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SECRETARY  
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SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

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**Exclusive**

## The day that one in six schools fell silent

- Education disrupted in up to 3,800 schools across the country as ballot boxes moved in
- Many forced to close over safeguarding concerns as strangers enter schools to vote

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**MOST TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT EVER?**

Ann McGauran hunts the DfE's secret papers

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## EDITION 28

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## NEWS

## One in six schools 'fell silent' yesterday

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools across the country were turned into makeshift polling stations yesterday as the nation cast its votes to decide the closest election in decades.

Figures from 66 of the 152 local authorities reveal that at least 1,673 schools, most of them primary, had to close or partially close as the ballot boxes moved in.

However, the true number of schools affected is likely to be much higher: if our average was expanded to include the authorities that did not respond to our survey, it would mean more than 3,800 schools – nearly 18 per cent of the country's 21,452 – were disrupted.

Returning officers, responsible for overseeing elections in each constituency, can force any state-funded school to become a polling station.

But it is up to the headteacher and chair of governors if the school closes.

Many prefer to stay open, but face huge disruption with parts of the building and some entrances cordoned off for voters.

The use of schools as polling stations has led to concerns over safeguarding, particularly in primary schools, where strangers are free to enter the school.

Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (pictured), said: "This usually means the whole of the school has to be closed to avoid several unaccompanied adults being around young children.

"It would be helpful if all local authorities were to examine their use of schools as polling stations and see if they can find alternative centres that do not involve young people losing a day's education."

Authorities must review their list of polling stations every five years and Mr Trobe (pictured) said many schools have requested to be dropped.

Our investigation shows that local authorities are listening to concerns. Of the 14 authorities that provided figures for the



number of schools used in the 2010 election, 11 were using fewer this time round.

In Nottingham just two schools were used as polling stations, compared with 32 in 2010.

Nottingham City Council said it wanted to avoid closures because they impacted on the attainment of pupils and could cause unexpected childcare costs and loss of pay for parents and carers.

Plymouth has also slashed the number of schools used as polling stations from more than 50 in the last general election to 29 so "as many children as possible are in school on election day".

But the discretion remains with the authority. Of Birmingham's 460 polling stations, 216 were in schools – nearly 50 per cent. Conversely, Poole and North East Lincolnshire had none.

Billingshurst Primary School, in Horsham, West Sussex, had to partially close despite fierce opposition from the headteacher Helen Williamson and parents.

Ms Williamson said the polling impacted her legal obligation to offer nearly

400 pupils free school meals. Instead they had to shut a hall and 90 pupils forfeited a hot meal for a packed lunch.

"It's just irrational... to disrupt the welfare and learning of children when there are other places available. We are long past the day where it's acceptable to close a school," Ms Williamson told *Schools Week*.

Despite finding alternative sites, her pleas were rebuffed by Horsham District Council.

Returning officer Tom Crowley told parents: "Elections take place on a single day no more than once a year and therefore the level of disruption to schools is minimal when judged against the importance of supporting the democratic process."

Electoral Commission guidelines state: "Schools that are publicly funded, including academies and free schools, may be used as polling stations free of charge, and the legislation allows you to require a room in such schools for use as a polling station."

Guidance from the National Association of Head Teachers says that staff could be made to attend and lost education time could be made up at the end or beginning of the academic year.



## Harrow primary pulls all the right strings

SOPHIE SCOTT  
@SOPH\_E\_SCOTT

Closing schools to make way for polling stations not only disrupts daily classes, but also impacts on additional learning – as one educational scheme realised when it planned a classical concert for key stage 1 pupils at a Harrow school.

City of London Sinfonia runs workshops over three weeks with primary schools in Harrow and Tower Hamlets, London, to open pupils' eyes to a different world of music.

Each three-week session ends with a concert in which the children watch an orchestra play, many for the first time, and the youngsters perform a song they have written during the workshops.

However, a concert at Weald Primary School in Harrow – planned for May 7 – faced cancellation when the school realised

it would be used as a polling station for yesterday's election.

Musicians were already booked to make the journey to Harrow and Pia Luck (pictured), the Sinfonia's education manager, said: "They are such a lovely and enthusiastic group, it was a shame when we thought we would have to cancel."

Fortunately Harrow Music Hub came to the rescue and organised for the City of London Sinfonia to play at Harrow Arts Centre instead.

Ms Luck added: "It is important for the children to see the end result of their work and to enjoy the concert."

About 90 children are expected from Weald, with their parents.

A class from nearby Moriah Jewish Day School, which has been taking part in the project alongside Weald, also planned to be at the concert.



Hopefully Ljova's *Bagel on the Malecon* and *Crosstown* went down well with all the youngsters and their families yesterday, providing much-needed relief from election madness.



## NEWS

## The morning after: who came up trumps?

## DAVID LAWS

**Role:**  
Minister  
for schools

**Constituency:**  
Yeovil



**ODDS:** 1/4

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Marcus Fysh, Conservative, 3/1



## NICKY MORGAN

**Role:**  
Education  
secretary

**Constituency:**  
Loughborough



**ODDS OF RETAINING SEAT:** 1/4

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Matthew O'Callaghan, Labour, 11/4



## SAM GYIMAH

**Role:**  
Parliamentary  
under secretary  
for childcare and  
education

**Constituency:**  
East Surrey



**ODDS:** 1/100

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Helena Windsor, UKIP, 20/1



## GRAHAM STUART

**Role:**  
Chair of  
the education  
committee

**Constituency:**  
Beverley and  
Holderness



**ODDS:** 1/100

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Margaret Pinder, Labour, 25/1 and Gary Shores, UKIP, 25/1



## NICK BOLES

**Role:**  
Minister for  
skills and equality

**Constituency:**  
Grantham  
and Stamford



**ODDS:** 1/100

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Marietta King, UKIP, 22/1



## TRISTRAM HUNT

**Role:**  
Shadow  
education secretary

**Constituency:**  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Central



**ODDS:** 1/66

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Mick Harold, UKIP, 14/1



## NICK GIBB

**Role:**  
Minister for  
school reform

**Constituency:**  
Bognor Regis  
and Littlehampton



**ODDS:** 1/100

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Graham Jones, UKIP, 7/1



## EDWARD TIMPSON

**Role:**  
Parliamentary  
under secretary  
for children and  
families

**Constituency:**  
Crewe and  
Nantwich



**ODDS:** 4/6

**CLOSEST RIVAL:** Dr Adrian Heald, Labour, EVS



**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

We've all got to know the faces of the politicians in the education world and – if you listen to the bookies – we're going to be seeing a lot more of them.

All the education ministers in the last government were odds-on favourites to retain their seats before last night's election, according to bookmakers William Hill.

Nick Boles, minister for skills and

equality, Sam Gyimah, childcare minister, and Graham Stuart, chair of the education committee, were all 1/100 to regain their Westminster passes. (In other words it's so likely, that you'd get a penny back for spending a quid.)

The bookies also liked the look of school reform minister Nick Gibb's 13,063 stronghold in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton, and shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt's 5,565 majority in Stoke-on-Trent Central. They were 1/20 on

and 1/66 on respectively.

The juiciest contest was expected to be fought in children's minister Edward Timpson's Crewe and Nantwich ward. The bookies had him as 4/6 on to retain his seat (majority 6,046) with Labour rival Adrian Heald not far behind at evens.

Big guns Nicky Morgan (education secretary) and David Laws (schools minister) were also facing a worrying night.

Ms Morgan was defending a majority of just 3,700 in Loughborough, although

her odds of 1/4 on reflect that she is probably the best-known Conservative fighting a marginal. Nearest rival Matthew O'Callaghan, Labour, was at 11/4.

Mr Laws was also 1/4 on to reclaim his seat, in Yeovil. Despite commanding a huge 13,036 majority in 2010, his odds nosedived with the apparent wane in support for the Liberal Democrats. Conservative rival Marcus Fysh was 3/1 to take the seat.

*The odds were correct at noon on Wednesday*

GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS BLOG: VISIT [SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK](http://SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK)

## How we should combat teacher cyberbullying

**ANN MCGAURAN**  
@ANNMCGAURAN

School professionals need to work together to combat cyberbullying of teachers, say two academics who have examined YouTube videos from across the globe, including England.

A paper by Dr Chris Kyriacou and Dr Antonio Zuin shows how students can use social media to challenge and undermine teacher authority. It concludes that whole-school anti-cyberbullying policies are required, as well as lessons in personal and social education (PSE) that address the role of bystanders during any incident.

Chris Kyriacou is professor of educational psychology at the University of York; Dr Zuin is professor of the philosophy

of education at the Federal University of Sao Carlos, Brazil. Their article was published in *Research Papers in Education*.

Teachers who are the potential targets also need to think about how to develop a positive ethos in the classroom so that a student is less likely to engage in cyberbullying, the pair add.

A video used in the study was made outside a secondary school in England. Two students are seen fighting with each other, with two teachers struggling to pull them apart. One of the students, still on the ground being restrained by a teacher, is then kicked by the other student as he is pulled away.

Three other teachers are then seen grabbing and pushing two onlooking students who resist efforts to get them to

move away from the incident.

Several students scream and laugh throughout. During the footage, one of the onlooking students runs across the front of the camera and yells "...look at all the staff, it's a wonderful world". Students near to the camera start laughing in response.

According to the paper, the recording raises the question of who the victims are in this situation as "both the teachers and the students involved in the struggle were likely to feel demeaned by others viewing the recording of their behaviour".

The recording appears to be celebrated by the students as "an attack on the image of teachers in general".

Professor Kyriacou described to *Schools Week* how cyberbullying had taken the

education community by surprise "in terms of how rapid the rise in it has become".

He said that pupils making secret recordings on smartphones was about the students "turning the tables" on teachers.

"The number one motive is the sheer enjoyment the pupils who make the recordings get... they have a mechanism to make themselves more powerful than the teacher."

Professor Kyriacou said that lessons within school about cyberbullying were the best way to show that it was unacceptable.

It was necessary to "get the message clear to all pupils that within the school community this type of cyberbullying of pupil on teacher, or pupil on pupil, is not a way of dealing with problems".



## NEWS

## Teacher training applicants dip by more than 5,000

Recruits to teacher training programmes are more than 5,000 down on this time last year.

UCAS figures for April 2015 show there were 5,260 fewer people applying for teacher training posts than in the same month last year.

Using government projections for initial teacher training places against number of jobs advertised, Professor John Howson, who runs job website TeachVac, predicts some subjects will be particularly squeezed.

"There seems to be a shortage of vacancies for physical education teachers. This is a subject that regularly over-recruits on training targets."

Professor Chris Husbands, director of the Institute of Education, said an extra 490,000 school places were needed over the next few years, which increases the demand for teachers.

This, mixed with the pressures on graduate recruitment as the economy recovers, was a "developing crisis".

James Darley, Teach First's head of recruitment, said applications for the graduate teacher training programme were down this year by about 20 per cent. "But the flip side is that quality is up."

# Data backs up head's Ofsted fury

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

When executive headteacher Geoff Barton was told by an Ofsted inspector that his school's behaviour grading was limited by its low attainment grade, he complained to the inspectorate. Exclusive analysis by *Schools Week* suggests he was right to do so.

Writing in the TES Mr Barton last week revealed that an Ofsted inspector said Hardwick Middle School in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, could only score a "requires improvement" rating for pupil behaviour because its previous exam results had not been good enough.

His horror at this pronouncement was one of a number of criticisms levelled at Ofsted in the article written to highlight the "devastating personal price" paid by headteachers at the mercy of the education watchdog.

But analysis by *Schools Week* has found that nearly a third of schools inspected this year have scored a higher grade for behaviour than attainment (see graph).

The figures cast doubt on any claims that attainment levels obligate inspectors to hold back their behaviour score.

Since January 1, 669 inspection reports have been published for primary, secondary, all-through and special schools, according to data collected with the help of Watchsted.com.

Of those, 70.46 per cent were given the same grades for attainment and behaviour.

But in 28.65 per cent of cases, the behaviour grade was better than the achievement grade.

Further analysis of the 448 schools receiving a grade 3 for attainment shows that more than half of them scored a grade 2 for behaviour.

