



# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2025



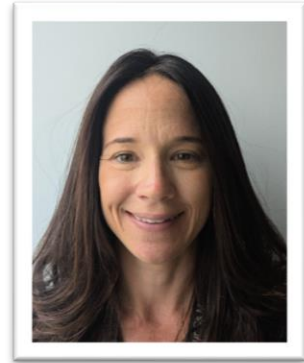
Updates, insights, Alumni news and much more!

# *Meet the Team*

‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’  
Nelson Mandela



Henry Sauntson  
SCITT Director



Lisa Hilliam  
Administrator



Deb Wilding  
Senior Programme Manager



Dominique Norris  
Senior Programme Manager



Sarah Granville  
Senior Programme Manager

## Director's Blog



Hello Everyone,

That time of year again! I have been reflecting a lot recently on the very essence of teaching, and why we do it. Lee Shulman once stated, very clearly, that '*teaching is impossible*', and yet still we persevere. Why? This beautiful passage from William Ayres (1999) brings to mind the very purpose of teaching - to improve outcomes for students, not just academically but in their societies, communities and - perhaps most importantly - within themselves. It is a craft, a science, and the ultimate art form; it is a profession with a soul. To paraphrase Ayres (below), we aren't just teachers, we are reachers.

Teachers bring their best version of themselves to work every day, and in doing so they help improve society:

*"The fundamental message of the teacher is this: You can change your life. Whoever you are, wherever you've been, whatever you've done, the teacher invites you to a second chance, another round, perhaps a different conclusion. The teacher posits possibility, openness, and alternative; the teacher points to what could be, but is not yet. The teacher beckons you to change your path, and so the teacher's basic rule is to reach. To teach consciously for justice and ethical action is teaching that arouses students, engages them in a quest to identify obstacles to their full humanity and the life chances of others, to their freedom, and then to drive, to move against those obstacles. And so, the fundamental message of the teacher for ethical action is: You must change the world."*

Reading this reminded me of some more wise words from Zongyi Deng (2018), in relation to the importance of worldly knowledge and inner purpose for teachers and how this translates to classrooms:

*The role of the teacher in 'curriculum-making' is to create a 'fruitful encounter' between the content and the learner leading to a 'deeper understanding of the world, modifications in perspectives and the cultivation of human capacities or powers'*

I love the concept of the 'fruitful encounter'; students must feel connected to the intended curriculum before they can hope to absorb and retain its content. Teaching is, at its heart, both humanistic and contingent - although there are frameworks these are not straitjackets, for ultimately the purpose of education is the enrichment of the human soul, and this cannot be fettered.

Consider how you create curriculum encounters in your teaching, and how you ensure that they are indeed 'fruitful'; teaching is the tool with which you can change a world.

Everyone out there who works in teacher development does so because they want to help shape futures, to educate educators, and to continue to learn about themselves. Being involved in education has taught me far more about myself than I have ever imparted to students, and that is why I love it.

Thank you for everything you do.

Henry

## Teach East Graduation 2025

We recently held our Teach East Graduation Ceremony and would like to emphasise how proud we are of all of our 'Class of 2025'. They have been a fabulous group of people, who have risen to the challenges of this incredibly fast-paced and intensive year, with enthusiasm and resilience. There have been highs and lows along the way, and every bit of their success is truly deserved; the students, departments and schools of Peterborough are very lucky to have such motivated and committed professionals joining the ranks.





Zoe Merrington

Primary Trainee Teacher 2024-2025



## Reflections on my training year

### Why did you decide to train to teach?

Something that I never thought I would say is - it is all thanks to covid! Whilst my own children were at home during school closures due to the pandemic, I realised that I enjoyed supporting my children with their learning and, surprisingly, it was going very well. Following this, I applied for a job as a support assistant and naturally fell into the role of covering classes due to teacher absence or ECT time. I found that I enjoyed my days covering more than supporting the class, but I wanted more security, with a base, a classroom to call my own. I spoke with SLT who agreed to support me through teacher training; I then applied for Teach East the day (I actually think the minute!) that applications opened.

