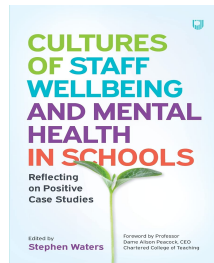


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‘There is no pupil wellbeing, there's no pupil achievement, there's no pupil collaboration, there's no pupil collective responsibility, there's no pupil anything, until the adults experience it first. ...it's quite a simple equation - if we're not putting our adults in a soil that is nutrient rich - that will allow them to flourish into whoever they want to be as an educator, they have no chance of doing that effectively and sustainably in a classroom of children. Because sometimes, very often as a child, you have to watch somebody love something before you can learn to love yourself. That is a nutrient that gets overlooked in many schools - that we need to make sure as leaders that we take care of the people who take care of our pupils.’

Overview

Jeremy Hannay, Headteacher of Three Bridges Primary School, is a frank and outspoken critic of high-stakes accountability leadership of schools and the Ofsted inspection process by which schools are judged. In this forthright interview with the book's author and editor, Stephen Waters, he describes how he has rejected the model that, in order to raise standards and improve results, teachers must be scrutinised, monitored and controlled. By restoring trust and professional respect and supporting teacher-led professional development, Jeremy explains how teacher agency leads to teacher mental wellbeing

Context

Three Bridges Primary School is in Southall, West London. It is a larger than average two-form entry community school, with over 400 pupils, a nursery class and two reception classes. Over 40% of the children are identified as Pupil Premium (PP). 96% of the children are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). 75% to 80% come from a wide range of heritages and have English as an Additional Language (EAL). A small number of children are at the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of disadvantaged children is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) at 25%. Transience is also high, with 35% of the children leaving or joining the school before they reach Year 6, and the proportion of pupils joining the school after the early years is higher than the national average. One of the catchment estates is in the second percentile for crime and violence, and Three Bridges Primary School is one of 75 primary schools with the most disadvantaged communities in the country. Results are excellent, with the school in the top 3% in the UK in terms of progress over the last 7 years.

Three Bridges is an outward-facing school offering training and support and development for schools, teachers and school leaders. Between 2016-20 the school supported and trained over 300 schools, and more than 2000 teachers and school leaders, locally, nationally and internationally.

In January 2020, John Dutaut, CEO of Elemental Learning and Skills, interviewed Jeremy for Schools Week. Jeremy emigrated to the UK with his partner, also a teacher, from Ontario, Canada in 2012. He joined Three Bridges while a supply teacher. At the time, the school was 'Outstanding' but Jeremy explained how 'he found an accountability culture he hadn't imagined possible'. He subsequently took up post as Assistant Headteacher in another 'good' school but, in a matter of weeks, it went into 'Special Measures'. Jeremy returned to Three Bridges as a teacher and team leader and, within a year, the school narrowly avoided a judgement of 'Requires Improvement', saved only by its previous results. As Key

Stage 2 lead, Jeremy took a completely different approach to achieving results and they improved. He then became Assistant Head and Deputy Head before becoming Headteacher Designate and then substantive headteacher of Three Bridges in 2017. From the start of his headship, Jeremy's focus was on teamwork and trust, two qualities that he had learned from his time as the Regional Director of Athlete Development in Ontario for the sport of volleyball. In September 2020, Jeremy began his ninth year in the school.

His catchphrase 'There is Another Way' has become synonymous with a growing number of headteachers, teachers and educators who believe that high-stakes accountability is affecting teachers' wellbeing and mental health, driving them out of the profession and contributing to the challenges of recruiting staff (see www.the-otherway.com).

My interview with Jeremy Hannay

This chapter is based on a video-recorded and transcribed interview I conducted with Jeremy one late afternoon in September 2019. I had become aware of Jeremy's approach to staff wellbeing and mental health via Twitter conversations and his blogs on teacher accountability. His views coincided with my reason for creating the Teach Well Alliance: in order to for teachers to engage pupils in their learning and to take care of them, the wellbeing and mental health of teachers must come first. I wanted to explore Jeremy's approach further and he kindly agreed to be interviewed. He allowed me unrestricted use of the content.