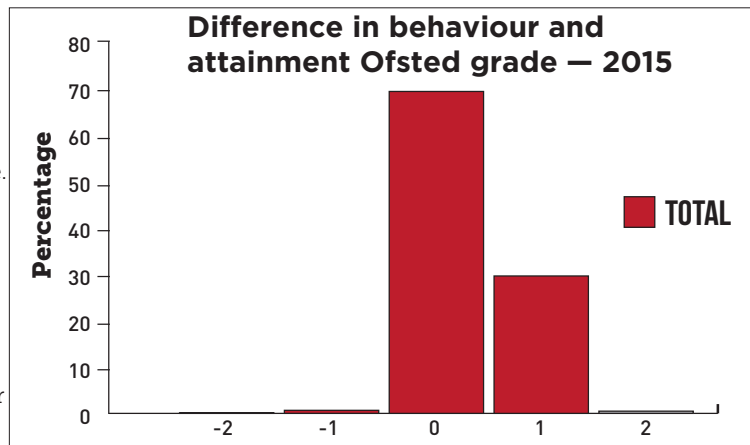
Mr Barton asked the inspectors to re-evaluate their grading and made an official complaint after they refused to budge, but his complaint was not upheld.

Learning of the figures found by *Schools Week*, Mr Barton said: "It seems to me that there is a lack of transparency from an organisation that expects transparency from schools."

Ofsted has refused to comment specifically on Mr Barton's claims. But a spokesperson said that the watchdog does not "have a policy that limits the judgment on behaviour and safety because of previous attainment".

She said: "Inspectors are guided by the school inspection handbook and would, when judging behaviour and safety, consider the extent to which pupils' attitudes to learning help or hinder their progress in lessons."

Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook



lays out 17 criteria that state inspectors must follow when judging behaviour and safety.

They include whether pupils' attitudes to learning help or hinder their progress and pupils' respect for the learning environment.

However, Mr Barton rebuffed the argument that the behaviour grade reflected attitudes to learning.

"It is this very narrow definition of what behaviour is... that it is about behaviour for learning. In some schools with high grades you will see utterly compliant behaviour and it's not really about learning.

"If you asked parents what they mean by behaviour this is not what they would say."

Hardwick Middle School will close in 2016 as Bury moves toward a wholly two-tier school system.

# Trust 'can't cope' with high pupil numbers

SOPHIE SCOTT  
@SOPH\_E\_SCOTT

Aspirations Academies Trust is planning to reduce pupil numbers in two of its secondary schools, despite concerns from local about a lack of school places.

The trust runs three secondary schools – Banbury Academy in Oxfordshire, Rivers Academy in west London, and Magna Academy in Poole – and has applied for its planned admissions numbers (PAN) at Banbury and Rivers to be decreased from September 2016.

At Rivers in west London, the trust wants to reduce the 215 pupils admitted per year to 180, making a total capacity of 1,100. The trust claims that this is an "educationally and economically efficient school size".

In Oxfordshire, the county council is concerned that Banbury Academy's funding agreement is for 1,953 pupils but the school said it only admits 180 pupils per year, putting it at a maximum capacity of 1,260 pupils.

The council is also concerned about the introduction of banding tests – to be taken by pupils before entry – which may mean some pupils are rejected on the basis of literacy scores.

Both Rivers and Banbury have studio schools attached to their sites, each with 300 pupils, and the trust says this has reduced capacity in the main school.



**Aspirations Academies Trust**  
in association with AUI and QISA

## Consultation on the proposal to change the Published Admission Number for the secondary provision at Rivers Academy West London

In accordance with the Schools Admissions Code, article 1.42 "When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following school year".

AAT chief executive Stephen Kenning said both schools were unable to cope with high numbers of pupils.

Former schools adjudicator Alan Parker

said: "This is a very good illustration of what is wrong with the system at the moment. If academies want to be difficult about things, they can play the system.

"With the banding issue, there isn't enough information about how it is going to be operated. They have said

it will be across three [ability] bands, but have not said if that will be equally distributed.

"I think probably the most damaging factor is the deliberate restriction of the size of the school when there is a

shortage of places in the area."

The trust said that a decision about the

reduction in admission numbers now rested with the regional schools' commissioner's office and was not expected until after the election.

The Department for Education said this was a decision for the school.

Mr Kenning said the banding would only apply when the school was oversubscribed. "We are trying to make sure national averages are represented. It gives a real comprehensive mix. Rivers is outstanding for the first time and we expect admissions to get to a very high level."

Mr Kenning also defended the decision to reduce pupil numbers at both schools.

"Rivers hasn't been oversubscribed but if it does it will be hard to manage. At the moment, 180 in a PAN is a good number. Any more than that and it is going to be a bit tight in Hounslow.

"When we took Banbury on three years ago its PAN was 1,900. But we have only had 1,100 since then. It is physically impossible to get more than that in the buildings.

"Education has changed since the PAN was agreed, and when we took over the school we were not aware of the massive growth issues."

He said that the trust had offered Oxfordshire County Council the option of building another school on its Banbury site.

# Inspiring Leadership Conference 2015

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**JILL MCMILLAN,** Director of Jill McMillan Associates

**The transformational power of trust**

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What can leaders do to help nurture trust? Based on real-life examples of what happens in schools when trust-building is prioritised and what it enables as a result



**BRIAN LIGHTMAN,** General Secretary, ASCL and Leora Cruddas, Director of Policy, ASCL

**Stepping up to lead a self-improving system – the emerging role of school and system leaders**

Imagine replacing the relentless cycle of centrally driven change which has had mixed results over the past 30 years and which has too often been poorly planned and overly bureaucratic by a system which would champion professional learning; where curriculum change would be introduced in a managed way, based on evidence rather than political whims; where inspections would focus on outcomes rather than processes; and in which schools and colleges would be properly financed by a national fair funding formula.



**RUSSELL HOBBY,** General Secretary NAHT

**Connected leadership**

Great leaders rarely rely solely on their formal authority. They use it when they must, but they also persuade, negotiate, deal, nag and charm.... Arguably, the ability to lead without formal authority becomes even more important when we work beyond departmental and institutional boundaries. Based on studies of outstanding leaders, this session will try to map the skills and attributes of effective influencers. It produces a reassuringly humane and down to earth model of leadership. It will be especially relevant to middle and system leaders.



**JAY ALTMAN,** CEO, FirstLine Schools

**School leadership strategies for improving schools**

This session will offer different perspectives on school improvement strategies and associated leadership skills. What are helpful skills and mindsets for leaders turning around failing schools? Are these different for leaders starting up a new school? Are there essential skills that all leaders must have or can leaders leverage their individual strengths and build a complementary team? Participants will actively workshop a framework built around the skills and mindsets that make up culture leadership, instructional leadership and general leadership and management.

SOME OF OUR SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



Sir Ken Robinson



Erica Ariel Fox



Steve Munby



Pak Tee Ng



Baroness Susan Greenfield



Bill Strickland



**ANDY BUCK,** Managing Director, Leadership Matters

**Seven habits of highly effective schools**

Following his successful masterclass last year, Andy's session this year is inspired by Stephen Covey's 'The 7 habits of highly effective people'. He will introduce seven key approaches that the evidence suggests have a positive impact on pupil outcomes, including: the evidence behind Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory, Robin Alexander's work on dialogic teaching; Bergmann and Sams ideas on the flipped classroom; Viviane Robinson's leadership meta-analysis; and finally, how the best schools manage change for sustainable impact.



**KEVAN COLLINS,** Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation

**Harnessing evidence to secure professional trust**

'Trust arrives on foot and departs on horseback' Building and securing trust sits at the heart of everything we want to achieve as teachers and school leaders. We will examine the latest findings from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) working with over 700,000 children schools in England. Considering international and English findings we will re-visit our models of teaching and school improvement to consider how evidence can inform practice and help to improve pupil outcomes and establish new levels of professional trust and knowledge

Limited delegate places are available on a first come first served basis. For more information and to book your place visit: [www.inspiringleadership.org](http://www.inspiringleadership.org)

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## NEWS

## NAHT GETS ITS PRIORITIES IN ORDER

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

National free school meal data sharing, real-terms increases in education funding, money for mental health support and reviews of "excessive" testing will all be campaign issues for the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) in the coming months.

The union's annual conference in Liverpool last weekend passed 30 motions that will shape policy over the next year, which could be critical for the union as it strives to get its voice heard by a new government.

A motion on mental health addressed the "fundamental role that mental health plays in children's success and that poor mental health is a significant barrier to learning", and called on the government to increase the funding to raise awareness and to support children and young people with mental health issues.

Proposing the motion, Julie Simpson, headteacher of St Martin's C of E primary school in Liskeard, Cornwall, reminded delegates that it was only a year ago that the conference had paid tribute to Ann Maguire, a teacher stabbed to death by a pupil in her Leeds secondary school.

She also drew a link between excessive testing and damage to children's mental and emotional wellbeing, and said the government's obsession with levels and grades was a "national scandal".

"We need to have the training and support to recognise poor mental health in children at an early age to prevent escalation to a serious mental health condition."

The frequency of testing was a running theme across several motions, with one declaring that the amount of national testing given to primary children was "excessive and...not good for them". The motion called on the NAHT executive to commission a study into the effects of testing on this age group.

Another motion called for the NAHT's "vigorous" opposition to "any assessment system that is harmful to children" while another from the SEND committee called on the Department for Education to "urgently" review its approach to national benchmarking and assessment for pupils working significantly below national norms.



Russell Hobby

The association will also spend the next year campaigning for a national funding formula and a real-term increases to education funding to avoid a "budget crisis" in schools.

Conference overwhelmingly passed the motion relating to finances after Plymouth branch life member Vince Burke warned funding increases were needed to cover rising costs. "If the current situation continues, with income frozen and outgoings rising, it will mean the bankruptcy of our schools."

A motion calling for a "national system of data sharing" for information on free school meal entitlement passed after Nicky Gillhespy, business manager of Cheam Fields Primary School in Surrey, and Alan Doyle, business manager at Mount Primary School in Wirral, spoke about the negative impact on pupil premium funding when parents failed to register for meals.

Debate about Ofsted led to motions calling on the association to resist moves to sack headteachers solely based on the outcomes of inspections and for any future system to give

"greater acknowledgement in its judgment of leadership to strategic, long-term planning and ingenuity".

Proposing a motion that lamented the "continuing attempts by the political parties to use testing of grammar and maths at key stage 2 as a political football", Lancashire branch member Tony Roberts described the "industrial scale" of political meddling under the coalition government.

"We have had change, meddling or idiosyncratic intervention by secretaries of state for decades, but not on the industrial scale of the past five years, largely led by Michael Gove and his rosy vision of the 1950s grammar school curriculum."

In the wake of the motions, the NAHT will also campaign to have disqualification by association legislation repealed, to remedy the "dire situation" of pay for school leaders and for a database of governors barred from service.

Go to [www.schoolsweek.co.uk](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk) for a full list of conference motions.

## EXCELLENCE IS INDIVIDUAL

"An atomised education system, where schools are the only agents, competing in a market of provision is not a healthy system. It is not a realistic vision. Schools succeed when they play to their strengths in a well-balanced system. I strongly believe in a school-led system. We have been doing just that. But I do not believe in a schools-only system.

This does not mean centralised prescription. It is possible to combine high levels of autonomy within wider structures of support and co-ordination.

Yet the promise of autonomy and freedom feels unfulfilled. It is not just poverty that limits schools but bureaucracy and heavy handed measurement too.

It is hard to make the most of curriculum freedom when so much of what you do is constrained by the exam syllabus. It is hard to develop new approaches to teaching when the inspection team has its own ideas. It is hard to plot a long-term course when the measures change every year.

Looking back on the past five years I think we will find that, far from delegating power and authority to school leaders, the Secretary of State has in fact delegated power to the Chief Inspector of Schools.

Schools must now spend too long guessing what the inspector wants instead of thinking about what their pupils need.

I have come to feel that one of the most pernicious aspects of our inspection regime is the "outstanding" grade.

We have handed the definition of excellence to our regulator rather than owning it as profession.

