

The School Report

Select Education's newsletter for education professionals

Issue 16

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Are teaching academies undermining both good teachers and academic excellence?

Teaching academies continue to attract flak from all quarters. Indeed, Tony Blair found recently that the issue has become a personal one when hundreds of protestors turned out in Darlington to try to stop council plans to close two local schools then replace them with an academy sandwiched between a factory, a lorry park and a recycling tip. The North East, because it has already experienced an academy in operation (Middlesbrough's Unity City Academy), might fairly claim to have already given the concept of privatised state education a chance. And, from the demonstration in Darlington, they don't think it deserves another.

Middlesbrough's academy was the first in the country, and like that in Darlington was intended to replace two schools. Unfortunately there the initiative led to substantial cuts in the teaching workforce

- 40 were axed - and grades have suffered as a consequence. It seems that in Darlington the locals are persuaded that, because the schools being replaced by the academy are being earmarked for a casino, a hotel and executive housing, the entire initiative is one which is in the best interests of big business rather than children.

So what's the big idea behind academies? Originally it was to create state-maintained independent schools which would be established with the help of outside sponsors. They were supposed to lift standards by replacing failing schools within struggling education authorities. Initially these new

schools were to be called city academies, but that nomenclature didn't sit with the rural areas which, as well as inner cities, would accommodate them. There are 12 academies to date, including one set up by Christian philanthropist - and advocate of the Creationist theory - Sir Peter Vardy. But the government plans to introduce another 200 over the next five years. The first few, though, seem to have had a shaky start.

Private organisations are expected to run academies outside LEA funding control, and they win this right by virtue of a sizeable



Pic: anti-academy demonstrators in Darlington

contribution (probably to a rebuild). But such organisations are supposedly still required to observe all national requirements for curriculum and standards (which is why questions are being asked about whether a Creationist is going to be a proponent of hard science in schools).

This is clearly a politically charged issue, and it is arguable that the Labour government has simply commandeered policy which would be more in keeping with a Tory manifesto. Select Education has an open mind on the subject, but we'd be delighted to publish opinions in our next issue. Contributors are invited to write to us and air their views!

New initiative to harness teaching assistants' affinity for maths and science

Teaching assistants will be able to improve their maths and science subject knowledge to render more assistance to teachers if new courses which started earlier this term across the country prove to be successful.

The pilot courses, run by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), aim to provide schools with higher level teaching assistants (HTLAs) who have the subject knowledge and skills to support maths and science learning whilst giving extra help to pupils in class.

There are 400 places in total on courses which started in September 2005. Training takes place over three school terms and is tailored to the needs of individuals, including on-the-job learning as well as formal tuition.

Participants are required to meet the professional standards for higher level teaching assistant (HTLA) status - which include classroom management, teaching and learning, and assessment - as well as gaining the equivalent of A-level subject knowledge in either maths or science.

Credits from the course may also be used towards gaining a foundation degree.

Richard Cole, head of training delivery for support staff at the TDA says: "Training for maths or science HTLA status is a great career opportunity for people interested in working in a support role in the classroom. Participants will develop their knowledge through the course so they can take on a range of tasks to assist pupils' learning - such as helping them understand maths concepts, observing and recording experiments or working with groups."

Further information is available on websites at www.hhta.gov.uk and www.vtc.ngfl.gov.uk



SELECT EDUCATION CAPTURED in SAUCY PHOTO

Life is not just about work. Not in school. And not at Select Education. So we do look for opportunities to sponsor events like this recent fun run in Preston (no jokes please!) The event went down so well that it made the front page in the 'Burnley Citizen', which we thank for this photo. If you'd like our sponsorship then just ask. We'll help if we can!

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Or visit
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Inside this issue

Cliff Richard could retire.
But can you?

Thunderbirds are go. And so are
Select Education International.

AND a Sudoku for
your staffroom!



The School Report

Issue 16

The Editor's Opinion



Stating the Obvious:

So the government has belatedly concluded that kids are better taught in banded classes after all. Well, excuse me, but when I trained to teach in the 70s it was totally clear even then that mixed ability teaching wasn't in anybody's best interests. And it had already been trialled for a decade. Which means that we've had 40 years of wasteful experimentation driven by socialist dogma. That's 40 years when, whoever has been in power, their classes have not been taught intelligently. And 40 years when the same old unelected policy-making mandarins have perennially insisted that egalitarianism is a more worthy goal than excellence. I say that because the government stopped supporting mixed ability classes in 1997. But, of course, it's not the government who actually teaches!