Before the interview, Jeremy took me on a tour of the school. Even without children in the building, the environment was inspirational. Creativity, freedom of expression, joy, wonder and pride oozed from every pore of the building. Life-size papier-mâché figures, built by the children, stood in the corridors. Jack was climbing up his beanstalk in the stairwell between the ground and first floor. Displays celebrated

children's work or presented a theme or topic which the children were exploring. Jeremy explained that all the displays and figures had been created by the children, supported by their teachers. There were no 'rules' about how displays should look, no insistence on having the same borders of the same width or of the same colour, no rules about which direction the staples should point. The quality of each new display was influenced by previous displays.

Classrooms are inspiring places of learning, with ongoing work or projects hung from washing lines across classrooms. Evidence of teachers' lessons from the day is work in progress, rather than sanitised for other eyes. Enjoyment in teaching and engagement in learning is evident in every room I visited. I remarked that there are similarities between layout and displays in classrooms. Jeremy explained that this is embryonic, that it had evolved from teachers visiting each other's classrooms and using ideas from one another. There are no top-down rules about how teachers should design or present their rooms. We returned to Jeremy's office to video the interview. I began by asking Jeremy him how he would describe Three Bridges:

'I probably wouldn't describe it any differently than most headteachers describe their schools...it's academically rich. I think that our children come away from our school, you know, being able do the core skills – reading, writing and solving problems quite strongly, but I would also say that there is a much larger part to what we do here. A big part of our curriculum is around adventure; the children here are not just learning to read, write and solve problems - they are canoeing and kayaking, learning teamwork and resilience and self-direction. They're learning to build fires and use chemical tools...

'...I can tell you that we're the happiest school on earth...there is a really heavy focus on ensuring that the adults in the building are well-taken care of...I think some of my colleagues are saying you've got to put pupils first. Put the children first, that's going to be the centre of all decision-making and I don't want anyone to think that what I'm suggesting is counter to that message.

'I guess it's simply put like this: There is no pupil wellbeing, there's no pupil achievement, there's no pupil collaboration, there's no pupil collective responsibility, there's no pupil anything until the adults experience it first. I think to me it's quite a simple equation - if we're not putting our adults in a soil that is nutrient rich - that will allow them to flourish into whoever they want to be as an educator, they have no chance of doing that effectively and sustainably in a classroom of children. Because sometimes, very often as a child, you have to watch somebody love something before you can learn to love yourself. That is a nutrient that gets overlooked in many schools - that we need to make sure as leaders that we take care of the people who take care of our pupils. It's a crucial element.'

Staff wellbeing and mental health

I asked Jeremy what he did to improve staff wellbeing and mental health when he took up post as headteacher:

"I've been at Three Bridges for 8 years. I've been here quite a long time and I have had a number of different roles in the school and the work... building a culture around the development of staff, the support of staff, the wellbeing of staff started before I was the headteacher here. And it really meant interrogating all of the pieces of the school that we had always done...There's a poster somewhere, somewhere in my office here that...the most dangerous phrase in our language is 'We've always done it that way.'

'So, it was really about asking why. Why are we marking for four hours a night...for children sometimes who can't read what it is you're writing and is that the most effective way of communicating? Is that the best way to give feedback?

'And we looked at...collective responsibility and collaborative design, so taking care of the instructional program. When I started at Three Bridges...the achievement of the children was not great, was poor

...there wasn't a lot of consistency or rigour around the instructional program. It hadn't been clearly disseminated or collaboratively decided, so it was really about taking, taking the bits and pieces I thought would get the monkeys off our back and dealing with those things first. So, we redesigned as a collaborative our instructional programs.....what I mean by that is I think this school was used to someone coming in saying we're going to do this and I'll be in next week to check that you're doing it, and then I'm going to take a look at your books and your planning to make sure it's to the standard ...that's how I'm going to know you're doing it. And I grew up in a system [in Ontario, Canada] that does not behave that way and understands that if you want long-term sustainable impact you can't treat people that way.'