Excellence – to which all schools should aspire – is individual and subjective. It is not captured by a checklist or framework. The outstanding grade tames the mavericks. When it underpins so many other opportunities and initiatives it introduces a dangerous fragility to the system."

Russell Hobby,  
NAHT general secretary

## SCHOOLS ARE THE A&amp;E DEPARTMENTS OF COMMUNITIES

"Family life – as we know in this room – has never been under more threat than it is today.

Public services slashed, two incomes not enough to make ends meet, children losing out as life gets in the way.

And where do families turn when times are tough? They turn to us.

These days we're not just educating children, we're supporting mums and dads and putting neighbourhoods back together.

Schools are the A&E departments of communities. We're the first and last point of contact for families.

What use is a vague promise to protect

education spending when the other sources of support for families are disappearing or have already gone?

The school is the centre of the community, never has that been more true than today.

The school is the family that every family needs and values, and we take on that burden just as keenly as we do with our own flesh and blood.

For many years, my school, Water Hall Primary, was labelled a failing school.

Our story was one of repeated intervention and year upon year of doing more of the same.

Our story was being written for us by bullying and inept people from the DfE and the local

authority. Our story was one that you will all recognise, I know.

So we decided we weren't going to be controlled by the story anymore and that we needed to take charge of it.

We focused on values.



We embedded those values in the environment and the curriculum. Vulnerable children re-engaged with their learning. Damaged families re-engaged with the school.

We employed new teachers and retained the ones who shared our values, putting the interests, the welfare and the learning of the children above all else.

We created our own family at school."

Tony Draper,  
NAHT president



# DfE lets us look at register of board members' interest

ANN MCGAURAN  
@ANNMCGAURAN

The Department for Education's register of board members' interests is not available on its website and is more than a year out of date.

During an investigation regarding donations to the election campaigns of education ministers, *Schools Week* asked to see the register of interests the DfE is legally required to hold that describe any paid-for employment or unremunerated interests of DfE board members.

*Schools Week* was told that the register was only available for viewing by appointment at the Department for Education offices in Westminster – and a reporter had to copy its contents by hand.

The initial investigation into campaign funds revealed that more than £15,000 of donations were made by lead non-executive director of the DfE Paul Marshall to Yeovil Liberal Democrat's 2015 election campaigns. Yeovil has been the Liberal Democrat seat of schools minister David Law. Mr Marshall is also chair of trustees for academy sponsor Ark.

Appointment complete, our viewing of the register last week revealed that it had not been updated since April 2014. It therefore did not include four board members who had joined since that date.

These members are: director general of children's services and departmental strategy

Paul Kissack, director human resources Simon Fryer, non-executive Marion Plant and chief scientific adviser Tim Leunig.

While the £15,000 donations from Mr Marshall were declared by Mr Laws in the 2014/15 register of MPs' financial interests in

August last year and February this year, they were not entered in the DfE register of interests as the donation was made after the register's creation.

Other notable interests include director of strategy Tom Shinner's post as a Royal Navy Reserve Lieutenant, and Theodore Agnew and David Meller's connections to Policy Exchange - the think tank founded by Michael Gove.

*Schools Week* was originally told by the holder of official access to the document that

the information could be sent as a pdf but this option was later withdrawn.

The document – written on three sheets of A4 paper – was eventually viewed in the DfE's head office, Sanctuary Buildings, in Westminster.

It is unclear why the information could not be sent electronically.

A version of the document has now been uploaded to [www.schoolsweek.co.uk](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk).

## THE REGISTER

Declarations of interest by DfE Board Members as at April 2014:

**Chris Wormald – Permanent Secretary**

Nil return

**Tom Jeffery – former director general of children, young people and families directorate**

Family member interests: wife is assistant director of children's services, East Sussex County Council

**Andrew McCully – director general for schools infrastructure and funding**

Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: Skillforce, trustee

**Shona Dunn – director general, education standards**

Nil return

**Simon Judge – director, finance and commercial**

Family member interests: sister (Emma Judge) involved in project How to Thrive, supporting resilience in Herfordshire school, which received £600,000 funding via endowment originally funded by DfE, in 2012.

**Janette Durbin – former director, human resources**

Nil return.

**Tom Shinner – director of strategy**

Other remunerated employment: Royal Navy Reserve Lieutenant.

Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: Governor (member and director), Greenwich Free School.

**Peter Lauener – chief executive Education Funding Agency**

Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: Educators International, trustee.

**Paul Marshall – lead non-executive board member**

Remunerated directorships: Marshall Wace Asset Management Ltd, MWAM UK Ltd, MWAM NA Ltd, Marshall Wace LLP – Partner.

Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: Absolute Return for Kids (ARK)

Education, director; Eureka Charitable Trust, trustee; Sequoia Trust, trustee; CentreForum, trustee.

**Jim O'Neill – non-executive board member**

Remunerated directorships: paid speaker, organised by Chartwell Partners Miscellaneous and unremunerated directorships: Shine, Sutton Trust, Teach for All, Piggybank Ltd.

**David Meller – non-executive board member**

Remunerated directorships: Julius Meller, CS Holdings Miscellaneous and unremunerated directorships: The Hertswood Academy, the Harefield Academy, The Bushey Academy, Elstree UTC, Watford UTC. Presidents Club, trustee; Greenhouse, trustee; The Meller Educational Trust, director; Original Giving, non-executive director; Policy Exchange, trustee; Access Inspiration, trustee; chair Grenada Schools Ltd, Conservative Friends of Israel Ltd, The Tel Aviv University Trust, The British Friends of the Jaffa Institute, National Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network.

**Theodore Agnew – former non-executive board member**

Remunerated directorships: Burnley Group Partnership, partner; Somerton Capital LLP, partner; Flovate Ltd, director; Accident and Credit Services Ltd, director; RQ Capital Ltd, director.

Miscellaneous and unremunerated directorships: Policy Exchange, trustee; Inspiration Trust, academy sponsor.

**Dame Sue John – former non-executive board member**

Remunerated directorships: Lampton School Academy Trust, headteacher (three days a week); Challenge Partnership, Engine of Improvement head (one day a week)

Miscellaneous and unremunerated directorships: London Leadership Strategy, director; Brilliant Club, chair of trustees; Future Leaders (project company board), trustee; Teaching Leaders, trustee; Royal Shakespeare Education Advisory Group, member.

# FREE SCHOOL BLAMES EFA FOR EARLY CLOSURE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

More than 20 pupils face moving schools halfway through their GCSE studies after a free school in Stockport announced its closure is moving forward by a year.

Stockport Technical School, a 14 to 19 free school sponsored by Stockport College that opened in an office block in September 2013, announced in March that it would close in 2016, citing disappointing recruitment levels caused by the lack of a permanent building.

But principal Philippa Ollerhead this week confirmed that the school would now close at the end of 2014/15, forcing 22 year 10 pupils to transfer to other secondary schools to complete their GCSEs and other qualifications.

Ms Ollerhead (pictured) said that the failure of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to find the school a home for its final year had sparked the decision to close early.

"It's not unusual for a free school to open without a permanent building, but our frustration has been that they have not been able to find us a permanent building in two years, and it has had an impact on recruitment.

"It is simple to understand why no one would want to send their child to a school without a permanent building, but bureaucracy means it has been two years, and it's too long to wait."



Wellington House, Stockport, the free school's temporary site

Ms Ollerhead said that while the former Hillcrest Grammar School site in Stockport was identified as a potential base, low pupil numbers meant the large building was "not a financially viable option".

When asked whether the EFA was entirely to blame, she said: "It's not fair for me to say, but obviously Stockport College is our sponsor and they have had a myriad of problems themselves. That hasn't helped, but they have done the best they can."

Ms Ollerhead said the school was working closely with Stockport Council and secondary headteachers in the town to find places for the 22 displaced pupils, with an option for those studying vocational courses to study at

Stockport College on day releases.

She said the situation was a "source of disappointment", adding: "We have worked incredibly hard as a school. We have done all the right things. This is not the doing of anybody employed by the school."

The news comes after a difficult 18 months for the school's sponsor, Stockport College, which was graded as inadequate by Ofsted in October 2013 and subsequently warned that it was not improving quickly enough.

Simon Andrews, the college's third principal since January 2014, said he was "very much aware of the college's chequered past" and said it was "making big strides". But in the wake of the closure announcement his



focus was on the "wellbeing and progression of every student".

"We are working proactively with the Stockport Technical School to ensure all students have been placed in local schools.

"Stockport College has not failed in its duty as a sponsor. Issues outside the scope of the college, such as the failure to secure a permanent home for Stockport Technical School and the politics of local secondary schools, have contributed to the situation."

The Department for Education said that a permanent location was found for the school in July 2014 with the approval of the principal and the Trust, but the Trust made a decision not to proceed.

The DfE are now working with the council to ensure alternative school places are found for all pupils to aid a smooth transition.



## NEWS



## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinerney | [laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk)

Election days are weird for schools. If you're closed for the day, you sit at home a bit out of sorts, thinking that the shops must inevitably be on bank holiday opening hours. If you're in school with a polling station you spend the whole day shushing children and praying that it doesn't rain so you can eat butties on the playground (given that the hall is out of order). And if, like most secondary teachers, you're in school and the children are allowed to speak, you'll spend the day being relentlessly asked about your voting

intentions as you dance around the issue to avoid arcane penalties that you're sure are laid down in some circular or other about opinions that teachers can or cannot have about such things.

All that's already enough, and then there's the problem of the night time. Do you stay up and watch, knowing that you must marshal year 3's Friday afternoon PE session which is bad enough even when you're not sleep-deprived, or do you do the sensible thing and miss out on a little piece of history the story of which might just be

perfect for next week's assembly?

On top of all that there's the aching wait to find out who will be the next education secretary. "Just as long as it's not Gove," said more head teachers than I cared to count at NAHT's annual conference last weekend. Yet others have said they miss his passion and they fear education will be overlooked in the next government.

In some respects, a hands-off politician might not be a bad thing. With a looming teacher shortage, tightening school budgets, and the GCSE, A level and

curriculum reforms still to bed in, whoever is the next secretary of state is going to need more than passion. An iron stomach and a steady hand is definitely preferred.

Still, whoever the newbie is, and whatever their style, the brilliant thing about young people is that they will carry on as they were – learning, growing, improving. Education secretaries can change laws and budgets but despite decades of meddling they've yet to stop young people's growth. There's a lesson in that for us all.

## MEET THE TEAM

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# EXPERTS: 'If I were education secretary (again)...'



## DAVID BLUNKETT

Education secretary 1997-2001

### "I would want to put the glue back"

**M**oney is not the sole salvation in achieving quality education for all children. However, cutting the money available can have a devastating impact on those schools that have been making the most progress, reaching out and engaging with families and for whom the pupil premium was a lifeline at a time of retrenchment.

That is why I would insist that not only schools but the whole of the education system retain funding in real terms at the present

level, reversing the freeze for two-thirds of schools and most colleges and local authorities from April of this year.

I would resist a 10 per cent cut in real terms over the coming parliament and seek to reverse the 25 per cent reduction in funding for the foundation stage. The early years are crucial to providing that foundation on which world-class leadership and excellent teaching can be built – hence the need to restore a semblance of what was the original Sure Start

local programmes, particularly in the most deprived parts of the country. This could possibly be done by allowing local authorities to raise, from local taxation, an earmarked amount specifically for early years.

I would, as outlined in my paper of summer 2014, want to put the glue back into the system. We should encourage schools to partner with one another to learn and share best practices, by demonstrating how schools behave towards one another and their local communities. We need to lead by example.

I would, therefore, initiate the posts of independent director of school standards (DSS) across the country. Each DSS would have a remit relevant to all schools, whatever their status, in a light-touch approach with "intervention in inverse proportion to success".

Schools would be encouraged to continue taking responsibility for their own success or failure, controlling their own destiny, experimentation and innovation. However, there would be common requirements on key aspects.

A light-touch basic curriculum would apply to all schools, ensuring that the values we espouse are inculcated. Citizenship education would be a benchmark for Ofsted in whether a school received a good or an outstanding designation.

Given the enormous drop in teacher training take-up at secondary level, teachers must be kept motivated by extending bursaries, providing other incentives and stepping up high-quality continuing professional development and progression.

