



RECRUITING NOW: 1

Students from Ibstone Church of England Infant School went to London in October, on an excursion with a difference. After 18 months without a permanent principal and five different advertising campaigns, the students booked Stand D60 at the *TES* Education show at London's Olympia in October and set up class. Helen France, the chair of governors of the 35-student early-years school in rural South Buckinghamshire, England, said it was time to try a radical approach. 'Our governing body decided it was time to think "out of the box" and go and meet teachers who might want to be our new head,' France told *BBC News*. 'We hope that we will meet some prospective heads at this show and be able to talk directly to them about our school and why being our head would be a great career move.' Interested? Email office@ibstone.bucks.sch.uk – and fair's fairtrade, Olympia hosted Opportunities in Australia later in October.

RECRUITING NOW: 2

Recruitment isn't just tough in rural South Buckinghamshire: conservative British politicians now want to give soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan free teacher training if they teach in schools in disadvantaged areas in the United States. The idea is modelled on the American Troops-to-Teachers Program, authorised by the federal 'No Child Left Behind Act' of 2001 that aims to 'relieve teacher shortages,' especially in Maths, Science, Special Education and other high-needs subject areas, and 'to assist military personnel in making successful transitions to second careers in teaching.' As one wag wrote on the British Army Rumour Service web forum, 'I can imagine it now. 0730: Smartly dressed ex-military men and women turning up 15 minutes early for their first day in teaching at 'problem school'; 0805: Whole school doing knees to chest for being scruffy and idle. 0845: Whole school repeating knees to chest as "the message didn't get through."' Not likely, a forum correspondent replied.

More likely, '0810: Ex-mil teacher escorted off school property for invading human rights of pupils.' By the way, if you think the Australian military might be the solution to local education recruitment, think again. As Minister for Defence Joel Fitzgibbon explained on ABC Radio's the *World Today* back in March, 'We want to make sure that when the defence family is sitting around the kitchen table...thinking about whether to stay or to leave, we can put things on the kitchen table which provide them with additional incentives.'

RECRUITING NOW: 3

Still on recruitment in Britain, Glasgow City Council has begun hiring nurses instead of teachers in nursery schools. The difference? Teachers start at around \$64,000, while nurses start at around \$40,000.

PADDLING

Paddling: it sound innocuous, but it's the most common word for corporal punishment in the United States, and it remains widespread across the southern states – notwithstanding the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution – according to a new report, *A Violent Education: Corporal punishment of children in US public schools*, by Alice Farmer for Human Rights Watch. 'According to the Office for Civil Rights at the US Department of Education, 223,190 students nationwide received corporal punishment at least once in the 2006-2007 school year, including 49,197 students in Texas alone, the largest number of any state,' writes Farmer. 'In Mississippi, 7.5 per cent of public school students were paddled during this period, the highest percentage in the nation. The actual numbers almost surely are higher: Human Rights Watch interviewees reported that corporal punishment is often administered in a chaotic environment in which many instances of the practice are not recorded. One administrator reported that 37 students in a single day were sent to his office for corporal punishment.' While corporal punishment has been banned in most developed economies, 21 American states still permit

educators to use physical violence against children. Human Rights Watch called for legislation to ban corporal punishment in US schools and an immediate moratorium on corporal punishment for special education students until a ban is in place.

MEXICAN WAVE

Thousands of teachers have been on strike since August in Mexico and more than half a million students have yet to start the school year. The reason? It's a dispute over a policy called the Alliance for Quality Education, a national plan to require teaching applicants to pass government-administered exams before hiring or promotion and to hold teachers accountable for student performance on standardised tests. Ratified back in May by Mexican President Felipe Calderon and National Education Workers Union leader Elba Esther Gordillo, the policy should've had the support of the union's 1.6 million teachers, but they're angry because the deal would stop them from selling their position or passing it on to their children. Gordillo, by the way, recently declared herself the union's leader for life. Whether she aims to sell the position or pass it on to her children remains unknown.

SAFETY RULES

China's Ministry of Education released an updated code of ethics for primary and middle school teachers in September, with a new rule instructing teachers to 'pay more attention to the health of students' and 'take care of their students' safety.' Ministry officials said they had been considering a safety rule since 2004 and the case of 'Running Fan' merely reinforced their decision. 'Running Fan' is the name given to Fan Meizhong, a middle school teacher in Dujiangyan in southwest China's Sichuan province, who ran for his life, leaving his students in the classroom when the 8.0-magnitude earthquake struck on 12 May. Fan was fired by his school shortly after the earthquake.

This month's Grapevine is by Steve Holden, Editor of Teacher.