Leadership and management

'So, I guess those were the first...those were the first changes...about interrogating how it was we were going to change. Was it going to be through management practices or was it going to be through leadership? And...that's something that has become a real challenge in our system in the last decade...that we are dressing up management as leadership and it's not. So, monitoring and scrutinising and holding people to account and observing lessons and rating things, scrutinising books, scrutinising planning in advance... those are management practices and I'm not suggesting that there is no place for management in schools...management helps systems run effectively, organisations run smoothly. But we can't dress it up as leadership because it's not...it's a part of effective leadership but it is not the whole, it is not the whole piece.

'And so, I think what I tried to do was build our social capital. Really put teachers in situations where they were talking effectively and directly about learners and learning, so that it wasn't just meaningless meetings...they were purposeful and that the decisions that they were making in those meetings about instruction, they were immediately putting into practice and then they have an opportunity to come back

and say whether or not it was working and so that's how we constructed our instructional programmes...not I'm telling you what to do and I'm going to make sure you're doing it, but let's look at what research says is high-quality instruction, let's go give it a try, let's go away and have a play. Let's come back and analyse what works in our school in our context and what's not working and when things are not working, let's support each other making those things better. ...those were the initial seeds planted to help Three Bridges grow into the collaborative success perhaps it is today.'

In June 2019, a month before I interviewed Jeremy, he had been interviewed by the magazine Teach Primary and had said this about the culture of professionalism he encourages at Three Bridges which is integral to teacher wellbeing:

"The teachers know that they are afforded the capacity and professionalism of disagreeing. They don't do things because I want them to do it. No one in this building is afraid to tell me if they think something isn't right. But they also know they're part of the solution. They can say 'This isn't working, so why don't we try it this way?'"

There is another way

In following Jeremy on Twitter and reading his blog posts, I had seen his phrase 'There is Another Way' recurring in the context of school leadership. I asked Jeremy to explain what he meant by it.

'...over time, I've eliminated virtually every overt invasive, interrogative management practice and replaced it with leadership and that's at every level, not just from me. I would say actually today very rarely from me...the purpose of doing a lot of this was to create a self-sustaining school, to be a leader who's uncovering a leader who's uncovering a leader. You know, the hero leader paradigm is one that's been proven as a failure over and over again.

'So, what is the 'other way'? I think the other way is looking at why...what it is we're doing and why we're doing it and then moving those practices as far away from us as possible and replacing them with things

like lesson and learning study, with teacher research groups, with collective responsibility...with decisional capital, giving teachers the opportunity not only to study learners and learning but enact decisions that make a difference in the lives of their children.

'I think it's really been about also identifying what management practices are requisite. What is it that we need to do to ensure that the organisation runs smoothly, and things are improving and how is it that we're gauging those things, but enacting...the decisions, the determinations from those management practices in the most humane and the most ethical way possible?

'So, observation is a common one...we hear of schools where teachers are being observed ...six times a year. They're being given a feedback sheet; it's coming from someone who is hierarchically above them and when you ask why that is, why is it you're observing teachers, often people say well, it's about consistency or it's about practice. I make sure that the practice is good enough or it's about compliance, making sure they're doing what we said is best practice in our school and I don't think anybody would argue that there's a problem with having consistencies in a school. I think most teachers say that that's a positive thing. I don't think that there would be teachers who would say high-quality practice is something that's a bad thing, I think all teachers inherently want to be their very, very best...

'...leadership I think at its heart is influence. So, if what we want are consistencies or we want high-quality practice or we want professional people who are growing to be better professionals than they were last week or last month or last year, then it's really about asking under what conditions can we facilitate that happening without putting them under pressure, without making it high-stakes, without making them feel like there's a gun to their head. How can we put them in the right soil? So, at Three Bridges those are the kinds of questions that we ask ourselves. What are the conditions that are necessary for professional people to take responsibility for their own learning - teacher-led learning - and what happens when you pull away the observation and you input something like micro-research or lines

of inquiry for professional growth? You see development take off because...someone once said to me you can mandate mediocrity, but you can only unleash greatness and that's what's happened here.'