Still, maybe now we can have all the kids in the class facing their teachers too. Maybe now we can stop wasting kids' time by teaching them to spell phonetically rather than give them dictionaries to show them how words are spelt outside the classroom and in the real world. Maybe we can have our grammar schools back. And maybe now we can start handing out certificates which distinguish successes from failures - and thus have some relevance to those who are expected to employ school-leavers in the meritocracy that exists outside classrooms and the ivory towers from which they're run!

The Use of Force:

So the government is giving teachers the power to use reasonable force to restrain pupils? Big of them! But wait a minute. Didn't teachers always have that? I seem to remember a DfEE circular, Number 10/98, which related to Section 55A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. And I also seem to recall that every citizen, even if they are a punch-bag of a teacher, has the right to use reasonable force to protect themselves, others, or property. If hapless teachers haven't already been told that, it's about time they were!

Open All Hours

It's not only the late-lamented Ronnie Barker who, as corner-shopkeeper Arkwright, was expected to be open all hours. Now it's schools too.

There are some who mourn the extension of the time which children are spending within the school grounds. There are those who think that simply to extend provision is a policy which will further erode family life, a policy which will facilitate further abdication of parental responsibility, a policy which will have adverse repercussions on children's nutritional status as well as their happiness and behaviour, and a policy which will make further calls on already-overburdened teachers. But not everyone sees it that way.

In fact a straw poll taken by Select Education seems to indicate that there is considerable support amongst the teaching profession for the extension of school hours. We've spoken to teachers in the Sheffield area, for example, who have waxed lyrical on the successes of such extensions at the Firth Park Community College (which caters for pupils from 11 to 16 years). They speak of breakfast clubs being an opportunity to ensure that children don't arrive in classes with low energy levels because they've not been fed. They speak of bringing schools and their communities closer together in line with the government's plans to extend the school agenda. And they speak of this initiative being as much for parents as it is for their children.

The NASEN and TES Special Needs Exhibition

Held on 21st-22nd October this year, the NASEN and TES Special Needs Exhibition at the Business Design Centre in Islington was a free-entry event which focused on the SEN teaching resources, products and services provided by over 130 exhibitors. Apart from the opportunity to see and test-drive wares, there were professional development seminar sessions and a special emphasis on ICT. For all SEN teachers searching for new ways to add sparkle to their lessons, and for headteachers looking to develop their curriculums, the event was, as ever, inspirational.

As you'd expect, Select Education (which has done much to improve its recruitment and supply of Special Needs specialists) was there at this year's event. And we even have a pic to prove it!

Readers who would like to get involved in this event next year should visit the website at www.teachingexhibitions.co.uk



Arkwright isn't the only one to be open all hours. Now it's schools too.

One respondent told Select Education: "This is about access to all. Opening up schools to use their facilities around the clock will give many parents the opportunity to teach or learn too. It might be aromatherapy sessions or driving lessons. It might be a chance for people to learn to throw the javelin or speak Arabic, or perhaps learn about the Koran since learning can be fundamental to not only an individual's personal growth but an entire community's health and tolerance. So this is an opportunity for those who are natural teachers, but aren't qualified, to pass on their knowledge. Or a chance to extend one's learning either academically or vocationally. In this way the schools can all use what has previously been a largely-untapped resource - and most schools have only been occupied for a fraction of the time they could be used - to the betterment of the whole community. Education, after all, isn't just about kids. And it isn't just about school. It's about the whole of the community. And it should last a lifetime!"

Select Education's view? Anything that is good for schools, good for communities, good for children, is OK by us! Select Education spokesman John Dunn: "As yet we've still to see how such changes will affect Select Education. And indeed there may be no commercial opportunity for agencies like ours in them. But Select Education isn't simply profit-driven. So we applaud any initiative which brings additional kudos to schools and which enhances capabilities, a respect for learning and the benefits it can bring, in the society in which we all have to live!"



Firth Park Rides Forth



Firth Park, where community involvement is the icing on the cake.

