion

We need inspirational teachers. However, what we are trying to do at Merchiston is to remove the idea of the 'heroic model', working at a pace to inspire colleagues to emulate and exceed the model's output. There are so many different ways of raising the standards of all of our teaching than simply pointing to the outstanding practitioners and encouraging every other teacher to emulate these rare, and perhaps driven, individuals. As I have already indicated, teaching is predicated on individual relationships. No human being can successfully import another human being's relationship model as if it were a computer programme to be moved from one PC to another. So, in our lesson observation programmes at Merchiston, what we are trying to do is to observe, to analyse and to borrow from what one fellow teacher does well to see if it can be accommodated in our own personal methodology. We move on to then seek other colleagues from whom to learn different tricks which can also then be integrated. It is right that all the teachers at Merchiston show some real strengths and professional skills. However, not all the teachers have the same strengths and skills! What we try to do from our lesson observation programme is to show that all teachers can learn from each other. That is why the 'medical rounds' model is gaining enormous credibility as a route to professional development. There will always be a role for unique, individual and outstanding heroic teachers but, equally, cooperative professional learning from the pooling of skills and expertise is the development tool that we are trying to emulate at Merchiston.

These notes reaffirm Merchiston's commitment to the teaching of boys. It is not a 'marketing document' it is an affirmation and reaffirmation of our mantra, *Boys First!* If you have reached this conclusion, I hope you have enjoyed reading *How Merchiston Nurtures the Learning and Teaching of Boys!* Please feel free to let us know if you would like to receive electronic copies of any of the reference documents detailed overleaf.

With best wishes from Merchiston.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunter". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right. There are two small dots at the end of the line.

**Andrew Hunter**  
**Headmaster**  
**October 2017**

## Recommended Books and Publications

Parents may be interested in the following presentations, articles and notes; copies of which are available in School. *Please email Reception to request a copy of any of these notes:*  
[reception@merchiston.co.uk](mailto:reception@merchiston.co.uk)

1. ***In this girls' world, boys are deviants*** by Janice Turner.
2. ***'Laddishness' as a Self-worth Protection Strategy'*** by Carolyn Jackson, Lancaster University, 2002.
3. ***Programs and Practices That Encourage the Development of Resilience in Adolescent Boys*** paper presented at IBSC Conference July 2003 by David Gee, Brisbane Grammar School.
4. ***Gender Performance and Learning Styles***, paper presented at HMC Annual Conference October 2003, by Professor Caroline Gipps, Kingston University.
5. ***It's About Boys*** – The Good Man Project, New Zealand paper presented at the Heads of Boys' Schools Conference, Nelson College, New Zealand by Celia Lashlie, March 2004.
6. ***Friendship*** – Merchiston Prizegiving Day July 2004 speech by Alexander McCall Smith.
7. ***Definitions of Masculinity*** by Nancy A Werner 2005.
8. ***The Paradox of Single-Sex and Co-educational Schooling***, Alan Smithers and Pamela Robinson, University of Buckingham and HMC, September 2006.
9. ***Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys and Making the best of Parent-Teacher Conferences - Eight steps to Success for Parents***, Dr Michael Thompson, March 2007.
10. ***Why girls do so much better than boys*** correspondence in *The Independent* newspaper by Andrew Cunningham (February 2007) and response by Dr Nigel Mortimer, Assistant Head, Merchiston.
11. a) ***Why Gender Matters – what Heads of Boys' Schools need to know about the emerging science of sex differences*** Dr Leonard Sax, January 2008, slides.  
b) ***Why Gender Matters – what Heads of Boys' Schools need to know about the emerging science of sex differences*** Dr Leonard Sax, January 2008, slides.  
c) ***Why Gender Matters – what Heads of Boys' Schools need to know about the emerging science of sex differences*** Dr Leonard Sax, Headmaster's notes.  
d) ***Boys Adrift: the Five Factors driving the epidemic of unmotivated boys***, a presentation at Merchiston by Dr Leonard Sax, January 2008.  
e) ***Who speaks for Boys' Schools in England?*** Harrow Record, January 2008.
12. ***Ten Things to Think About With Them There Boys*** – Independent Thinking Ltd/pmgeducate, March 2008.
13. a) ***How do Boys Think, Feel and Learn?*** In-service training prior to session by Dr Abigail James, January 2009.  
b) ***How the Male Brain Learns***, by Dr Abigail James January 2009.  
c) ***Gender differences and the Brain - applications for parents***, by Dr Abigail James, January 2009.  
d) ***Gender difference and the Brain - classroom applications for boys' schools***, by Dr Abigail James, January 2009.