'As a leader I want the teachers in the school to be a better teacher than I was. I want them one day to be a better leader than I am. It's like you know being a parent, you want your children to have better opportunities and a better life than you have. Well, as a leader you should wish the same thing for your staff. I want the teachers here to be the very, very best they can be. The teachers in this school today are better teachers than I was. That's why I know I'm doing the right thing. They're self-regulating, they're inquisitive, they never ever settle – they always want to be better – a healthy dose of self-improvement but it's because they're leading it on things that they're passionate about. They're able to reflect now without pressure and say, 'I'm struggling here, and I've heard you're doing some cool stuff with that. Can you help?' And it's a culture now of self-referral. When someone's struggling or someone's uncertain, it's a culture of collaborative development so the reception teacher is working with the Year 3 teacher to improve. It's about collective responsibility. Nobody refers to themselves as a classroom teacher, they're schoolteachers. We here are the stewards of all of our children. There's no sense at Three Bridges being a great teacher if the teacher down the hall is struggling."

In his interview for Schools Week, Jeremy had referred to how staff planned series of lessons collaboratively and took collective responsibility if learning did not happen as they intended. Teachers were only too willing to examine what had gone wrong and to work as a team to put it right. He described this approach as being located in a 'professional coaching culture'.

At the heart of improving teaching and learning were three collaborative processes which Jeremy identified in series of blog posts 'No Ordinary Classroom' in July 2019:

a – Learning and Lesson Study.

b – Teacher Research Groups.

c – Open Lessons.

a. Learning and Lesson Study

Learning and Lesson Study originated in Japan. A group of three teachers collaborate on a series of lessons that involve research questions related to teaching and learning. Learners are placed at the centre of the enquiry as the teacher identifies pupils that will report back to the teacher on the lesson. After the lesson, the pupils are interviewed and the group of teachers discuss the lesson, the pupils' feedback, what was successful and what might need further development.

b. Teacher Research Groups (TRG)

As in lesson study, a Teacher Research Group or TRG is often a group of teachers from different schools who collaborate to explore an aspect of pedagogy over an extended period of time, usually twelve months. A facilitator, knowledgeable about the aspect of teaching to be investigated, supports each member of the group to conduct research on the agreed topic in their own setting, organises debriefings and a group conversation to discuss the findings. The facilitator also sets 'gap tasks' between meetings which take place every two months. The aim of the TRG is to encourage reflective practice and to influence teaching approaches by sharing and creating good practice.

c. The Open Lesson

An open lesson shares characteristics with the TRG but is a single lesson and is an alternative to judgemental hierarchical lesson observations. As with the TRG, a facilitator discusses the focus of the lesson with one or more observers. The lesson is observed live or through a video link or recording. The teacher who has taught the lesson shares their view of the lesson with the observers; the intention is to open up a learning conversation, rather than arriving at a judgement.

At the time of my interview with Jeremy, a polarisation was emerging on Twitter, on educational forums, and in educational magazines and journals, between traditional and progressive education, with a resurgence of interest in Rosenshine's work on instruction. As Jeremy had referred to 'instruction' earlier in the interview, I wanted to know what his views were on this apparent dichotomy and the relevance of it to his views on leadership.

Traditional or progressive?

'...I guess my view is that there is a time and a place for virtually everything...I mean in our school when we teach phonics it is direct instruction. There's a scripted lesson. There is no fluff or bells and whistles. It is a very, very direct instruction, a scripted program and it is incredible....until I find something that is more incredible than that, this will be what we do. There is nothing better in my mind. I have never seen children learn to read as joyfully and quickly as they do with the way we teach phonics. But we don't teach maths that way.....and I think that that's where people....struggle. They get hung up on one way. You know, this is the way that it should always be done...always should be teacher telling, showing, working with the children and then they produce on their own...I guess I have the joy of not feeling hamstrung to any particular...traditional belief or progressive belief. My belief is...based on the children in the context of the subject, the people, those are factors that you need to consider. Are there times when sitting in rows is really effective? Absolutely there are. Are there times when having a conversation at a table...that perhaps has a Kagan model...? Absolutely there is, but I think here what I try and do as a leader is to be far less prescriptive.'

Is workload to blame for a lack of teacher wellbeing?

'You know, teachers aren't haemorrhaging out of our profession because of ...what we're calling workload, you know marking, planning, admin, they're not haemorrhaging out because they're marking too much or planning too much...what I try and do here is give people the opportunity to develop, to

reflect, to research, to be critical of their own practice and be involved in coaching conversations that further that but I give them the agency and the autonomy to make decisions that affect their own practice...