Firth Park Community Arts College is Sheffield's pilot extended school. Its catchment area is in NE Sheffield, a poor area marred, as one would expect, by poor health, poor life-expectancy and poor results.

But Firth Park's extended school is doing something to change all of this. It runs well-attended breakfast and homework clubs, study support, and (as a Specialist Arts Status school) it offers a variety of performing arts, holiday and term-time sports, adult learning courses and after-school activities including yoga, keep fit, pottery, ICT, textiles, the Community Sports Leadership Award and confidence building for women.

The school holds at least two family learning days a year – immensely popular Saturdays when all-comers are invited to take part in a wide range of activities and workshops. It also regularly publishes

its 'Extended Schools Newsletter', which goes to all the families within a broad network.

Gordon Henshaw, Firth Park's Extended Schools Coordinator, says: "Partnership is crucial. The area's Lifelong Learning Partnership helps link all the providers. Then good communications keep the public informed through the local courses booklets. This has improved the take-up of courses. The schools have worked with each other, with parents, and with organisations like the local Sure Start Children's Centre. Then the community has seen it working. Exhibitions and performances have sold the idea and trumpeted the successes. And we have maintained impetus. So that means we haven't rested on our laurels. And we continue to plan, expand, look to the future. Because it works!"

Interested readers are invited to visit the college's website at www.firthpark.co.uk

Select Education achieves industry training standard

'Here at Select Education we have, yet again, something to celebrate! The Recruitment and Employment Confederation, the association for the UK's £26 billion private recruitment and staffing industry, recently announced that Select Education had been accepted into the REC's Accreditation Scheme leading to the Certificate in Recruitment Practice. It's obviously an achievement we're proud of and, alongside the DfES Quality Mark (which is still only held by something like 20% of teacher supply agencies) as well as our recognition as an Investor in People, not to mention our ISO 9001 and UKAS Quality Assurance badges, it is all reassurance that Select Education is developing a service which reflects its position as market leaders.'

Under the scheme, recruitment companies prepare consultants for the Certificate in Recruitment Practice qualification through their own REC-approved induction training.

Accredited Induction Scheme centres have to demonstrate that their training is consistent with the syllabus and that their teaching complies with the REC Code of Good Recruitment Practice.

The Certificate in Recruitment Practice is the first level qualification for recruitment practitioners and, as such, is now studied by over 2500 consultants each year. Successful

students have to demonstrate their understanding of the recruitment process, employment agency and discrimination legislation, the sales process and interviewing. Such a commitment is good for the consultants, the industry, and employers like Select Education.

Peter Flannery, Select Education's MD, says: "The company has always been dedicated to the development of its staff and I am delighted that our newly improved induction programme has been approved by the REC. This enables us to provide an industry-recognised qualification for all staff which is important if we wish to continue to attract and retain the best people. We are excited by the message it sends out to our clients and candidates too. Indeed, recognition like this is every bit as important as sales!"

Commenting on Select Education's accreditation, Judith Armatage, the REC's Director of Professional Development, says: "We're impressed that Select Education have demonstrated their belief in the importance of industry qualifications and have been accepted onto the scheme. It is imperative that the REC and industry trainers work together to raise standards and make recruitment qualifications more accessible".

A date for your diaries: the BESA Education Resources Awards. Sponsored by Select Education.

Friday 10th March 2006 at the NEC

Every March these awards, given by the British Educational Suppliers Association with the support of the National Association of Head Teachers and Select Education, are presented at a high-profile black-tie awards dinner in Birmingham during the Education Show.

The BESA Education Resources Awards highlight the quality and diversity of educational products and resources available, the best educational establishments and the most dedicated members of the teaching profession, all of whom are working to

encourage the raising of standards in education. The awards are thus typically attended by some 500 of the cream of the world of education.

Anyone wishing to put in an entry should contact either Chris Milton on 01322 611 419

or Ann Price on 01322 660070 (both are at Nexus Media Communications, which handles entry forms and places for the dinner too!) The entry deadline is 3rd February 2006. Further details are also available from Nexus.



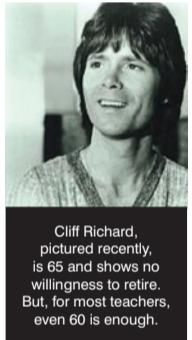
Come into our virtual parlour!