I would argue that the whole of the education, skills and lifelong learning agenda should be under one secretary of state and, therefore, one department: a department that offered support rather than overbearing control from the centre and that valued a broad-based education over ideology and dogma.

**David Blunkett is author of *The Blunkett Tapes: My Life in the Bear Pit* (Bloomsbury, 2006)**

**S**econdary schools have become an increasingly diverse and rather chaotic gathering. It seems to be held together (more or less) by Ofsted and the examination system, with huge emphasis on league tables and exam grades to the detriment of creativity and imagination. The result is the imposing of great stress on youngsters in the later secondary years.

Maintained education has ceased to be enjoyable beyond primary school. I would address the marginalisation of local government in education – good local education authorities had much to contribute, not least the support and advice of teacher colleagues. In addition I would seek to build bridges between the profession and the Department for Education: they are currently pretty strained, and the reliance



## BARONESS WILLIAMS OF CROSBY

Education secretary, 1976-1979

### "I would make sense of secondary schools"

on headteachers rather than a team of senior teachers narrows the concept of accountability.

There also seem to be wide differences in educational standards among academy chains as well as among community schools – indeed, there is not much awareness of the school's relation to the community it belongs to. That would also need to be addressed. There would be much to do, but few jobs in government are as important, or as rewarding, as education secretary: it is a role that requires energy, imagination, and a commitment to improving the life chances of all our children, regardless of background.

**Shirley Williams is author of *Climbing the Bookshelves* (Virago, 2009)**



## LORD BAKER OF DORKING

Education secretary 1986-89

### "I would elevate the status of technical education"

**I**would secure all-party support to launch a ten-year programme to spread technical education throughout the whole education system.

One of the biggest challenges for the next government is to fill the skills gap: by 2020 we will need 830,000 STEM graduates and 450,000 technicians and engineers at levels

3 and 4. The institutions in our country today will not be able to do that without a fundamental reform.

In 1945 we had 300 technical schools: these were killed by snobbery and buried by the comprehensive movement. A huge mistake that Germany did not make.

The key is that technical education should

start at 14 and continue to 19. We have made a start with university technical colleges (UTCs) – 30 open and 30 preparing to open – that already have 6,700 students, rising to 15,000 next year and, when full, 36,000.

I believe that students can learn by doing as well as studying. The object is to train "intelligent hands", a phrase borrowed from the Industrial Revolution. In UTCs students spend two days a week designing, making and working in teams on projects.

A university and local employers plan and implement the technical curriculum, and come in to help with teaching, passing their practical experience on to the students. The UTC target is to have no young person who is not in education, employment, or training. So far they have met it: no student has joined the ranks of the unemployed on leaving their UTC.

Eighteen months ago we launched career colleges. They follow the same model as UTCs but extend it into non-STEM subjects such as catering, hospitality, creative arts, professional services, health and social care.

Three are now open, as an indication of rapid progress the Bromley Career College in Hospitality, Food and Enterprise launched its

student-led restaurant, BR6, in February. It has 60 students and expects to enrol more than 120 this September.

I would like to see more co-operation between the 4,000 academies, working in clusters of, say, two or three secondary schools alongside a UTC and a career college. This would secure a more suitable education for many students and make significant cost savings.

UTCs and career colleges provide clear pathways of success just as compelling as three A-levels and a university degree. Indeed, over a working lifetime, many technical students will earn as much as their contemporaries who chose the university route.

**Lord Baker is co-founder of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust and author of *14-18: A New Vision for Secondary Education* (Bloomsbury, 2013)**

**Contributions are taken from "If I were Secretary of State for Education", edited by David James and published by Pearson for The Sunday Times/Wellington College Festival of Education, in association with Summerhouse Education.**



## EXPERTS



## CHRIS WEADON

Research associate at Education Datalab

## Would you trust a human to mark your work?

**You might say no to a driverless car or a pilotless plane, but it is time to trust computers to do your marking**

**Q**uestion: A boy climbs slowly to the top of a slide and then slides down. At which point will his kinetic energy be a maximum?

One student wrote as his answer:

*When the speed is greatest – which is at the lowest point in the swing cycle.*

The response was marked as incorrect, and the feedback given to the student was this:

This question is about a child on a slide not a swing.

What is remarkable about this feedback is that a computer generated it.

Computers can mark pretty much anything; from open-ended text responses to algebraic equations. So why do we still expect teachers to mark using a model developed before the first industrial revolution, let alone before the second?

First, computers used to be very bad at marking. Pretty much all you could trust them to mark was multiple-choice questions. A sensible student answers multiple-choice questions in reverse. You check the answers for plausibility before reading the question. You select and verify and discount distractors, and often get the right answer for the wrong reasons. Worse, you may even remember the distractors as the right answers! We certainly wouldn't want technology to drive what is assessed and how it is assessed. The good news is that now you can throw away your multiple-choice tests, with your marking.

Second, computers used to be very bad at giving feedback. Two examples should suffice to put this bad record straight.

Consider this question from the Open University's PMatch system, available as a plug-in for Moodle:

*If the distance between two electrically charged particles is doubled, what happens to the electric force between them?*

And this answer:

*The force is decreased by a factor of four.*

If you were marking, you would probably correct the spelling if you spotted it – unless you were feeling uncharitable, in which case you would simply put an angry red cross by it. Using PMatch, the infinitely patient computer notifies the student politely that he or she has made a spelling mistake and asks him or her to have another go before submitting an answer. So, not only are your students

getting feedback, they are practising the correct spelling. In an era when mathematical and scientific literacy are key, such small improvements in performance could be very beneficial.

The same process of trial, error, feedback and correction is available from the open-source computer-aided mathematics assessment system Stack, developed for Moodle by Chris Sangwin at Loughborough University. Stack not only knows that the derivative of your answer should be equal to the expression that you were asked to

**It will make teachers more acute observers of the kinds of mistakes students make**

integrate, but also shows you what the derivative of your (wrong) answer would be. Not many maths teachers would go that far!

You are told if you forget your constant of integration, and, in case you think this could lead to sloppiness, you can penalise a student for his or her errant constant while still allowing some credit for finally supplying it.

Finally, there is a perception that auto-marking will make teachers less aware of the mistakes their learners are making, when quite the reverse is true. To set up and maintain auto-marking systems you need a deep understanding of formative processes, of how and why students make mistakes. Interaction with auto-marking systems will make teachers more acute observers of the kinds of mistakes that students make, which can only improve their teaching.

So let's not pretend we are climbing into driverless cars or pilotless planes with auto-marking. The teacher is very much present in auto-marking systems, watching the dials, ready to take over and guide us in to a safe landing.

**Chris Weadon is founder of No More Marking Ltd, a company that uses comparative judgment to assess work more accurately than traditional marking techniques**



## SHONA CHRICTON

Speech and language therapist and professional adviser to The Communication Trust

## All talk and lots of action

**Supporting all pupils to develop their speech, language and communication skills is everybody's responsibility and can be a part of every lesson**

**S**peech, language and communication needs, or SLCN, is the most common special educational need within state-funded primary schools. But, while the identification of SLCN has increased by about 70 per cent in recent years, many pupils – particularly at secondary school – are still not identified at all.

Too often pupils with SLCN are missed or their needs are misinterpreted as a behaviour difficulty, a problem with learning, or an emotional, social or mental health need.

Supporting children and young people to develop speech, language and communication skills is essential.

It's a central life skill at the core of business and society yet, in the UK, more than one million young people – that's two to three in every classroom – have some form of long-term and persistent SLCN that can affect them early, severely and for life.

Spoken language impacts on young people's attainment, behaviour, social skills and emotional development because these skills allow pupils to learn, understand rules and consequences, and to understand their own and other people's emotions.

Although there is much focus on SLCN at primary school, a significant number of secondary pupils are being misidentified as having some other kind of SEN or no need at all. Teachers often report a lack of resources to support this.

A transition report by the Better Communication Research Programme highlighted that despite 3 per cent of seven year olds in year 2 being identified with SLCN as a primary need, by year 11 this reduced to just 0.6 per cent.

The Communication Trust therefore has recently launched a secondary progression tool to help schools check if pupils are on track with expected levels around speech, language and communication for their age.

Teachers have also expressed a lack of confidence in knowing how to support children and young people with SLCN. With this in mind, how can you ensure that you're supporting your pupils' development in the right way?

First, think about it as part of everyday planning. Language and communication are a part of every lesson.

When planning, it can be helpful to ask:

am I introducing new vocabulary and what's the best way to teach it? What strategies can I use in the lesson to develop pupils' spoken language skills? How can I plan-in time and space that pupils may need to process and understand new information that they're presented with?

Also, think about your classroom talk. How much is involved? What's the balance between teacher talk and pupil talk? Is there time and space for pupil-pupil interaction and small group work, as well as adult-pupil interaction?

You also need to think about your own actions. The way you model speech, language and communication skills will make a difference to the children you teach.

**Too often pupils with SLCN are missed or their needs are misinterpreted**

So, think about how you are modelling communication to your class. Do you show them how to use the language for different things? Different communication skills are needed when you negotiate, debate, problem solve, form an argument, share an opinion, seek clarification, work together, plan, evaluate...

If your school isn't already involved, consider taking part in No Pens Day Wednesday for the way it focuses everyone in your school to think solely about the importance of spoken language. Eighty per cent of the schools that took part last year reported that the event successfully raised awareness of SLCN.

Supporting speech, language and communication doesn't necessarily mean doing something different, it can just mean bringing it to the forefront and considering its importance in every classroom, school and setting.

**The Communication Trust is a consortium of more than 50 not-for-profit organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication.**  
[www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)  
**For more information on No Pens Day Wednesday, go to: [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/no-pens-day-wednesday/](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/projects/no-pens-day-wednesday/)**



## EXPERT



## COLIN RICHARDS

Chair of governors of a Cumbrian secondary school and a national leader of governance

## GOVERNORS' CORNER

## Small is not always beautiful

**One governing body is challenging "statutory guidance" on governing body size. It wants to reflect its large and diverse community so, come September, there will be 12 co-opted governors on board...**

As governors of a community school proud of its status as a strategic resource for the local authority, we have just fulfilled our most important single function. No, not to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school, as laid down in section 21(2) of the Education Act 2002, though it will contribute to that end. Nor is it directly about what the Department for Education (DfE) sees as our core strategic functions of "strategic direction", "holding the headteacher to account" or "overseeing the financial performance of the school",

though it will impact on all of these.

What has happened, is that we have just appointed a new headteacher for our community's school. Not the local

**We have a very good reason for having a large governing body**

authority's school, not the DfE's school, not any academy chain's school – OUR school.

By "we" I mean ALL of us: five community, four local authority, four parent and two staff governors, with seven associate members (two senior students, three senior leadership team members and

two from our partner secondary school). All had a major say in the appointment, though for legal reasons only "full" governors were involved in the final interviews. This full involvement took place before the required reconstitution of our governing body, which takes effect from September.

We are aware of the DfE's requirements for reconstituting the governing body of a community school: a minimum of seven governors including at least two parent governors, one LA governor, the headteacher, one staff governor and an indeterminate number of co-opted governors.

However, the steer provided by the guidance is towards smaller governing bodies rather than larger, and towards restricting the number of co-opted governors. The model presented seems to be predicated on the assumption that schools are businesses, that they produce easily quantifiable outputs and that they should be governed accordingly – on the lines of a chief executive serving a board of directors. We firmly reject that view.

Our practice goes against both the spirit and the letter of the current guidance advocating these smaller streamlined governing bodies that, education minister John Nash believes, need to focus ruthlessly on the core strategic functions and avoid getting distracted by more peripheral matters.

But because our community is diverse and because we value that diversity's influence on our school we don't go along with the recently posited wisdom from

Nash that "smaller governing bodies are likely to be more cohesive and dynamic". We do accept that all governors should have skills and experience but we want to draw on far more than the skills and experience of human resource, project and financial management. We believe strongly in the importance of community engagement but don't accept the DfE's view that "it is not the role of governing bodies to provide this through their membership".