'...we don't have a marking policy here. There's no proforma that they need to complete, or codes they need to use. They get to choose. If they think that...writing a paragraph in a pupil's book is going to be right for that child in that day and that lesson, then they do it and if they don't, then they won't...I think that's why people are haemorrhaging out of this profession because we've taken a group of university graduates who are inspired and passionate, intelligent and budding professionals and put them in an environment where we're telling them what to do at every single turn. You need to mark this way. You need to plan this way. You need to teach this way. The kids need to sit this way...we've over-engineered schools. We've over-managed them and I think that's where I go back to this piece about leadership. Our job as leaders is to influence change and that's by putting teachers in the conditions under which change and teaching about learning is possible. So, it's not teachers get to make random decisions whenever they want about anything - the teachers here are researchers, they're collaborators, they're studiers, they're put in an environment where they are able to make decisions that are right for them and for learners...it's not a free-for-all but they get to choose because they're put in the environment where they want to make the very best choices.'

In the summer term of 2019, before this interview, Three Bridges had been inspected and had received 'Outstanding' in every category. I wanted to know what Jeremy thought about the judgement and how the school had achieved it.

Ofsted

“...Ofsted...that’s a tricky one...Ofsted is the root of all things evil in this country and the worst...the worst bit is that they don't know it and.....it is it is one of the most challenging things for me personally, but the badge that they have given me and this school will be the badge that I use to dismantle them.

‘The challenging bit is having to acknowledge that they gave me the badge because, if I'm honest, I don't recognise it. I don't recognise it as any indicator of success whatsoeverbut I'm very aware that many people do. That's parents, that's governors, that's other headteachers - and I am able to sleep at night knowing that I end up having to talk about Ofsted now and again because I know that it's a platform that some people can connect to that I would otherwise be unable to reach...I've been speaking about this approach to leadership and this approach to leading a school for years and there are always people in the room who are going, ‘Well, we hear what you say. We like where you're going with this but you're only Good. Right? Your school’s only good.’ And...at the time our school has been outstanding. We’ve had an incredible school for years. I've known it. The staff here know it. The community has known it...

‘...speaking to other headteachers, speaking to colleagues, the badge that they've given me that I don't recognise, other people do, and [I’m] using it now as a platform to be able to speak to a wider audience...While it's slightly conflicting, I think it serves the greater good.

‘How do I think that we got that badge? Well, I think... I think it probably is a number of factors...our results are good, they're very good, and they're very good in a very disadvantaged community. So...40% to 50% [of pupils are] Pupil Premium. 85% [have] English as an Additional Language. 35% of our children between Years 1 and 6 turn over...You know, one of the estates across the road is in the second percentile for crime and violence. We’re one of the 75 primary schools with the most disadvantage...the children in this school come from some serious challenges so I think that the... first way we got that

badge is through results but the way that we got the results I think is the important bit and that's ...to me that's the joke of Ofsted.

'Getting results, building a curriculum even, can be done in a million and one ways. Right? I mean you can drill and kill kids, you can teach to the Test, make sure they can do that, and you get the grades and [Ofsted] come in and things are good. I know schools that...have not done a fantastic job with their children through the school. They get to Year 6... a ton of teachers are poured into Year 6, they're teaching them the test for the whole year, only maths and English are happening in that school. The kids do well in the test, forget a bunch of it after they've done that, and they get the fancy badge too. So, am I in incredible company with the outstanding badge? No. No different company that I was in before, but I think...that's one of the flaws. One of the flaws is that there are a million and one ways to get a result and Ofsted doesn't have the capacity to unpick that. Was that done a good way, the right way, a sustainable way in the long-term? Right? How many staff left in the last four years since we were here? How much turnover do you have? None of those things are measured. Right? It's just the headline figures.