Ever tire of websites that are difficult to navigate? Where you can't easily visualise quite where you are? Or how to get where you want to go? Well, the recently upgraded Select Education site will be like a breath of fresh air for you! Its trails are simplistic, dividing visitors into employers and jobseekers, then into primary, secondary or special needs.

Registration for teachers is a simple process but input data is utilised intelligently to notify consultants and to enable candidates to store and retrieve profiles. And there are options to receive newsletters, to take up eLearning, and for CPD. Vacancy searching has likewise been streamlined.

Meanwhile the employers side of the site lets them upload vacancies directly to the local branch of Select Education, immediately initiating the search for a suitable candidate.

The site continues to evolve. But it's already the cats' pyjamas. Have a look for yourself on www.selecteducation.com



Record early retirements as teachers increasingly forgo full pensions

Last year 28% of teachers retired early with actuarially reduced benefits (ARBs). That's a record, up 5% on the previous year, and a sign that more and more teachers would rather swallow huge cuts in their pensions than stay in the classrooms where they feel they're perennially bombarded by change and dismal pupil behaviour.

The DfES still plans to raise the pension age to 65 in 2013 (for anyone younger than 50 in September 2003) in order to make public sector changes that would otherwise have to be funded by tax hikes. But the Treasury has already back-pedalled on similar plans for other public-sector workers. As a consequence, strike action by teaching unions who feel that teachers are being unfairly discriminated against, is certainly a distinct possibility in 2006.

Select Education, as ever, eschews political comment. But we are of course happy to remind any teachers who opt for early retirement that we can offer work which will allow early retirees to top up their funds and yet decide on a daily basis whether or not they wish to be in the classroom or in the garden. Says John Dunn, Marketing Director: "Everybody at Select Education is aware that teaching can be a tough job and one that is arguably too tough for many at 65. Teachers, more than anybody, deserve to be able to smell the roses whenever they retire. But, for those who want to boost their income, supply teaching offers a lot of flexibility for those who are either compulsorily retired or opt to leave full-time service prematurely. These people have a wealth of experience which doesn't become valueless overnight. However, we can't be involved as an organisation in the politics of the situation. In the event of strike action the Quality Mark guidelines expressly forbid agencies from offering replacement staff. But we do of course have sympathies with the heads who could be left trying to run their schools short-staffed. As well as the teachers on whom we've always depended!"

SELECT EDUCATION TEACHERS of the TERM



Michelina Lauria from Cambridge, the overall winner.

Bristol	Trudy Skidmore
Cambridge	Michelina Lauria
Camden	Fiona McGill
Cardiff	Andrew Ford
Crawley	Lynette Vincent
Finsbury Circus	Johannes Van Der Westhuysen
Hampstead	Veena Nagiah
Hull	Martyn Rooke
Ilford	Duncan Poyer
Leeds	Andrew Crosby
Leicester	Kay Booth
Manchester	Craig Summer
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	Beverley Anne Irving
Nottingham	June Birch
Plymouth	John Miners
Preston	Natalie McNeill
Reading	Peter Kanani
Southampton	Michelle Essery
Warrington	Malcolm Ashton
Wolverhampton	Barbara Carolissen
Further Education	Touria Jouilla

We're still awaiting results from offices in Belfast, Birmingham, Chelmsford, Croydon, Ealing, Liverpool, Maidstone, Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Stockport and Swindon. But, in the meantime, our hearty congratulations go to those below for their wins. And a special pat on the back for Michelina Lauria, our overall winner (see above pic!).

Demand in Swindon soars so new office opened

A 15% increase in demand over the last 2 years has led to Select Education opening its 33rd office in Swindon, within the Shaftesbury Centre on Percy Street. Previously schools there and in Wiltshire were served by our Southampton and Bristol offices.

Peter Flannery, MD of Select Education, says: "Swindon is a buoyant, expanding town. The workforce reform agreement should herald a better work/life balance. Demand for staff will accelerate as school hours are extended. So heads will need even more support, and we'll be there to offer that."

Campaign for Learning

For anyone who doesn't know, The Campaign for Learning began in 1996 as an initiative by the RSA to champion the cause of lifelong learning but in 1997 became an independent charity. It works for an inclusive society in which learning is understood, valued and available to everyone as of right. It operates as a unique partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, all dedicated to developing a learning society, and has attracted an impressive range of support from the government, national bodies, national and regional media, schools, universities and other training providers as well as community groups and individuals.