### How have you found your training year?

My training year has been invaluable in many different ways. Firstly, the continuous support of the Teach East family has allowed me to celebrate the highs and lows, as well as having some in-depth conversations about the teacher I want to be. I am incredibly lucky to have an experienced, nurturing mentor within my main placement, who strives to support me wherever possible. Our weekly check-ins are essential for my development and have allowed me to really reflect and evaluate my approach to teaching. My contrasting placement was eye-opening and allowed me to experience an alternative way of teaching with a different set of values and ethos. There have been a multitude of little wins across the year, but these are topped by the moment a girl with selective mutism in my class felt confident enough to talk to me about her current reading book!

### How did you feel before you began your training?

The months that followed my acceptance onto the course felt like years, but, as September approached, my excitement definitely outweighed the nerves. Luckily, I had had the opportunity to meet and make friends with other people from the course at our induction prior to the course starting, which meant that the first session was much easier, knowing I had others to lean on when needed.

### Has anything surprised you?

Anyone that works in a school will know that the days are full of surprises! For me, I think the surprise was how quickly I 'felt like a teacher'. Things like planning lessons feel scary to begin with but that feeling changed much faster than I expected.

### Best teaching moment so far?

One of my favourite teaching moments so far is making umbrellas with my class! They used a variety of materials to explore how waterproof they are. It was super successful, and the children had the best afternoon. It stands out for me as a win, as it was the moment where I realised - those daunting, practical lessons are actually sooooo beneficial for the children when combined with good planning, organisation and behaviour management!

### Most difficult teaching moment so far?

Whilst I don't have a standout moment that lingers in my mind (I feel like this is a positive thing!), general organisation is the thing that I have found most challenging. There have been a few occasions where planning and other requirements have felt too much, and I wish that I had been a little better with my time management.

### Favourite teaching strategy?

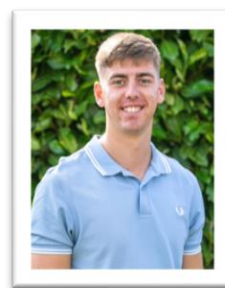
I am a huge fan of live modelling and could talk all day about the use of a visualiser. Not only does it allow the children to see in great detail what I need to show them, whether that be a worked example or concrete resources, it also allows me to model my handwriting, presentation and posture. I am able to narrate and expose the children to valuable vocabulary whilst doing so, and it is a fantastic way to set my expectations.

### What is your teaching career dream?

Whilst this seems a little way off just yet, I am a lover of mathematics, and I aspire to be a subject lead. We have talked many times in our training sessions about children's (and adults') attitudes towards Maths. I hope to one day play a part in encouraging the whole school to have a positive mindset when it comes to mathematics and the attitude of 'I can do this!'

### Based on your own experience, what are your top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training?

Get stuck in! Don't worry about looking silly or making a fool of yourself in front of the children. An engaging and animated teacher holds the focus of their class. It may be hard to stand up in front of a group of children in the early days but this feeling eases. Try to fill your lessons with confidence and this will be reflected in the behaviour of your class.



**Bradley Gothard** Secondary Trainee 2024-2025

Physical Education (PE)

Main Placement: Hampton Gardens School

Contrasting Placement: Ormiston Bushfield Academy

## Reflections on my training year

### Why did you decide to train to teach?

I have always been a passionate sports person with a love for everything PE. I studied Sports Science and Coaching at University, always with the aim to progress into PE teaching. With experience from a number of coaching roles, I realised that the aspect of coaching I enjoyed the most was the process of helping a young person to improve and develop overtime, not only in terms of their skills within a particular sport, but also as a 'whole' person.

### How have you found your initial teacher training year?

My training year as a trainee PE teacher has been both incredibly challenging and deeply rewarding. Every day has brought new experiences, and I've embraced the opportunity to grow. With the consistent support and encouragement from my subject lead and the staff at Teach East, my mentor, PE department colleagues, and teachers across other subjects, I've been able to overcome setbacks and develop my practice in meaningful ways. A particular highlight for me has been witnessing the pride and joy on students' faces when they accomplish something they once thought was out of reach. I'll never forget the moment a student managed to throw a javelin and see it stick in the ground for the first time. Seeing their reaction reminded me why I chose to become a PE teacher. Beyond PE lessons, I've also had the opportunity to support extracurricular clubs, including Football, Rugby, Tennis, Cricket, which has allowed me to see students thrive in different environments.

Throughout my training year, I have encountered a number of challenges that have ultimately been invaluable to my development as a teacher. One of the most significant was the transition to my contrasting placement after Christmas. Just as I had reached a point at my main placement where I felt confident in my role, developing a deeper understanding of the students, forming stronger relationships with staff, and becoming more familiar with the school environment, I had to step into an entirely new setting. It felt as though I was starting from scratch.