14. ***The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People/Teachers***, In-service training delivered by the Headmaster, August 2009.
15. a) ***Reaching Boys***, an international study of effective teaching practices by Michael Reichert and Richard Hawley, for the International Boys' Schools' Coalition, January 2010.  
b) ***The Purpose of Schools for Boys***, by Dr Abigail James, for the International Boys' Schools' Coalition, January 2010.  
c) ***It's a Boy! Understanding your Son's development from Birth to Eighteen*** by Michael Thompson for the International Boys' Schools' Coalition, January 2010.
16. ***Inspiring Teachers, Inspiring Boys. What do we mean by being 'inspirational'?*** Andrew Taylor, January 2011.
17. ***Teaching the Male Brain II*** by Dr Abigail James, February 2011 in addition to an assessment of Merchiston's Learning and Teaching.
18. ***Boys and Girls***, by Ms Jayne Wyvill, former staff member at Merchiston and St George's, June 2011.
19. ***Resilience Resource Pack*** presented by Gillian Bridge at HMC Annual Conference, October 2011.
20. ***Boys, Breast Cancer, and the Magic of Boys' Schools. Are boys' schools institutionalising sexism? Loti Day says that couldn't be further from the truth.*** By Lori Day, October 2011.
21. a) ***Locating Significance in the Lives of Boys*** by Dr Adam Cox. In-service training delivered by Mr J Timms (Merchiston) April 2012.  
b) ***Locating Significance in the Lives of Boys*** Research Paper by Dr Adam Cox.
21. a) ***Reaching Boys, Teaching Boys***, Michael Reichert and Richard Hawley, IBSC Conference, The Windsor Boys' School. In-service training delivered by Mr Paul Nicholls and Ms Niamh Waldron (Merchiston), August 2012.  
b) ***Reaching Boys, Teaching Boys***, Michael Reichert and Richard Hawley, IBSC Conference, The Windsor Boys' School, summary document.
22. a) ***Beyond Resilience Or, how to become AntiFragile/Unfragile***, Dr Leonard Sax, May 2013, slides.  
b) ***Beyond Resilience Or, how to become AntiFragile/Unfragile***, Dr Leonard Sax, May 2013, summary document.  
c) ***What kind of Man?*** Dr Leonard Sax, May 2013, slides.
24. ***The Value of Relationship in Boys' Learning*** In-service delivered by Dr Tanya Bower (Merchiston) based on IBSC paper above by Martin Reichert and Richard Hawley, August, 2013.

## Recommended Books

- ***Raising Cain – Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*** by Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, published by Random House, United States; website: [www.randomhouse.com](http://www.randomhouse.com); ISBN 0-345-43485-4.
- ***Why Gender Matters – What Parents and Teachers Need to Know about the Emerging Science of Sex Differences*** by Leonard Sax, MD, PhD, published by Broadway Books; [www.broadwaybooks.com](http://www.broadwaybooks.com); ISBN 0-7679-1625-5.
- ***Boys adrift – The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men***, also by Leonard Sax, published by Basic Books; [www.basicbooks.com](http://www.basicbooks.com); ISBN-13; 978-0-465-07209-5; ISBN-10; 0-465-07209-7.
- ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers*** by Sean Covey, published by Simon & Schuster UK Ltd; [www.simonsays.co.uk](http://www.simonsays.co.uk); ISBN 13: 978-0-7432-5252-2.
- ***Raising Boys*** by Steven Biddulph, published by Thorsons; website [www.thorsons.com](http://www.thorsons.com) ISBN 0-7225-3686-0.
- ***Boy Oh Boy*** by Dr Tim Hawkes, published by Pearson Education, Australia; website: [www.pearson.com.au](http://www.pearson.com.au) ISBN 1-74009-554-5.
- ***That's My Boy*** by Jenni Murray, published by Vermilion; website [www.randomhouse.co.uk](http://www.randomhouse.co.uk); ISBN 009188964-2.
- ***He'll Be OK – Growing gorgeous boys into good men*** by Celia Lashlie, published by Harper Collins, New Zealand; website: [www.harpercollins.co.nz](http://www.harpercollins.co.nz); ISBN 186950 528 X.
- ***Speaking of Boys*** also by Michael Thompson, published by Random House, United States; [www.randomhouse.com](http://www.randomhouse.com); ISBN 0-345-44148-6.
- ***Teaching the Male Brain*** by Abigail James (2007). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (Web address: [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com) Note: *Winner of the 2007 Gold Award from ForeWord Magazine for the Book of the Year in Education!*)
- ***Be a Winner – Achieve Your Goals with Scotland's Sporting Heroes*** by Richard Orr and Kenny Kemp, in partnership with Winning Scotland Foundation, published by Mainstream Publishing Company (Edinburgh) Ltd; ISBN 9781845964023.
- ***Amazing Tales For Making Men Out Of Boys*** by Neil Oliver, published by the Penguin Group; [www.penguin.com](http://www.penguin.com); ISBN 978-0-718-15382-3.