This is in conflict with the government's "statutory guidance", which does not appear to be "guidance" at all. The DfE will tell you that "statutory guidance sets out what schools and local authorities must do to comply with the law".

But it also says: "You should follow the guidance unless you have a very good reason not to."

So we're taking the DfE at its word. We have a very good reason for having a large governing body. Our community has a democratic right to oversee the education provided for its children and, as our community is large and diverse, so should our governing body be.

When our "new" governing body is convened in September it will meet statutory requirements but it will also include 12 co-opted governors to reflect the diversity that we value.

It will support and challenge the headteacher we have just appointed, it will engage with its "core strategic functions" but it will also act as a guardian of the whole community's interest in the education and well-being of our young people.

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ANN COTTON  
ALAIN DE BOTTON  
ANGELA LEE DUCKWORTH  
CAROL DWECK  
SEBASTIAN FAULKS  
+ OVER 200 MORE**

**AC GRAYLING  
BONNIE GREER  
ANDREW KEEN  
PIERS MORGAN  
STELLA RIMMINGTON  
KEN ROBINSON  
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STEPHANIE SHIRLEY  
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Headteacher



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## PROFILE



## KATE DETHRIDGE

ANN MCGAURAN  
@ANNMCGAURAN

**Kate Dethridge, primary head and national leader of education**

**K**ate Dethridge became a dame at the start of this year – but she was nearly the last person to find out.

For starters, the vital letter from the Cabinet Office went to her old house where, luckily, the new resident thought it looked significant enough – it said “important” on the envelope – to pass on to Dame Kate’s husband, Rod.

He, however, left it in his briefcase for two weeks before finally handing it over to her last December. “I thought he said it’s from the tax office and I said ‘If they want any more money...’

“That is my husband! If it had been the other way round I would have opened it. But no!”

Rod, a teacher in the independent sector, was instrumental in her becoming a teacher. The couple met at Durham University where he was in the year above.

He later applied to do a PGCE “to play another year’s university sport”, Kate says, “and because I was living with him and a few other people who were doing PGCEs, I just fell into it. I said I’ll do it for a year or so, because it gives me the chance to decide what I really want to do. I still haven’t decided what I really want to do.”

Open and warm, her abilities as a leader and

“It’s important to remember what it feels like to be a bad learner”

communicator shine through. Where did that strength of character come from? “My mum . . . she was incredibly capable. She worked only in the home. She never had the confidence to get a job out of the home.

“In some ways she was a great influence because I thought as I was growing up I mustn’t be like that. I’ve got to be a little more confident and have a go at doing things. I have a brother, Mike, who is 12 years older than me. He was the first of our family to go off to university and he gave me the aspiration.”

She was incredibly homesick for her Essex home during her first term at university. “I had a lot of letters from him saying you have to get on with it because it’s important and it will make a difference.”

She put in to transfer to a place at King’s in London. “I

was a real homebird – so what possessed me to think that Durham was a good idea? But it was the making of me, without a doubt.” She stayed put.

Her father had been a pilot in the Second World War. “He was someone who was also quite aspirational. We all had a great work ethic from mum and dad.”

The youngest of four, she says she had a “fairly sheltered upbringing”. She went to an all-girls’ school, which she loved. “When you are surrounded by nuns who do everything, it gives you a fabulous vision of what women are capable of.”

She says she “wasn’t naturally clever” but always worked hard. “I was very organised and I wanted to be in control of things.” When she got to the sixth form, one teacher, Mr Collett, stood out. “He was a classics teacher and I really liked his lessons. He was a good bloke with a sense of humour.”

There have been no regrets about that move into teaching. She was given a fellowship from the National College of School Leaders in 2011, and part of that funded a leadership course. She opted to do hers at the London Business School.

“I was surrounded by amazing industrialists and people who ran oilfields in Russia – all sorts of interesting people, including an arms dealer.

“Working with them I suddenly thought that I am the luckiest person in the world. You are all chasing satisfaction though money and profit, and I’ve got this most amazing job. So many of them were slightly envious of my levels of satisfaction.

“Although I’d always thought I kind of sleepwalked into



## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

### What was your favourite childhood toy?

A Pelham puppet of Ermintrude, the Magic Roundabout cow. I've still got it.

### Who were or are your mentors, and why?

My husband Rod. Over the past 33 years he's been the most extraordinary support, offering encouragement, advice and admonishment. I couldn't have achieved anything without him. Also Roy Blatchford, an HMI who has helped me to challenge long-held orthodoxies and believe that things can and will get better for children. And Jenny Hill, my dear friend and deputy head for 17 years. She got me through some incredibly tough times and can make me laugh like almost no one else can.

### What are the two best pieces of advice you'd pass on?

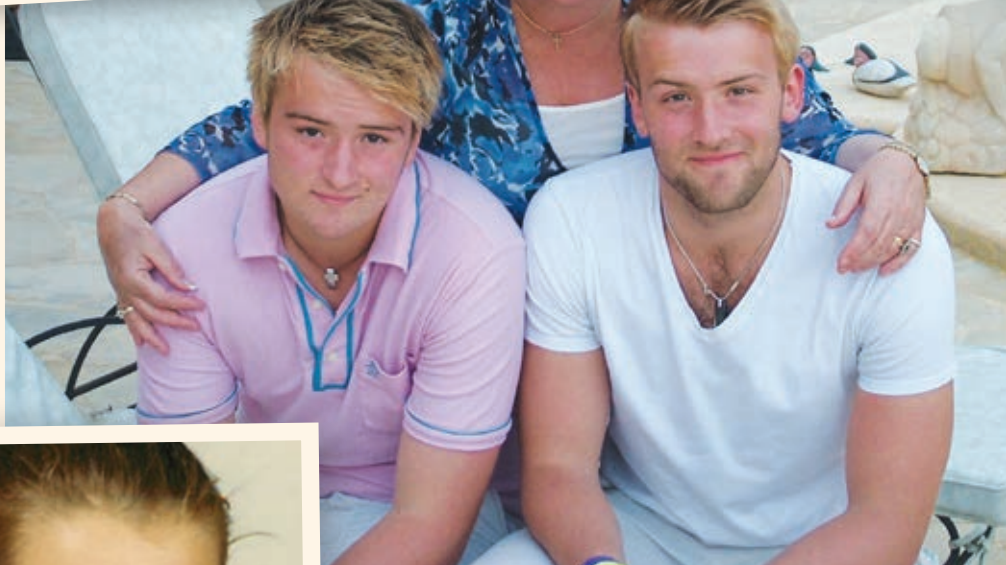
Don't ever forget that the children are what's important. We are servants of the community. Ask yourself what decision you would make if you weren't scared.

### What are the first things you would save from a fire (after the people, of course)?

Family photos and letters from my parents who are sadly no longer with me. They gave me the most perfect childhood and really valued education because they saw it as the route to improving life chances. It's no coincidence that three out of four of their children went into education.

### How would you spend an ideal day?

With my family in the most beautiful place in the world, Aghada in Cork, Ireland, walking on unspoilt beaches – then meeting relatives for a catch-up over a cuppa.



Clockwise from top:  
With Rod during university days  
Kate with sons Will (left) and Tom  
Kate at primary school

teaching, I don't think it was as simple as that. There was something that attracted me into working with people and influencing them.

"I came away from that course thinking I was so lucky. I haven't got a new Mercedes every year, but I'm much more content than any of the people I met."

Which role has she enjoyed the most? She says it would have to be her current one at Churchend School, a primary academy in Reading, "because I've got such an emotional attachment to it".

She says that if she accepted that she had any great talent, it would be for picking good staff. "Of course if you do that then the job becomes so much easier."

Churchend has high aspirations for the children academically. "People here recognise that education is a great door to better things. We recognise we have a responsibility to help children find things they are really good at and find things they are going to have a passion for, hopefully for the rest of their lives."

She strongly believes that there has to be a curriculum that appeals to everyone. "My former deputy head and I went to a regional question time and she was petrified of being asked something. There are children who feel that every lesson of every day. It's so important we remember what it feels like to be a bad learner or an under-confident learner. It's about how we can adapt the curriculum to support those children."

Churchend, judged outstanding by Ofsted, is designated

as a teaching school. "We act as the hub. It's about offering expertise and support. For example, we will talk to other schools locally, ask them what sort of staff development they would like and we will organise and run that for them."

As a member of Ofsted's headteacher reference group, she feeds in views from staff and highlight issues or concerns. She welcomes the move to bring inspection in-house. "They have asked people to apply to become inspectors again and I understand the bar is quite high to ensure the right high calibre.

"They are going to be looked after more closely now by Ofsted and I think the new framework, certainly around the inspection of good schools, sounds quite exciting because it is going to be more of a partnership. Which is what we all want really."

With so many roles, how does she find time to relax? "I see lots of the children." Tom is 23 and working in London and Will is 20 and studying biology at university. The family has a place in Ireland, too, and "we do a bit of travelling and I love cooking".

It's clear she relishes all her jobs, within and outside Churchend. "It's a real privilege to be part of something bigger than one's own school. I meet lots of excellent practitioners.

"But last week I taught a science lesson for someone and I got as much excitement out of that as of going to an Ofsted meeting. No two days are ever the same. You could never say you are bored in a school."

## Curriculum Vitae

### Education

1967-1974 St Joseph's primary school, Upminster, Essex

1974-1981 Brentwood Ursuline Convent, Essex

1981-1985 Durham University, Trevelyan College, BA Hons (geography); PGCE

### Employment

1985-1986 Ardleigh Green Infants School, Hornchurch, Essex – class teacher

1986-1988 Basildon Primary School, Berkshire – class teacher

1988-1998 Spurcroft Primary School, Thatcham, Berkshire – head of key stage 1/head of key stage 2/ deputy head

1998-present Churchend School, Reading, Berkshire – head

### Other roles

2010-current National Education Trust associate director

2012-current Member of Ofsted's headteacher reference group

2012-current Vice chair of the bureaucracy reference group at the Department for Education

2014-current Chair of the DfE panel writing new standards for teaching assistants

2014-current Member of the north London and south central regional schools commissioners' headteacher boards

2014 Made a Dame in the New Year's honours list for services to education.



## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit  
[www.schoolswEEK.co.uk/reviews](http://www.schoolswEEK.co.uk/reviews)



Our reviewer of the week is  
**Andrew Old**, teacher and blogger  
[@goldandrewuk](https://twitter.com/goldandrewuk)

### Do you want a learning revolution?

By [@greg\\_ashman](https://twitter.com/greg_ashman)

A teacher reflects on the times he has encountered attempts to revolutionise teaching and learning by removing the walls of the classroom. The first he recalls from his own childhood, and the last from a recent newspaper story. The same sequence of events happens every time. He explains why it doesn't work and how the walls always go back up again – and asks why people keep trying.

### Can Character Be Taught?

By [@katie\\_s\\_ashford](https://twitter.com/katie_s_ashford)

I have to declare an interest in this one; I am the (unpaid) editor of the Labour Teachers website where this appears. This post grasps with the latest craze among politicians: character education. The author argues that while schools cannot avoid contributing to the formation of their students' characters, much of what passes for good character only reflects good habits. She suggests that schools can, and should, teach good habits through their discipline systems. Punishments can be more useful than teaching in this respect.

### Progress

By [@MrHistoire](https://twitter.com/MrHistoire)

Toby French, a history teacher, describes a recent job interview. Having taught a lesson about the Arab-Israeli conflict to an unfamiliar class of year 10s, he is asked how he knows the students he's taught for 25 minutes have made progress. Bravely, he admits that for all the positive things he could say about his lesson, he does not believe that anybody can demonstrate genuine progress, rather than observing performance, in such a short time with an

unfamiliar class. Read the post to find out if his audacity is rewarded.

### In Praise of Prep Time

By [@AnthonyRadice1](https://twitter.com/AnthonyRadice1)

An English teacher, who has in the past worked at a boarding school, describes the practice of prep time. He explains how he has seen it turn into a period of online chat rather than silent study. "If such silent periods are firmly established, we can also help our pupils to develop the good habit of getting on with the work they have been set promptly, not leaving it too late on the night before it is due. And perhaps, even more importantly, we can establish the principle of finishing work at work, so that there is time to spend with family in the evening: a healthy work-life balance."