However, this transition was made far smoother thanks to the strong support network around me. My new mentor and the PE department at the contrasting school were incredibly welcoming and supportive, which helped me settle in quickly. I was also grateful for the ongoing guidance from colleagues at Teach East and at my main placement, which gave me reassurance and continuity during the move.

### Has anything surprised you?

Yes, one thing that really surprised me during my training year was just how much the role of a PE teacher extends beyond delivering physical activity. I expected to focus mainly on sport and fitness, but I've come to realise how much influence PE has on students' overall wellbeing, confidence, and personal development.

### How did you find doing the PGCert alongside your training?

Balancing the PGCE on top of teacher training was the biggest challenge for me personally. In the grand scheme of things, the workload isn't too bad, as long as you are prepared and manage your time effectively. I wouldn't say academic work is a strength of mine, therefore, I had to be extremely organised in terms of allowing enough time to complete PGCE related work alongside all the teaching associated work, and weekly reflections etc. I found that we were given plenty of time to complete the PGCE assignments, as long as you don't procrastinate too much! (which is something I am very good at!)

My advice for completing the PGCE would be:

- as soon as you have enough information and knowledge from the conference days and webinars, make a start
- manage your time efficiently so that you meet the 'informal' feedback deadlines
- engage with the feedback and take it on board
- Make corrections to your work as you receive the feedback and use it to inform future work.

### What do you feel are the benefits of completing a contrasting placement?

Undertaking my contrasting placement brought a range of valuable experiences that really supported my development. One of the key benefits was learning how to adapt quickly to a completely new school environment. I had to get to know new staff and students, understand different routines and systems, and build relationships quickly—skills that are crucial for any teacher.

Another major benefit was receiving feedback from new mentors who had never seen me teach before. Their fresh perspectives helped me reflect on my practice in new ways. I also gained a lot from observing a variety of PE teachers in a different setting, it gave me a broader view of the subject and highlighted that there isn't just one way to be an effective teacher. Everyone brings their own style to the role, and that really encouraged me to be confident in developing my own approach.

### Favourite teaching strategy, and why?

One of the most effective strategies I've implemented, and continued to develop throughout my training year is cold-calling / no-hands-up questioning (Wiliam, 2014). Over time, I've improved my ability to use questioning not just as a tool to check for understanding, but also to deepen and extend students' thinking. Effective questioning is, in my view, one of the most challenging yet powerful teaching techniques. By focusing on this area, I've been able to involve a wider range of students in discussions engaging learning environment. Developing this skill has had a significant impact on the quality of my teaching and the progress students make in my lessons.

### What is your teaching career dream?

In all honesty, I don't have a big elaborate teaching career dream. My short-term plan is to focus on becoming the best teacher I can be, and then see what opportunities arise along the way.

### Best teaching moment so far?

During a cold-weather football lesson with a lower-set boys group, I encountered a student who was visibly unmotivated and disengaged. Rather than pushing him to participate immediately, I took a few minutes to speak with him individually to understand the root of

his reluctance. Through that conversation, I was able to find some common ground and tailor my approach to connect with him on a more personal level, by encouraging the student to approach the lesson as if they were controlling themselves on a computer game, to align with their interests. As a result, the student began to engage with the lesson and demonstrated a noticeably improved attitude and level of effort. He not only took part but also showed clear progress in his understanding and application of the skills we were working on. It was a really rewarding moment for me, as it highlighted the impact that taking the time to build relationships and understand students as individuals can have on their learning and overall experience in the classroom.

### Based on your own experience, what are your top tips for anyone embarking on teacher training?

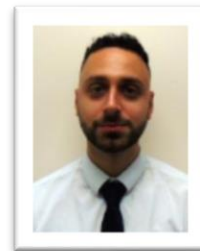
- Be prepared and take initiative for your own learning
- Get to know your students as well as you can. Firstly, make an effort to learn their names!
- Similarly, get to know as many members of staff as possible, it will make your working life a lot more enjoyable
- Say yes to everything (within reason). As long as it is a reasonable request, open yourself to experience as much as possible, even if you think you won't benefit from it in any way. Chances are, you will in the long run. For example, trips, marking, random tasks / assignments etc
- Take on feedback from as many people as possible and receive it with an open mind
- Prioritise behaviour management and decide where your 'line' of tolerance is early on
- Balance your work with your personal life, don't neglect the things you enjoy doing because of work.