Select Education is proud to have been, for the last seven years, one of the Campaign for Learning's sponsors. We're delighted to be involved with the extension of learning beyond the school boundaries.

Forthcoming events which readers should know about include:

Marketing Learning Seminars on Developing New Audiences

A practical one-day seminar for developing and promoting successful learning opportunities:

- 17th January 2006 at Bristol Harbourside, Bristol BS1 5DB

The Campaign for Learning also runs customised seminars for organisations and interested readers should visit the website at www.campaignforlearning.org.uk or contact the Events Team – either on 0207 766 0018 or by emailing them on events@cflarning.org.uk

WHAT'S HAPPENING? SELECT EVENTS CALENDAR:

The Schools Question Time Challenge 20 Oct 05 - 6 Jan 06

Young people around the UK can win the chance to produce a real edition of Question Time to be broadcast on BBC ONE. Enter before 5 November 2005 and automatically win a visit from a BBC journalist.

The BT Schools Awards 05/06 20 Oct 05 - 14 Nov 05

The deadline for entering for a BT Schools Award is November 14, 2005.

Road Safety Week 05 7 Nov 05 - 13 Nov 05

Brake has chosen its WATCH OUT! THERE'S A KID ABOUT campaign as the theme for Road Safety Week 2005 and will be raising awareness about children's safety on the roads.

Sexpression conference 05 12 Nov 05 - 13 Nov 05

This year's conference will look at how sexual health priorities have changed over recent years.

Enterprise Week and the Make Your Mark campaign 14 Nov 05 - 20 Nov 05

This campaign aims to inspire young people to make their mark in life by more enterprising means. Find out how you can help your students realise their potential.

Anti-Bullying Week 05 21 Nov 05 - 25 Nov 05

This year's theme is involving children and young people in tackling bullying.

International Education Week 2005 28 Nov 05 - 2 Dec 05

International Education Week (IEW) is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international dimensions in all levels of education, either in schools and pre-school work, Further and Higher Education, or Adult and Lifelong Learning.

Early Childhood Intervention: National Developments and European Perspectives 28 Nov 05 - 29 Nov 05

This two-day conference is an opportunity for practitioners working with very young disabled children and their families to hear directly from some of the world's leading experts about service development.

National Tree Week 23 Nov 05 - 4 Dec 05

This year is the 30th anniversary of the Tree Council's festival to mark the start of the tree planting season, and a nationwide celebration of trees and wood.

ADDISS - London monthly training event 7 Dec 05 - 7 Dec 05

A series of training days for teachers on ADHD, its impact and intervention.

Association for Science Education annual conference 2006 5 Jan 06 - 7 Jan 06

Three days of seminars, lectures and events exploring the latest developments and resources from across science education.

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International Academic Rescue

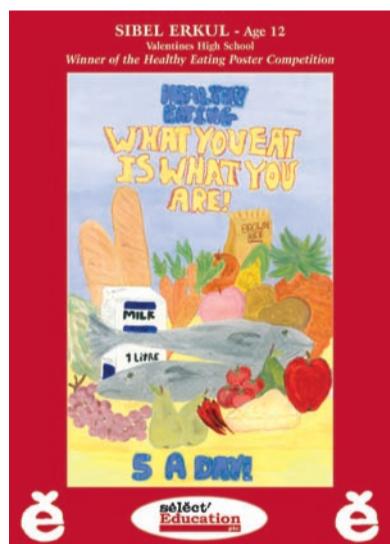
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Select Education International oils the wheels of the Kuwaiti education system



This is Tony Luttrell, an art teacher placed by Select Education International in Kuwait. We guess his palms have been crossed by silver as well as by, erm, palms!

EAT YOUR HEART OUT



The winner of the recent Select Education Healthy Eating competition is **12 year old Sibel Erkul from Valentines High School** (served by Select Education's Ilford office).

As yet Select Education International hasn't the resources to build the equivalent of Tracy Island (or even the low-tech equivalent as seen in Wallace & Gromit's latest outing, 'The Curse of the Were-Rabbit'). But the division has chalked up some notable successes in rescuing understaffed schools from some tight spots!