### Everything comes naturally

By [Quirkyteacher](https://twitter.com/Quirkyteacher)

A primary teacher argues that, particularly in primary schools, the extent to which it is assumed that children can be left to learn naturally is over-estimated. The teaching of basic skills and the expectation of self-control are both neglected under the mistaken belief that children will naturally acquire the relevant capacities as they get older. The author contrasts this with how other cultures directly guide children to develop adult dispositions. "I have always wondered why, in the West, we think it is natural to have physically mature humans with the brains of children."

### Interview Questions

By [@readwritereach](https://twitter.com/readwritereach)

Another tale of an interview, this time by a teacher recalling the interrogation when applying for a PGCE place some years ago. The interviewer did not hesitate to ask difficult questions. However, the account of how they imitated a defiant 15-year-old boy, right down to the swearing, makes the interview sound terrifying.

### The fetish of marking

By [@LearningSpy](https://twitter.com/LearningSpy)

In his latest bout of iconoclasm, consultant and writer, David Didau challenges the rituals required by marking policies in this country. Do they all actually serve a clear purpose that justifies the effort? Do they value classroom performance over actual learning? "Teachers probably do need to mark some work, if only so they understand the process of assessment, but I don't think the process needs to be nearly so onerous or widespread. Marking is only a proxy for what we actually want."

## BOOK REVIEW

### Educating the More Able Student: what works and why

**Authors:** Martin Stephen and Ian Warwick

**Publisher:** Sage Publications

**ISBN-10:** 1473907950

**ISBN-13:** 978-1473907959

**Reviewers:** Brin Best and Sophie Craven, co-authors of *Gifted & Talented Coordinator's Handbook* (Optimus Publishing)



Over the past two decades UK governments have sought to address the needs of more able pupils through a range of national programmes that have cost tens of millions of pounds. However, these efforts have not been systematic or far reaching enough and, as a consequence, more able pupils are still being sold short in schools.

Former independent school head Martin Stephen and gifted and talented specialist Ian Warwick are potentially well placed to address this crisis, and their book aims to showcase good practice around the world. Although it is aimed at a very wide audience – including academics and policymakers – its primary audience appears to be teachers.

There are four main sections. Following three chapters setting out the big picture and their methodology (the authors essentially have included a range of case studies as examples of best practice), the bulk of the book is made up of a further 13 chapters of case studies under the headings of "Techniques" and "Countries", though these end up as a rather confusing mix of the two. Nevertheless, there are numerous interesting and illuminating examples for readers at every level, with many important lessons for UK educators. The book ends with three synoptic chapters organised under the umbrella of "Future directions".

The presentation style falls half-way between a guide for teachers and an academic review. However, there is little in the way of down-to-earth advice for teachers in the form of checklists, do's and don'ts, tables and other tools to help make step changes in classroom practice. Instead, any teachers reading the case studies are largely left to interpret the findings for themselves, something that most simply do not have time to do.

On the other hand, the lack of consistent referencing in the text for the authors' assertions is frustrating and likely to prove especially taxing for academics. One is often left to wonder whether a statement is backed up by a piece of published research, or if it is simply the personal view of the authors. The bibliography doesn't help much either, as it is rather selective and omits several of the major works in gifted and talented education.

Teachers are likely to be surprised that the authors refuse to deal with the troublesome issues of identification and terminology. It is impossible to break down concerns that provision for more able pupils is elitist without some debate about which pupils fall into the target group, and the language that needs to be used when discussing them.

Further, the authors are in danger of

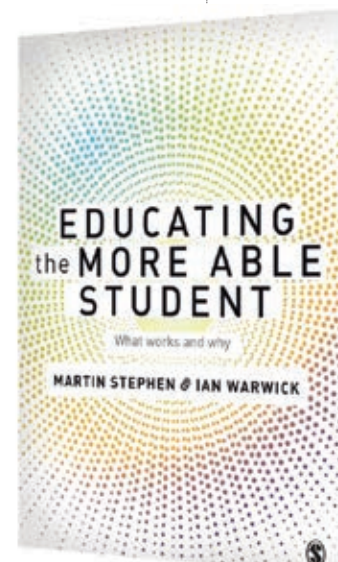
devaluing the validity of their book if they select case studies for inclusion without first ensuring that some form of standardisation has taken place (ie, the "more able pupils" in the Hungarian case study may not be equivalent to those studied elsewhere).

Many teachers will surely also be frustrated that the authors focus exclusively on what they call "academic intelligence" (they never define this). Schools have made great progress with inclusion in recent years, and any programme that overlooks

high ability right across the formal curriculum and beyond it, is likely to be seen by many parents as a step backwards.

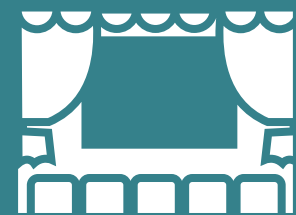
In the concluding chapters, Stephen and Warwick offer their often radical proposals to address the plight of the most able. Unfortunately, these are not particularly realistic and are unlikely to be adopted by many. In places, the tone when referring to more able pupils from non-traditional backgrounds borders on the patronising, something that could easily alienate readers.

Overall, this is an ambitious and thought-provoking book with a well-intentioned remit. However, because it contains so little school-level interpretation of the research presented to help teachers better meet the needs of more able pupils, we are not sure that it will bring about the change that the authors rightly wish for.



**NEXT WEEK:**  
**Transforming Teacher Education**  
By Viv Ellis and Jane Nicholl  
Reviewed by Christine Counsell

# PLAY REVIEW



## The Inspectors Call by Peter Campling Theatro Technis in Camden, London, until May 16

**T**he *Inspectors Call* artfully portrays a school heading towards crisis. Its head, George Smith, is passionate about making his pupils' lives better – but the truth is that he and his urban comprehensive have seen better days.

George has taken up yoga, but he needs more than that to help him handle a ghastly build-up of "challenges". He has sacked his homophobic, creationist science teacher, who then threatened the school with the "wrath of God" at the last appeal.

A year 7 mum wants to discuss the transition curriculum and he keeps being told his maths results need to improve. His list of concerns continues to grow as the academy chains circle and a new free school opens down the road. His personal life is looking pretty shaky too – his wife is off with her new man. Ominously, he thinks he has the support of the governors. Can things get any worse?

Hell, yes. The call from the inspectors that George spends every day anticipating and ruminating about finally comes. The inspectors are on the way...

Written by former headteacher and ASCL council member Peter Campling, it is a funny and entertaining production that has just received a nomination for Best



The Inspectors Call cast

Photograph: Simon Annand

"The play shows the passion and the small glories that light up schools every day"

New Play in the Offies, the Off West End theatre awards. But it is also unflinching as it draws us into the concerns of the head and his staff. They are – albeit with

a range of motivations – doing their best as a community for pupils in a down-at-heel setting. We're given a clear sense of the real difficulties this school faces.

The writer's long career as a teacher and a school leader has left him well placed to convey how easy it is for national politics and shifting policies to mess life up for schools. But he and the talented theatre company, No Notice Productions, successfully present the passion and the small glories that light up schools across the country every day.

The play addresses some fundamental questions, including what is education really for? Have schools, as George says, turned into exam factories with high staff burnout?

Is one student's poor attendance and predicted three GCSEs a failure of the school – or an achievement? Is her beautiful singing – "she'd not sung a note before she came to this school" George says – worth anything to the inspectors?

The actors work beautifully as an ensemble. Joe Cushley as George is brilliant at showing a battered, sometimes cynical but always committed head who really cares about all his pupils. Penelope Diamond is excellent as the director of children's services. Gbolahan Obisesan stands out as Winston. Gary Merry's direction is first rate too.

On this stage the stories are truly personal. Each character is brought vividly to life and every word has the ring of truth. The message is passionately political. Highly recommended.

For tickets go to [www.theinspectorscall.co.uk](http://www.theinspectorscall.co.uk)



# A week in Westminster

Your regular guide to what's going on in central government

## THURSDAY:

It all began when they told us that the legally required register was open for inspection "by appointment at any of the departmental offices".

What register? The one outlining the interests of board members at the Department for Education. Which offices? ANY, apparently.

Week in Westminster was chuffed. We love the DfE. Of course we wanted to go give them a hug and look at their snazzy, un-emailable paperwork.

We were in.

Thus it was that on Thursday Schools Week reporter Ann McGauran was despatched to the DfE's Sanctuary Buildings (see page 7). The 'sanctuary' name is no pun, by the way. The glass atrium is replete with glossy yucca plants and a glass elevator zooms towards the ceiling. Think Willy Wonka, with laptops.

Alas, despite protestations that the register could not be emailed, it did not come on parchment or papyrus. It was presented on three sheets of paper. See page 7 for the full list.

## FRIDAY:

Ofqual published its list of upcoming educational events that staff members are speaking or presenting at. Wherever "nil" is, its residents have a lot of upcoming visits.

Away from Westminster, Labour's Tristram Hunt was giving a speech at the National Association of Head Teachers' conference (see page 6). Looking sleep-deprived during a later interview he managed to say "um" 373 times in 20 minutes. (Ok, we didn't actually count.) To be fair, though, it suggests a busy campaign trail and we do like to see politicians earning their keep so we'll let him off. This time.

## SUNDAY:

On Sunday schools minister Michael Laws hid his tiredness well and told the NAHT conference that no negotiations had yet been held about education "red lines" with the opposition. Education secretary Nicky Morgan fought complaints from her constituency

party who wanted her to remain in Loughborough fighting for votes in her marginal seat (see page 2). She nevertheless made the trek to Liverpool and delivered a characteristically accomplished (if dull) speech.

## TUESDAY:

As news emerged that civil servants were badly behaving elsewhere – with Department for Health civil servants told off for playing ping-pong on ministerial desks, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs taking trips to the zoo – we realised that in the past few weeks we've been passed to the DfE's emergency voicemail service a few times.

Trip to Hogwarts, anyone?

## WEDNESDAY:

On the final day of the 2010-15 coalition government, we decided to check the most recent transparency statistics and, dun dun dunnn, there's good news!

First, Ofsted romps home with 97 per cent of freedom of information requests

responded to punctually. The zanier news is that this is less good than the 99 per cent rate they've been maintaining over the past year.

The DfE also stayed above the 85 per cent timeliness requirement – inching over the line at 87 per cent.

There is one sting in the tale, though. Ofsted may be quick but they're not open. Only one in five requests was granted in full, making the office the harshest on transparency across all government departments – by a long shot. The DfE came in at 66 per cent, a distinctly average score.

Ultimately, Week in Westminster is apathetic about whichever party takes the governmental reins next, and we wish them all luck. But if they could be a bit more transparent we'll love them even more and perhaps we'll even send them a Schools Week mug. The lucky devils.

Here's to the next crowd!

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEK FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



# School Bulletin



The King Edward VI Grammar School team, winners of the CyberCenturion competition

## Cyber enthusiasts win challenge

A team of tech-savvy Essex students have won a cyber-security challenge at Bletchley Park, the war-time intelligence centre used to crack Nazi codes and ciphers.

A group from King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS) headed to the historic site, where Alan Turing cracked the Enigma code, to compete under the watchful eyes of cyber experts in the first CyberCenturion challenge.

Eight teams of 12 to 18-year-old made it to the final, which marked the end of nine months of intense competition.

They all became "cyber-experts" at a fictional video games company "targeted" by rival businesses. Their task was to protect customer data and intellectual property against hackers.

KEGS' engineering coordinator Penny Bunting says the win was a "really proud moment. They took an early lead on the day of the final, but had fallen back later on so it came as a real surprise that they were announced as overall winners."

Visit [cybersecuritychallenge.org.uk/](http://cybersecuritychallenge.org.uk/) to enter CyberCenturion 2016

## Charity's FGM programme expands



Young people in London speak out against FGM

A programme teaching pupils about the dangers of female genital mutilation (FGM) has been rolled out in Manchester and Birmingham.

The free initiative, created by FGM specialist charity, FORWARD, started in London last May and is the first of its kind in UK schools.

Open to both primary and secondary schools, it teaches girls and boys as young as nine about the physical realities of FGM using age-appropriate teaching methods.