### What are you most looking forward to in your ECT years?

Throughout the training year, it's natural, whether consciously or subconsciously, to adopt elements of your mentor's style. This often comes from a desire to provide consistency for the students and maintain a familiar structure. While this has been a valuable part of my development, I'm really looking forward to having my own classes and the freedom to fully shape my teaching style, try new approaches, and establish routines that reflect my own values and personality as a teacher.



## Spotlight on: Marvin Zimmermann Teach East Programme Tutor, Teacher of History and Assistant Head of Year 10



### Training Year 2020/2021

#### Where are you now?

I am currently teaching history and classical civilisations at Arthur Mellows Village College in Glinton following a 4 year stint at St John Fisher Catholic High School. This has been a great change for me seeing as SJF only has around 800 and AMVC currently sits at more than double that! Since April 2024 I have also been the assistant head of year 10.

#### What is the best thing about your job?

My job is very multi-faceted; these few lines don't really encompass the full extent of the job, but I'll do my best. The best thing about my job is getting to know the students and the things they can do every day. We mustn't kid ourselves and think that this always outweighs some of the challenges but it's certainly a significant part! I love curriculum planning but I equally love pastoral work and at this stage in my career I'm finding it difficult to actively choose a route. Being head of classics and assistant head of year allows me to flourish in both, but a decision is to be made at one point or another!

#### What is the most difficult part of the job?

The most difficult part of my job (in any capacity) is to respond to the needs of all students. Six years in and I'm still getting to know new ways of trying to get the students to understand the very nuanced study of history. It is important to me that all students take away some successes from every lesson and that can be tough on you. It's key to set your own boundaries – you will not win every 'battle' but you can most certainly try. Wearing a pastoral and curriculum hat can be exhausting, but I wouldn't give up either!

#### Fondest Teach East memory?

Teach East is a fond but very distant memory! Unfortunately, we only got to do about half of our training as we were the dreaded Covid cohort! It probably doesn't paint me in the best light but every Friday I'd underestimate the Glinton traffic and turn up at 9 on the

dot rather than being early... Everyone got a good laugh out of it. Coincidentally that is also my most favourite memory – the fun sessions! Teach East allowed a lot of fun whilst learning to become to a sound practitioner. Another positive memory is the jokes Andrew and Duncan used to say about Henry's socks and shoes! He continued with the tradition at AMVC – I saw your socks the other day Henry!

#### What is your career dream?

My ultimate career dream is to become Head of Department, but I'm in no rush. Before that I'd like to progress pastorally and lead my own year group. This is very important to me. SLT has never really been an ambition of mine but I'd never say never.

#### What advice would you give to new trainees?

For trainees, the most important thing is to allow yourself space to breathe. Try things, put your mark on lessons and SOLs and enjoy the time you have to learn and observe from others. When your timetable is bursting at the seams, you'll look back and hope for another chance to observe your (often much more experienced) peers. Allow yourself to grow from the feedback and reflect and what it is you're doing. As with any task you create – ask yourself **why** you are doing this. For me, it was the love for my subject initially when in reality it's the joy of working with enquiring minds – even if they don't always admit it.

#### What have you done in the last 12 months?

In the last 12 months I have set up classical civilisation as a new subject and developed the resources with my co-teacher. In May 2024 I became a team leader for Edexcel to oversee 8 examiners in their marking. It might be easier to say what I haven't done! One very exciting venture has been to work with Teach East as a Visiting Tutor. I have absolutely adored seeing trainees in action and observing all the wonderful mentors with the trainees. I may have picked up an idea or two from doing so... which brings me to my last piece of advice: teach a bad lesson.... It'll let you teach a good one after!

# Preparing for Early Career Teaching

## A Guide

The next stage of the journey to being a fully qualified teacher, is the successful completion of the statutory, two-year induction period, signed off by the designated Appropriate Body. The induction period is fully supported by the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) package, underpinned by the Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which provides important tailored support for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), to ensure that teachers new to the profession are nurtured and supported in these exigent early years. The ECTE was created to respond to the high levels of people leaving the profession in the first five years of teaching, and is proving a constructive programme, which does indeed provide vital succour, to ECTs.

The government impresses upon schools that they must act in accordance with the statutory Induction Guidance, when employing and working with ECTs.