UK-bound teachers, who are seen as bringing new vitality, ideas, classroom skills and cultures from all over the world, are given pre-placement induction into the demands of the UK's National Curriculum. When vetting is complete (criminal records checks in their countries of origin,

written and verbal reference checks and NARIC evaluation) they are helped with housing, banking and transport once they arrive (and after face-to-face interviews to confirm their placement).

Diane Jacquotot, Division Manager - International, enthuses about their contribution to the UK's schools. "Aussies are known for their resiliency and strong classroom management. Kiwi teacher training programs are world renowned - especially for literacy. Canadians are known for their rigorous teacher training programmes and good classroom management. And South Africans are especially valued for their special needs training and sunny dispositions. These are good teachers. And they have a certain

drive and adventurousness about them otherwise they wouldn't be here!"

However it's not a one-way street. Because teachanywhere.com is the arm which Select is using to place outbound educators in private international schools all over the world. Says Diane: "We've placed heads in the Middle East, primary teachers in Thailand, Spain, Abu Dhabi and Romania. And geography teachers in Italy. Teaching in international schools provides excellent professional development for staff. Most schools provide flights and housing. Classes are usually small and teachers can gain invaluable portable experience on programmes like the International Baccalaureate, the Cambridge IGCSE and the American curriculum."



Tracy Island: we don't yet have the technology. But we do have the teachers!

To find out how you, or your school, can embark on an international adventure, contact Diane on 01582 406 809.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Areté proves to be at the cutting edge!



Anyone looking to fill an SMT role as client or candidate is likely to have come across Areté, a specialist division of Select Education plc.

The name, which derives from a classical Greek word which means 'being the best you can be', is intended to reflect the company's intent to help candidates capitalise on their true potential. And that striving for superlatives seems to be paying off. As a consequence, Areté is quickly becoming established as the leading recruiter of headteachers, principals, deputy heads, assistant heads, senior teachers, heads of department, school business managers and bursars.

That's not an achievement to be sniffed at. Education is a competitive market place where talented leaders are in short supply. But Areté has a proactive business approach. It markets its services to schools and colleges, takes briefs, and then headhunts the most talented and able SMT members.

If you believe we can be of assistance, or would simply like to take advantage of our free no-obligation consultation and advice then please contact your nearest Areté team:

London	020 7638 0003
Manchester	0161 257 2247
Birmingham	0121 616 6800
Or visit the website at www.areteteachers.com and email us!	

Ask the academics: your chance to air your opinions on the PPA workforce agreement

Select Education would love to know your views to the following questions. Please send them to editor@selecteducation.com before 30th November 2005. One respondent, selected at random, will receive £50 in book tokens.

The results - and most interesting responses - will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

- Q1. Do you envisage that you will require more or fewer qualified teachers because of PPA?
- Q2. Can teaching assistants seriously be expected to meet the demands placed upon them?
- Q3. Are you concerned that the agreement will further undermine discipline in schools?

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SUDOKU with SELECT EDUCATION!

OK, so there's no point in Select Education trying to buck the trend. Here's our very own Sudoku puzzle. From the wonderful people who brought you the haiku! And if you need instruction in either then we can recommend several travel agencies specialising in trips to the Orient!

FAX YOUR SOLUTION (TOGETHER with YOUR NAME and ADDRESS) to SELECT EDUCATION on 01582 406 821. IN KEEPING WITH THE JAPANESE THEME, THE FIRST CORRECT ANSWER WILL WIN A BOTTLE OF SAKI.

The solution will be in the next magazine. And we'll also publish tips, then, on how to solve them!

SELECT HAS MORE BADGES THAN MOST BROWNIES But what do they mean?

The DfES Quality Mark
Every aspect of its service exceeds regulatory requirements.
The government says so.

ISO9002
Clients, employees and suppliers know that all our internal processes have been audited and approved.

The REC Education Division Code of Practice
Another safeguard to prove that we adhere to tough standards.

Excellence in Education Standards.
Our Goal. We're tougher on ourselves than anyone else could be!

Investors in People
We value people. And this proves it.

The Campaign for Learning
And, last but not least, we value learning.

Quality Mark 2005-2007
department for education and skills
supporting quality supply teaching



RECD Recruitment & Employment Confederation



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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