A total of 3,963 FGM cases in the UK have been identified since data began to be collected in September 2014, according to the latest figures from the Health and Social

Care Information Centre. Sixty of the cases were girls under 18.

Vanessa Diakides, who runs the programme, says: "It is essential to teach people about FGM from such a young age because it is primary school children who are most at risk. They need to know about the support available to help them and to know what to do if they are concerned about their own health or the health of someone they care about."

The scheme will be expanded to other cities in the future.

Visit [www.forwarduk.org.uk/](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/) or email [vanessa@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:vanessa@forwarduk.org.uk) to book a session

## Young carers and how schools can help

### FEATURED

An awards-based programme offering help to young carers who juggle their school life and caring duties has been launched following a successful pilot.

Open to all schools in England, the Young Carers in Schools scheme offers step-by-step guidance, practical tools and training opportunities for pupils.

It was tested in 16 areas across the country, with at least five schools from within each area chosen to pilot the scheme. Fifteen bronze, silver and gold recognition awards were handed out.

Stockport Academy received a gold award for their work with 14-year-old Shanaida Ahmed.

Shanaida has been a carer for her two siblings and grandmother for as long as she can remember, but is still making "outstanding progress" academically and has a 100 per cent attendance record. She credits her teachers' support with her personal and school life.

The academy's designated safeguarding and child protection officer, Suzanne Fox, says that Shanaida knows that if she ever struggled to keep up with her homework – "not that she has ever missed handing a piece of homework in on time in three years" – that staff would understand and help her to catch up in school.

Led by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, it is hoped the new programme will



Gold award winners from Stockport Academy, Students Shanaida Ahmed (left) and Alan Bradbury with tutor Suzanne Fox

help to reduce the average 48 school days a year that young carers miss or cut short because of their responsibilities. The scheme is funded with grants from the Queen's Trust and Lottery Fund.

Gail Scott-Spicer, chief executive of the Carers Trust, says that schools play "a vital role" in a young carer's life, although many teachers are unaware that some pupils care for relatives.

"On average young carers will miss half a day of school each fortnight as a result of their caring role, so the steps schools take to identify and support them can have a huge

impact on their learning, wellbeing and life chances."

The launch comes as a survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) found that 90 per cent of staff say they have received no training on how to support young carers.

ATL general secretary Dr Mary Bousted says the union welcomes the Young Carers in Schools programme, which it has featured as "Campaign of the Month" on the union's Safer Schools network website.

Visit [youngcarersinschools.wordpress.com/](http://youngcarersinschools.wordpress.com/) to sign up

## Serving soldiers help to remember Great War



The soldier equipment used during the OP REFLECT presentations

Soldiers are heading to classrooms to help pupils to commemorate the First World War in a scheme run by the British Army.

As part of the free OP REFLECT, two or three serving soldiers will speak to secondary school and sixth-form pupils about how their recent military operations compare to the experiences of officers 100 years ago.

Captain Ash Edwards, who runs the West Midlands OP REFLECT office, says: "Because we have lost that generation who were in the First World War – and we now have children who didn't have grandparents during those times – it is important not to lose touch with the lessons that were learned and the sacrifices that were made."

He says lessons can be tailored to suit curriculum and student needs.

The content sat naturally with history but could be used in English literature, art, geography and psychology. The programme is due to run until 2019. Visit [www.army.mod.uk/training\\_education/25813.aspx](http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/25813.aspx) to sign up



# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

**A**nthony Seldon is leaving Wellington College after 10 years as the school's 13th headmaster to become vice-chancellor of the University of Buckingham, which his father Arthur Seldon helped to found 40 years ago.

Sir Anthony says he has done "everything [he] wanted to do" at the Berkshire independent school, including pioneering the teaching of wellbeing and happiness, the teaching of multiple intelligences and opening two schools in China.

"I love the students, the staff, the parents and the whole Wellington community and I will miss everything about it. I'll miss being part of a go-ahead and exciting institution — but the good thing is, I am going to a new one."

The political historian, author and commentator on education has written or edited more than 35 books, including works on John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and David Cameron.

The 61-year-old plans a 10-year tenure at the university. And after that? He says if he's then too old to be a player, he'll take over as manager of Manchester United.

"From now until then I hope they keep the seat warm for me."

**Julie Robinson** has taken over as the new general secretary at the Independent Schools Council, the first former school headteacher to lead the organisation.

For eight years she was head of Vinehall Preparatory School, East Sussex, and before that, Ardingly College Junior School, West Sussex.

Most recently, Ms Robinson has worked for the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) as education and training director.

She says that in her new role she wants to "remove the stereotype" that surrounds fee-paying schools.

"My aim — and you can guess how long this is going to take me — is to help people outside independent schools appreciate the diversity within our sector and help them to see just how different some of these schools are."

The 47-year-old has worked in education for more than 25 years. She completed an English degree at the University of Birmingham and then went to Westminster College, Oxford, for her PGCE.

**Laura Turner** has been appointed as the new preparatory school head at Barnard



Anthony Seldon



Julie Robinson



Laura Turner

Castle School, County Durham.

Ms Turner, who is also an inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, was head of pre-prep at the school. She moves to her new post this September.

The 34-year-old says her plans are to maintain the "high-standard" that has already been established and then continue to move the school forward.

"I want to focus on completing the plans for our building, oversee the changes to the curriculum and make sure we keep up the education pace that has been set."

Ms Turner graduated with a degree in primary education from Northumbria University before completing a masters in early year's education.

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your school, local authority or organisation please let us know by emailing [news@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:news@schoolsweek.co.uk)

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**Hunt urges return to a 'national system of levels'****Mark Mackley, Lancashire**

Frankly I am bored of the politicians pontificating and promising and generally meddling in education and basically screwing things up. I want an independent, research based body to determine and monitor education policy for the sake of the children!

**Barbie, address supplied**

Is he crazy?! We've just got our head around the new curriculum (some of us) and he wants to change it back! I'm not saying I'm necessarily a fan of the new curriculum but surely any fool can see that changing things so radically again is a waste of time, hard work and money. Most importantly, how on earth can that be good for the children in our schools. A lack of care if you ask me! If he accepts the need for stability, leave us be and let us do our jobs! Rant over!

**If I were education secretary... Toby Young****Judith Enright, London**

Local authorities used to do the things Toby describes. One unanticipated outcome of move to more free schools and academies is exactly what you describe: school leaders are now distracted by further layers of bureaucracy. Toby may also be interested to know that Tristram Hunt proposes peer review instead of Ofsted.

**The Runaway Schoolgirl: This is the True Story of My Daughter's Abduction by Her Teacher Jeremy Forrest****Ella, address supplied**

It was the girl's mother who seemed to be considered the "victim" even at the trial for some bizarre reason. Very unhealthy. If anyone was the victim, it would be the girl herself and no one else.

Clearly Forrest breached his trusted position as a teacher but I can't help feeling the whole thing would've been better dealt with by sacking him and giving him a suspended sentence or something. It's not like he's a danger to the public so sending him to jail doesn't benefit anyone, least of all the

girl who is now saddled with the guilt from what was done to him in her name. I suppose they wanted to make an example of him but that's a clear case of putting the law ahead of the girl's best interests.

**Norwich primary searches for four unqualified teachers****Chris Cowley, address supplied**

Perhaps we should also start employing unqualified cardiothoracic surgeons, don't worry about the damage that they might cause during their training.....just think about the money that could be saved to bail out future bankers!

**Phonics checks could come earlier for 'advanced' pupils****Ed Waller, Portsmouth**

Imagine a child being bored with phonics being taught for the sake of passing a test!

Why should that poor child be stifled by the test and retest, slash and burn policies of ill-advised governments? Let them enjoy learning at their own pace and trust our teachers to do the right thing by our children.

Teachers will use a mix of measures to encourage reading. Phonics is only one. There's been enough 'do it right' hectoring.

**BDB @BridgetBurke2**

Why didn't we think of this, testing them even younger put them off school for ever #sighs

**How schools are becoming 'mini-welfare states'****Martin Campbell @martincampbell2**

Happy that @vicgoddard does this. Sad that he has to.

**EBacc reforms fail to boost A-level languages****Keith Smith @kcsmith442**

That's because schools are forcing kids to take languages to boost Ebacc and Progress8 scores.

**'Home-grown teachers of Mandarin'****REPLY OF THE WEEK****Katharine Carruthers, Institute of Education**

Your article 'Wanted: home-grown teachers of Mandarin' of April 27 asks the question, "How do we create more home-grown teachers of Chinese?" This is not a question to be considered in the future; a programme to develop home-grown teachers of Chinese is already being implemented, successfully in schools across the country.

The UCL Institute of Education (IOE) is just reaching the end of its 4th year of Mandarin Chinese PGCE provision. Our graduates are snapped up by schools. Our student teachers include both native and non-native speakers of Chinese: yes, those who have learned Chinese at university (and in some cases at school before that) have already realised that teaching Chinese in a school is an attractive career option. From September 2015, there will be 15 in our PGCE Mandarin cohort who follow a programme focusing on Chinese pedagogy whilst at IOE, as well as in their placement schools.

And the IOE is not alone: for instance, Goldsmiths has had a flexible PGCE for a number of years, and Edge Hill University offers a Mandarin pathway for its secondary foreign languages PGCE.

Of course the growth of Chinese teaching has to be sustainable and development of a 'different' language in a school is never going to be easy, but schools where Chinese is really embedded are finding that their GCSE results for Chinese are at least as good as, in some cases better, than those for other languages.

Your article asks, can a manifesto pledge to "increase the number of teachers able to teach Mandarin" be implemented? The answer is "Yes" and implementation is already well underway.

**REPLY OF THE WEEK  
RECEIVES  
THE COLLECTOR'S MUG!**

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Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

**DO YOU HAVE A STORY?**

However big or small, if you have information or a story you think our readers would be interested in, then please get in touch. For press releases make sure you email our news email account, and don't be afraid to give us a call.

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# ST HILDA'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

## DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

**SALARY: LEADERSHIP L20 – L24 (£61,012 TO £67,290)**

**HOURS: FULL TIME**

The Governing Bodies of the following schools in Middlesbrough are working together to create St Hilda's Catholic Academy Trust:-

Corpus Christi RC Primary School  
Sacred Heart RC Primary School  
St Alphonsus RC Primary School  
St Augustine's RC Primary School  
St Bernadette's RC Primary School  
St Clare's RC Primary School  
St Edward's RC Primary School  
St Gerard's RC Primary School  
St Joseph's RC Primary School  
St Thomas More RC Primary School  
Trinity Catholic College

This exciting new journey will begin on the 1st October 2015 and will see our vision for outstanding education go beyond our individual schools in the formation of a collaborative Multi Academy Trust. This unique and innovative job opportunity offers the chance to help shape the future of our Multi Academy Trust, working alongside the Head Teachers and the Board of Directors.

### The successful candidate will:

- Be a fully qualified accountant
- Have sound leadership and excellent interpersonal skills
- Have a successful track record of management experience within a complex organisation
- Have proven and demonstrable experience of financial expertise
- Be able to uphold the catholic ethos and aims of the Trust

Applications are invited from prospective candidates in education, public sector or commercial settings who are able to demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria set out in the person specification.

To request an application pack, please contact Jenn Austin via email: [jenn.austin@avec-partnership.com](mailto:jenn.austin@avec-partnership.com). Applications must be returned direct to the above email address or by post to Jenn Austin, Avec Partnership, Suite 9 Yarn, Lingfield House, Lingfield Point, Darlington, DL1 1RW.

**Closing Date: Noon Monday 18th May 2015**

**Shortlisting Date: 22nd May 2015**

**Interview Date: 16th June 2015**

*The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. The post is subject to a successful DBS check and pre-employment checks will be undertaken before an appointment is confirmed.*



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For more information please visit: [arkschools.org/careers](http://arkschools.org/careers)



### New school, new building, new opportunities

**Ark All Saints Academy** opened in Camberwell in 2013 with an intake of 120 pupils. As a brand new school that is growing year on year, we're looking to recruit ambitious individuals to join our team in September.

English, maths, science, music and MFL teachers and lead teachers needed to join our talented and committed staff team.