### **The programme offered to ECTs must contain the following:**

- A reduced timetable for the first two full years of teaching. ECTs are entitled to:
  - 10% off their timetable in year 1
  - 5% off their timetable in year 2
- An Induction Tutor who provides support and guidance throughout the induction
- An Induction Mentor who has one-to-one mentoring sessions with the ECT
- Observations of the ECT in the classroom and discussions based on this
- Regular reviews of the ECTs progress
- The opportunity for the ECT to observe experienced teachers
- A programme of training and professional development that supports the Early Career Framework (ECF)
- Two formal assessments: one at the end of year 1, and the other at the end of year 2.

For more information visit:

[Early career teachers: your training and support entitlement - GOV.UK](#)

# Preparing for Early Career Teaching

## Some tips.

### 1. You don't need to plan from scratch

Use resources from others to help you save time and give you inspiration.

### 2. Don't be afraid to ask for help

The ECT Induction is designed to support new teachers through the first two years of teaching, which can be tough, to say the least. Don't be afraid to ask for help and support from those around you. You will have a mentor and a tutor you can turn to. But you can also turn to colleagues in your school and Teach East are still here for you if you need us!

If you're feeling particularly overwhelmed, [Education Support](#) provides mental health support designed specifically for the teaching profession. Reach out. You're never alone.

### 3. Get to know your school's policies and procedures

This might seem obvious but in your first few weeks, this kind of information is often presented to you en masse and gets filed away to be looked at 'later'. Translation: never. But policies and procedures, particularly behaviour policies, can come in very handy in those first few weeks when you're establishing yourself in a new school.

Make the time to read through and make notes on the ones you'll be employing daily.

### 4. Try new strategies and methods

There's no denying that the first few years in teaching are intense, but they also provide the opportunity to try new things and be brave. Try out new strategies for teaching and learning and throw yourself into the programme of professional development provided for you.

### 5. Be nice to yourself

When trying new strategies or ideas, be kind to yourself. Some will work. Some won't. Some lessons will go wrong, some will be the best ever. All of that is okay - in fact, it's a sign you're making the most of your ECT years.

We tell children they learn the most from mistakes; practice what you preach and give yourself a break!

### 6. Set your stall early for work/life balance

We're not going to lecture you about making sure you take breaks or tell you not to take work home. Rather, we think it's good to use this time to work out a pattern of working that works best for you.

Ask colleagues how they manage workload and try out their tips. Try not taking work home. Try only working until 6pm. Try going into school early. Decide what works for you and stick with it.

### 8. Look after yourself

The ECT years can be overwhelming. It's helpful to have a few go-to self-care activities you can do when you're feeling a bit saturated.

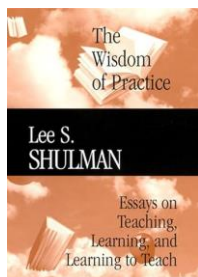
And don't be afraid to take days off if you're unwell. Going into school when you're ill will not help anyone and your pupils will be fine whilst you get yourself back to fighting fit.



# Recommended Reads

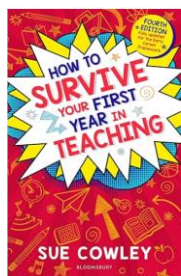
Take a look at our top tips for to pop on your reading list 😊

## Henry's Pick – An oldie but a goodie!! The Wisdom of Practice – Lee S. Shulman 2004



What do teachers need to know in order to teach well? How important is the depth and quality of teachers' content knowledge as a critical aspect of their ability to teach? How can teachers best be educated, and how can we assess their accomplishments as teachers? In what ways is the professional preparation of teachers comparable to the preparation of physicians and other members of learned professions? What kinds of educational research can provide deeper understanding of teaching, learning, and the reform of education? These are just some of the many questions answered in this landmark collection of Lee Shulman's best work. A pioneer in the field of teaching and teacher research, Shulman's work and thinking have long influenced teachers and researchers. But while Shulman is one of the most widely cited scholars in education, his writings have been scattered among a variety of books and journals until now.

## How to Survive Your First Year in Teaching – Sue Cowley (2023)



This new edition of Sue Cowley's bestselling book serves as a practical, up-to-date guide for early career teachers learning to navigate their first two years in the classroom.