'...the results were... the first thing they were probably looking at but the way we got those results I think is the important thing and I think that when they got here that's what they saw. They saw a staff that had been re-professionalised. They saw a staff that were, you know, inquisitive, collaborative, connected. They saw a staff that were deeply invested in moving learners and learning forward and doing whatever it took to be the very best they could be in front of those children, working on pedagogy, working on practice, seeing content as important but also seeing themselves as educators, as part of the hidden curriculum. I think that there are a number of factors like that...after the first ten minutes of them being in the building they saw straightaway and that can only be good.'

Accountability

I asked Jeremy whether the Outstanding judgment enables him to challenge the narrative that, in order to get outstanding, you need to have a high accountability culture in a school and whether his slogan 'There is another way' is part of that narrative.

'...I think that that is at the heart of exactly what I'm talking about...So, I think that's exactly it. The badge that they've now given our school, very rightfully, so very well-deserved, this staff is incredible, nobody's working harder than the people here, that badge is the same badge I will use to dismantle the view that the only way you can have an outstanding school is high stakes scrutiny, monitoring, observation...that that is a lie. It's not the truth. It is what as a headteacher you're told...if you speak to a local authority, you speak to an HMI, you speak to a consultant, if you're a new headteacher, if you're a headteacher that's experienced in a school that's Good, they're telling you this is how you gain an Outstanding rating. You monitor more, you scrutinise more, you hold people to a higher account. That is a flawed narrative. It is the narrative that is destroying our schools and our teachers and ultimately our children, and that is the narrative that I'm going to dismantle.'

In April 2019, Jeremy had written an article in The Guardian, 'Teachers are miserable because they're being held at gunpoint for meaningless data', in which he had referred to the mess in education which was leading to a third of teachers leaving teaching within the first five years. He described how schools, teachers and leaders were under pressure to force their pupils through a series of narrow tests. He argued that while high-stakes accountability and using control and coercion to achieve results might work in the short-term, it causes long-term damage to the wellbeing and mental health of teachers. He goes on to criticise Ofsted inspections as a blunt instrument of judgement rather than a supportive force for sharing good practice between the schools it inspects.

Jeremy continued in our interview to explain how, on arriving in England from Canada, he was told that holding teachers at gunpoint was the only way to ensure results:

“ ...it started when I first came to this country...as an immigrant...from Canada...and what I was told in the very first part of my time here was, ‘Listen Jeremy, if you don't like the way we do things here, jog on back to Canada.’ Whoa! And then the narrative shifts to, ‘Listen, you can have one of two types of schools, Jeremy. You can have a happy school. You know, you can treat your staff well. Give them freedom, be a little bit lax with them, you're never going to get the results, you need to monitor. You need to scrutinise...that's what's going to tip them over the edge. Or you can run a tight ship – monitor, scrutinise, push, pull, you can hold everybody to a high account. Pupil progress means every six weeks observations, every six weeks constant feedback, that's how they grow, that's how you get an Outstanding school. So, you can run a happy school but it's not going to be Ofsted successful or you can run a school like this and you will get the badge you need and life will be good for you’ ...not only is it completely untrue, the reverse is true that, while you may get recognised with a badge from Ofsted because you behaved that way, I guess what people are not seeing - because it's very challenging to see, because it has been this way for so long - is the opportunity cost.

‘What we're not seeing is who our professionals can become when they're not constantly monitored, measured and scrutinised. When people have a gun to their heads they behave strangely, they make rash decisions, they panic, they're filled with anxiety, stress, fear. You're not making the decisions that...you're not flourishing, you're not growing, it's not the very best version of yourself. You're definitely not helping other people do that, and so what I'm suggesting is that there is a better way, that you can get the fancy badge if that matters to you, but you can actually grow better teachers, better leaders and ultimately you might have a much stronger experience for the children. And I think as a school now, you know, that's what we're talking about. We're talking about curriculum and we have been for a number of years, but it

comes in many forms. I think what happens is in schools that are very compliance oriented, very militaristic, very much of a scrutiny observation, curriculum to them is content...'

In another interview for the education blog 'Ahead of our Time' in June 2017, when Jeremy was headteacher designate at Three Bridges, one of the topics that John Bishop covered was teacher observations. Jeremy commented that they were '...the most overrated idea in British education' and 'stifle at least 90% of the workforce'. As described earlier, he made clear that the form of observation he believed in was reflective practice of the kind encouraged in Lesson Study, TRG groups and Open Lessons.