For more information, please go to:  
[arkallsaintsacademy.org](http://arkallsaintsacademy.org)



Ark



## We require for September 2015: Associate Principal (Curriculum and Standards) Associate Principal (Teaching, Learning, Behaviour)



**St Gregory the Great  
Catholic School**

**Salary: L17 - L22 Start date: September 2015 Location: Oxford**

We are looking for two exceptional Associate Principals to become members of our Core Leadership Team at St Gregory the Great Catholic School.

As the Associate Principal of Curriculum and Standards you will lead on such areas as curriculum development, timetabling, standards and achievement, developing the role of subject leaders, and the tracking and analysis of results and data (particularly of groups such as Pupil Premium students).

As the Associate Principal of Teaching, Learning and Behaviour, you will lead on Teaching and Learning and Behaviour for Learning, working with a strong team to develop effective provision across the school.

We are looking for leaders who are committed to St Gregory's ethos of high expectation and aspiration for all and who are able to share and communicate our vision to staff, students and parents with passion and integrity. Initially, the successful candidates will have the support of the current postholders in developing their roles.

For further information and to apply please visit our website and submit your application by Wednesday 13th May.

If you have any queries regarding your application, please contact Mrs Rosemary Gelder on 01865 749933 extension 206. or email: [PrincipalSGTG@dbmac.org.uk](mailto:PrincipalSGTG@dbmac.org.uk).

**Closing Date:**

**Wednesday 13th May at 3.30pm**

**Interview Date:**

**Week commencing 18th May**

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of students so all staff are enhanced CRB checked.

Langley is a popular, over-subscribed mainstream 11-16 school, supporting approximately 1000 children including 70 children with Statements of SEN. It is also highly regarded for its friendly atmosphere and students' outstandingly good behaviour. Langley is particularly committed to supporting all staff in their professional development.



Langley School  
Kineton Green Road  
Solihull  
B92 7ER  
Tel: 0121 706 9771  
Fax: 0121 706 8715  
[www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk](http://www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk)

Langley School staff, governors and students are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of students and staff. Please note that Disclosure & Barring Service clearance at the appropriate level will be required for this post.

### Teacher of English

**Permanent – for 1 September 2015  
£MPS/UPS [£22,023 - £37,496]**

The successful candidate will be an enthusiastic and inspirational teacher of English, committed to facilitating high levels of student engagement and academic progress, creating a stimulating and positive classroom ethos and fostering independent and collaborative student-led learning. Applications from NQTs would be welcome. The Faculty is dynamic and forward thinking, made up of a combination of experienced and new teachers who work together effectively as a team and we take a collaborative and innovative approach to planning and curriculum delivery.

To download a person specification, job description, a letter from our Headteacher and the necessary application form, please visit the school website, [www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk](http://www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk) or email Julie Hannah via [s206jhannah@langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:s206jhannah@langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk)

**Closing date: Thursday 14 May 2015.  
Proposed interview date: Thursday 21 May 2015.**

Langley is a popular, over-subscribed mainstream 11-16 school, supporting approximately 1000 children including 70 children with Statements of SEN. It is also highly regarded for its friendly atmosphere and students' outstandingly good behaviour. Langley is particularly committed to supporting all staff in their professional development.



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Langley School staff, governors and students are committed to the safeguarding and welfare of students and staff. Please note that Disclosure & Barring Service clearance at the appropriate level will be required for this post.

### 2nd in English and KS4 Co-ordinator

**Permanent – for 1 September 2015 + TLR 2c £6,033  
£MPS/UPS [£22,023 - £37,496]**

We are seeking to appoint an experienced and enthusiastic English teacher to take on the role of Second in charge of English, with responsibility for coordinating Key Stage 4 English as well as leading Literacy across the Curriculum. This is an exciting opportunity for an aspiring Head of English to gain valuable experience in leadership and management. The faculty is dynamic and forward thinking, made up of a combination of experienced and new teachers who work together effectively as a team and we take a collaborative and innovative approach to planning and curriculum delivery.

To download a person specification, job description, a letter from our Headteacher and the necessary application form, please visit the school website, [www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk](http://www.langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk) or email Julie Hannah via [s206jhannah@langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:s206jhannah@langley-sec.solihull.sch.uk)

**Closing date: Thursday 14 May 2015  
Proposed interview date: Tuesday 19 May 2015**





The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust (GDFT) are now recruiting in the East Midlands for September 2015:

- Senior Leaders
- Middle Leaders
- 3-19 Teachers
- SEN Practitioners
- NQTs
- School Direct Trainees
- Support Staff

GDFT was founded by Sir Barry Day, an outstanding Head, to improve the life chances of young people in areas of social and economic deprivation and/or educational underachievement. This ethos remains today across the Trust's 27 primary, secondary and special school Academies

**A selection of our current vacancies include:**

- Principal, Queensmead Primary Academy, (£74,215-£83,892).
- Principal, Kingswood Secondary Academy, (£81,857-£94,817).
- Teacher of Science, Stanground Academy, (MPS/UPS).
- Teacher of Maths, City of Derby Academy, (MPS/UPS).
- Subject Coordinator, Key Stage 1/2 Teacher, Welland Primary Academy. (MPS/UPR plus TLR 1C)
- Second in Business Studies, (MPS/UPR plus TLR 2D), Nottingham Academy.
- Learning Assistant, (£12,941 - £13,565 pro rata), Queensmead Primary Academy



Visit our website for a full list of vacancies: [www.greenwoodacademies.org/vacancies](http://www.greenwoodacademies.org/vacancies)

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. This position is therefore subject to an enhanced disclosure check under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

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## Head of Primary Network

### Overview of SSAT

SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd is an independent membership organisation dedicated to raising levels of achievement in schools. Our members include primary, secondary, special educational needs schools, academies, and schools from over 13 countries around the world.

SSAT's membership and professional development programmes help you achieve this balance. They offer practical, schools-led advice for succeeding at Ofsted and raising attainment levels, but they also have the classic SSAT "extra ingredients": long-term vision, a pioneering commitment to student leadership, insights into the latest research and innovative practice and, above all, the challenge that comes from collaborating with other schools and teachers.

### The Role

The Head of Primary Network role is working with a wide range of primary schools and academies and is responsible for building growth of both membership numbers and other products and services across SSAT. Your key responsibilities will be delivering the annual business plan, ensuring that financial and delivery quality are maintained and built upon; maintaining and building upon the pace of growth of both membership numbers and financial objectives; continuing to develop partnerships which benefit our primary members as well as offering new opportunities for market growth; being responsible for building effective working relationships with schools, internal colleagues and partners.

For more information see [www.ssatuk.co.uk/jobs/](http://www.ssatuk.co.uk/jobs/)

The position is initially a maternity cover for up to 12 months, with a salary bracket of £55,000 - £60,000.

Applications should include a CV and Covering Letter and be sent via email to [Recruitment@SSATUK.co.uk](mailto:Recruitment@SSATUK.co.uk) by Friday 15th May 2015.



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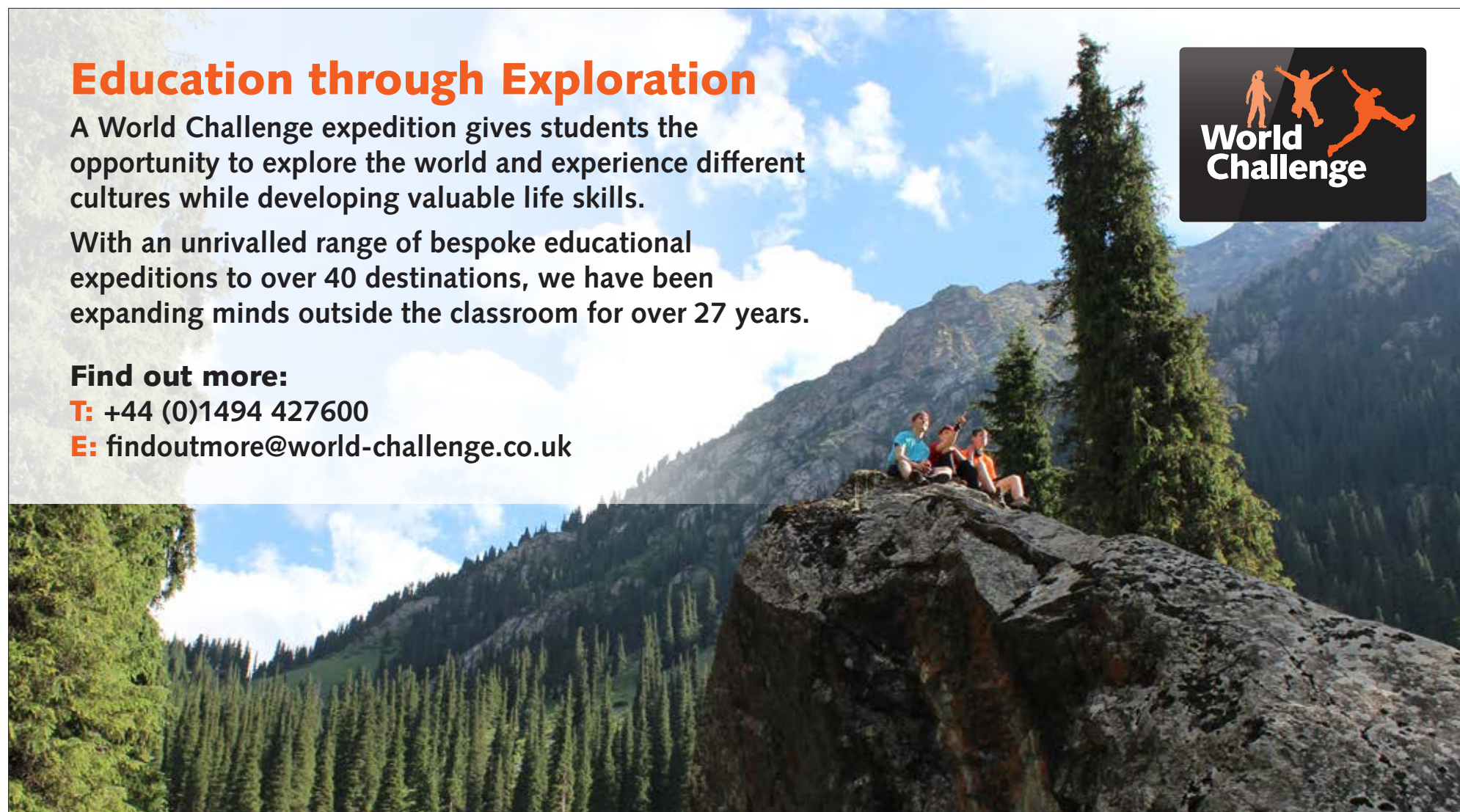
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## SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

						4	6	
			9		4	7		5
				8	6		9	
	2			9	3		7	
		3	7			2		9
	4	7	2				8	
	9			2	5			
3		2	4					
5	8			6				

**Difficulty:**  
**EASY**

### Last Week's solutions

1	5	9	4	3	2	8	7	6
2	7	4	6	8	1	9	3	5
8	6	3	9	7	5	2	1	4
3	9	8	5	2	6	7	4	1
6	4	7	8	1	3	5	9	2
5	2	1	7	4	9	3	6	8
4	8	6	3	5	7	1	2	9
7	1	5	2	9	4	6	8	3
9	3	2	1	6	8	4	5	7

**Difficulty:**  
**EASY**

3						9		
			6					
5		6	8	9		7	1	
							3	7
	1		7		8		2	
8	9							
	2	9		5	7	1		4
				9				
		8	1					3

**Difficulty:**  
**MEDIUM**

**Solutions:**  
Next week

3	5	2	9	6	1	8	4	7
4	8	6	7	2	5	3	1	9
9	1	7	3	8	4	2	6	5
8	2	5	1	7	3	4	9	6
1	7	3	6	4	9	5	8	2
6	9	4	8	5	2	1	7	3
7	6	1	2	3	8	9	5	4
2	4	9	5	1	7	6	3	8
5	3	8	4	9	6	7	2	1

**Difficulty:**  
**MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference to WIN a collector's ACADEMIES WEEK mug



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