This introspective toolkit shows you how to not only survive but thrive during the first two years of your teaching career, and this latest edition provides practical new chapters on how to effectively manage your workload and gives plenty of useful teacher wellbeing tips. It reflects the introduction of the Early Career Framework along with revised material on the National Curriculum and the current Education Inspection Framework.

Written in Sue Cowley's honest, accessible and down-to-earth style, *How to Survive your First Year in Teaching* is a must have for all new teachers at the start of their career.

## The Teacher Journal – Naomi Barker (2022)

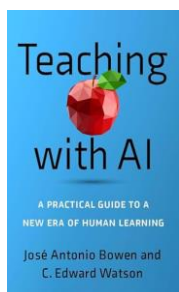


*The Teacher Journal* is the must-have resource for Early Career Teachers looking to thrive in their first role.

This one-of-a-kind hybrid journal is packed full of opportunities for professional development, practical information and relatable anecdotes from a teacher *who knows*. Its easily digestible content makes it perfect to use around a busy work schedule and includes 'think pieces' that explore current research and how to put it into practice with links to the Early Career Framework and Teaching Standards. By providing useful questions and prompts, this book helps early career teachers to self-reflect, prioritise their wellbeing and increase job satisfaction while avoiding burnout. It also offers space to track and record appraisal targets and evidence for professional reviews and formal assessment. The content is divided to reflect each school term, encouraging professional and personal growth throughout the entire academic year.

The Teacher Journal is the ultimate '*What I wish I'd had*' toolkit to help ECTs create the strong foundations needed to succeed in their careers while maintaining self-care.

## Teaching with AI – Jose Antonio Bowen and C. Edward Watson (2024)



How AI is revolutionizing the future of learning and how educators can adapt to this new era of human thinking. By learning how to use new AI tools and resources, educators will gain the confidence to navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by AI. From interactive learning techniques to advanced assignment and assessment strategies, this comprehensive guide offers practical suggestions for integrating AI effectively into teaching and learning environments. Bowen and Watson tackle crucial questions related to academic integrity, cheating, and other emerging issues.

Take a break and have a go at our educationally themed quiz!

1. The Open University is based in which large town?
2. Which university is often referred to as LSE?
3. Established in 1986, what does the acronym NCVQ stand for?
4. Which group established in 1994, is sometimes perceived as representing the 'best' universities in the UK?
5. Which year saw the last O-Level exams in the UK?
6. In 1801, the first modern what was designed by James Pillans, a high school teacher in Scotland?
7. In which North American city is McGill University?
8. What were introduced in 1614 by John Napier as a means of simplifying calculations?
9. One of the highest in the world, what is the compulsory school starting age in Finland?
10. Which constituent college of Oxford University, one of the first two women's colleges in Oxford, did Margaret Thatcher attend?
11. What name is given in the UK to a fee-charging independent primary school that caters for children up to the age of about 13?
12. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is abbreviated to what?
13. Konstanstin Stanislavsky developed the method school for which activity?
14. What is the acronym for the UK organisation whose main role is to operate the application process for British universities?
15. Old Wykehamists are former pupils of which college?
16. In 1899 what was the school leaving age raised to?
17. In which country would you find the worlds oldest university?
18. Henry VI founded Eton College in 1440 and which college in Cambridge University in 1441?
19. Which American university is abbreviated to MIT?
20. If alumni is the plural noun for a group of male graduates, what is name given to one male graduate?
21. In 1498, what was Wells School in Somerset probably the first to use?
22. Which public school in Godalming, Surrey, are pupils still referred to as Carthusians?
23. In 1969, Hatfield, Sheffield and Sunderland were the first three colleges to be designated what?
24. In 1548, Thomas Vicary wrote the first English textbook on what subject?
25. Which mathematical symbol was invented in 1557 by Welsh mathematician Robert Recorde?

Take a break and have a go at our educationally themed quiz!

## Answers:

1. Milton Keynes
2. London School of Economics (London School of Economics and Political Science)
3. National Council for Vocational Qualifications
4. Russell Group
5. 1987
6. Blackboard
7. Montreal, Canada
8. Logarithms
9. Seven
10. Somerville College
11. A preparatory school or prep school
12. Ofsted
13. Acting
14. UCAS
15. Winchester College
16. Twelve
17. Morocco (Fez, founded 859)
18. King's College
19. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
20. Alumnus (Note: An alumna is one female graduate)
21. Printed schoolbooks
22. Charterhouse School
23. Polytechnics
24. Anatomy
25. Equals sign