The Curriculum

'What is it they are specifically teaching and when, and that is a part of curriculum building but there's a much bigger piece to it than that and that is about the hidden curriculum. And when I say hidden curriculum, I mean a number of things but the things that I think are important right now are what is the pedagogy and how does the pedagogy align with your curriculum? Because in our school we're talking about global citizenship. We're talking about sustainable development, social justice and equity, power and governance - themes that are bold, propelling our children into the 21st century. But if your pedagogy is I'm the fount of all knowledge at the front of the classroom and you are receptacles to be filled, how is that aligned with equality, how does that align with social justice?...if in school we want children collaborating, we want children connecting, we want children enquiring, we want them to see the relationship between themselves and the professional in the presence of knowledge, as one that is not hierarchical but horizontal, where that exchange is learners learning and learners teaching and teachers learning and teachers teaching...if that's we're trying to do, surely our adults have to be in same environment first, they must be exposed to those same principles, those same practices, that same leadership pedagogy as we want the children to experience, and you cannot have that in a system that is very, very much compliance oriented. You can't. It's not possible.'

Advice to new headteachers?

I asked Jeremy what advice he would give a headteacher taking up post for the first time:

‘Disrupt. Be a positive disrupter. I wish I’d made that up, that’s Jaz Ampaw-Farr! [Ed: Jaz Ampaw-Farr is a keynote speaker, author, coach, storyteller and workshop facilitator]...be somebody who is looking for solutions that aren’t immediately apparent. Dig more deeply. Think about the wider picture. Think about the long look. But disrupt.’

My final question was to ask Jeremy where he thought Three Bridges would be in three years’ time:

‘I would like Three Bridges to be a beacon of hope and I want Three Bridges to be - along with some other really, really incredible schools – leading the revolution in schools in this country...not that...we should be kind of colonial and copy....this is Three Bridges because of a number of factors. This community is incredible, the people here are amazing, the staff here are unique and developed in their own ways. You could never recreate Three Bridges anywhere else, but that doesn’t mean that there isn’t a piece of music here that can be played somewhere else...

‘I think that...is why I stay. I mean it would be easy to go back to Ontario, be the principal of a school about the same size as this, in the Ontario system where there’s no Ofsted, there’s no SATs, there’s no high stakes accountability, there’s no nonsense. Professionals are respected and paid well, cost of living is lower...your pension is earlier, there’s a lot of factors to draw you back but this is why I stay, because I believe that Three Bridges has found a number of steps in the right direction and...we’re learning all the time from other schools as well about more steps in that direction, but Three Bridges is going to lead a revolution.

‘It is going to be the school that we’re going to look back on in twenty, thirty years and say that’s one of the places where this started. You know, the environment that we have in schools today is as a result of the work that was going on 25 years ago at Three Bridges when they said there was ‘Another way’ and

that's not about ego, it's not about money, it's not about power, it's not about control, it's about harmony, it's about the future of this nation, it's about an entire profession of people.'

Jeremy's vision of Three Bridges as a pioneer school in putting teachers' wellbeing, mental health and growth at the centre of the school was summarised in his final comment in the Schools Week interview when he said that his ambition was to create a network of schools with the beliefs and values of Three Bridges and where high-stakes accountability was replaced with trust and respect for teachers as professionals. His aspiration is to bring about social change by giving schools like Three Bridges a collective voice.

And that is a perfect summary of what Jeremy Hannay means by 'There is another way'.

Key Strategies

- No high-stakes accountability. No: hierarchical observations, book scrutinies, marking policy, learning walks, performance management, display board rules.
- Creative and inspirational environment, including displaying pupils' work in progress.
- Belief that there is no pupil wellbeing without staff wellbeing.
- Culture of enabling staff to grow and develop.
- Staff are encouraged to take risks, without fear of failure.
- Learning and study lessons.
- Teacher Research Groups.
- Open lessons.
- No 'one way' of teaching and learning: instruction integrated with creativity.
- No onerous data drops.
- Rejection of the belief that monitoring teachers and inspecting schools is the only way to raise standards and get results.