



OUR AWARD-WINNING LEAGUE TABLES ARE BACK: WHICH SCHOOLS TRIUMPHED THIS TIME?



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SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

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TEACHERS GIVEN SECRET BRIEFING AT TOP UNI



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WHO ARE THE RSCs? (NO ONE REALLY KNOWS)



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How the comma is causing chaos



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- Primary teachers told symbol will be reintroduced to year 6 maths tests
- Pupils may struggle as UK is only country in Europe (and most of world) to use it

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT

Investigates

The humble comma, often misused in written language, will make its mark in maths tests this year, causing potential problems for

thousands of children.

In an email to schools last week, the Standards and Testing Agency announced that from May,



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NEWS

Cambridge briefs over test return

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Exclusive

The University of Cambridge held a secret briefing for selected teachers this week over its plans to bring back entrance tests for many subjects, but will not publicise details of its decision until March.

Schools Week has learned that university officials met the group of hand-picked teachers in London on Tuesday.

A source said they had been "confidentially briefed" on the university's plans to bring back admission exams this year – first revealed by this newspaper last April.

Many pupils applying to the university will need to sit the tests in schools from September before the deadline for 2017 entry applications in October. The test scores will then be used to invite applicants for interview.

But the university does not plan to provide teachers with a full outline of its plans for the assessments until March.

Headteacher Allan Foulds, who is also president of the Association of School and College Leaders, said briefing a small group of teachers is a standard model of engagement.

He added: "We would expect the group to be inclusive of the diverse group of schools we have. We would want to ensure that school leaders are briefed on what the university is doing."

A well-placed source told *Schools Week* the briefing was part of the university's plan to "put informed teachers at the heart" of its changes.

Selected teachers were said to have been chosen so university officials could hear concerns and feedback before providing others teachers with a broad outline of their plans next month.



Photo: Mario Sánchez Prada: <http://bit.ly/1J4mYL3> via freeforcommercialuse.org

A university spokesperson confirmed in a statement that the group had met "to discuss the Collegiate University's developing plans to adapt its admissions system" and representatives attended "from a range of institutions".

Adding: "We are considering feedback and will announce any changes to our admissions system in due course."

He refused to be drawn on any questions regarding the selection of teachers at the group, or details of the test.

The university currently uses scores calculated from students' performance in their AS-levels to decide which applicants are invited to interview.

Under new reforms brought in to toughen up the qualifications, AS exams became optional in September and scores no longer contribute to the overall A-level.

Documents presented at a senior tutors' committee, and previously seen by *Schools Week*, revealed how the university thought it was being forced into changing its "well-trying system".

Schools Week understands the new exams will vary by subject, but several subjects are planning a three-hour written test. It is understood the entrance tests will

be run as a pilot for two years.

Not all faculties are believed to support the changes. The student union has also previously raised concerns.

Many staff were reluctant to speak when contacted by *Schools Week*, but one said colleges are ensuring the tests will not disadvantage applicants.

Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of the social mobility thinktank the Sutton Trust, told *Schools Week*: "We would be concerned at the reintroduction of entrance tests at Cambridge, as this could present a disadvantage for low and middle income students."

The University of Oxford already uses subject-specific aptitude tests for many courses, taken in schools prior to interview.

Sir Peter said the introduction of tests at Cambridge could further expand the thriving market in private tuition.

"Those parents who can afford additional tuition and resources will be able to give their children a significant advantage over those who cannot."

The trust is due to publish a report that will reveal further findings on admission tests at universities in the coming weeks.

UNREGISTERED SCHOOL PROPOSALS MET WITH DISMAY

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The supply of volunteers who give "hours and hours of tremendous value" to pupils in out-of-school education settings could be decimated under new registration proposals, an MP and former teacher has warned.

Caroline Ansell, the Conservative MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, told parliament on Wednesday that plans to force institutions and voluntary groups educating children for more than six hours a week to register and face inspection by Ofsted would put them under similar pressures to those experienced by teachers.

Her comments came during a debate on the government's recent consultation into "unregistered schools", aimed at tackling extremism and radicalisation through forced registration, with a particular focus on certain religious schools.

Ms Ansell claimed those who were radicalising children would not register their institutions under the proposals, but

those running valuable services in their communities would be affected.

She said: "Just this very morning, we had news around teacher recruitment. We are struggling to recruit the numbers that we need.

"Ofsted represents one of the most significant pressures. Bring Ofsted into this setting, and we will decimate volunteers who give hour upon hour upon hour and give tremendous value to the young people they engage with."

Conservative MP Sir Gerald Howarth warned against passing "massive powers" to Ofsted, to "define both extremism and what constitutes British values", and said the proposals in the consultation were hopelessly broad.

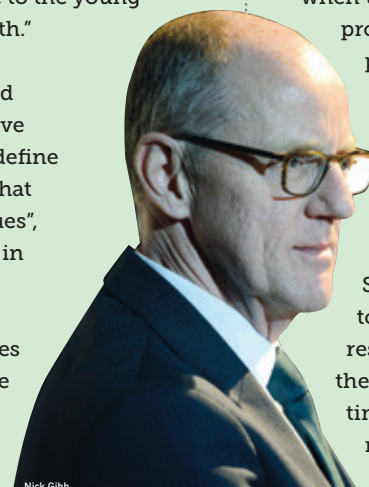
Second church estates commissioner Caroline Spelman said the Church of England provided 500,000

children with out-of-school educational activities, using 80,000 volunteers, and called for the government to use existing protections, such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Schools minister Nick Gibb sought to reassure MPs that provision such as Sunday schools and the Scouts would not be subject to registration, and added: "We think inspection should only happen when there is evidence that certain prohibited activities are taking place."

The government has received more than 10,000 responses to its consultation, including those from many religious groups.

The Catholic Education Service said: "It is reasonable to expect any group which has responsibility for children in their care for substantial periods of time to be subject to reasonable regulation to protect children's health, safety and welfare."



Nick Gibb

NEWS: LEAGUE TABLES

AWARD WINNING

GCSE results see disadvantaged schools making the grade

League tables for schools and colleges were released yesterday by the Department for Education. *Schools Week* brings back its award-winning analysis, showcasing schools with high numbers of children from low income families.

SOPHIE SCOTT
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Investigates

Disadvantaged pupils are once again at the heart of *Schools Week's* analysis of the GCSE results pupils received in 2015 – with a number of schools making a new entry into our league tables.

The league tables (right) show the best performing schools in the country for pupils receiving free school meals (FSM), and were featured for the first time in our pages last year.

This year there are 14 different schools in the tables, with six appearing in both.

Ark's King Solomon Academy, in London, makes a strong comeback this year, heading up the top of the table for schools with more than 20 per cent FSM intake from second place last year, and into second place overall from fourth last year.

The Bethnal Green Academy in Tower Hamlets, a centre of media attention after three of its pupils travelled to Syria, appears for the first time.

Both schools are in some of the most deprived areas of the country with large proportions of their pupils receiving free school meals. Remarkably 93 and 92 per cent of their FSM pupils, respectively, achieved the national benchmark of five A*-C grades, including English and maths.

Outwood Academy Ripon, where 79 per cent of FSM pupils made the benchmark, came 10th in the high FSM intake table. It made headlines in November when 40 of its pupils fainted during a Remembrance Day assembly.

Schools minister Nick Gibb said in a statement issued by the Department for Education (DfE): "This government is giving all young people, irrespective of their background, a fair shot in life and we must not let up the pace of reform now."

New to our league tables this year is the inclusion of the ability of pupils when they start key stage 4. Thomas Telford School in

Telford and Wrekin, fourth overall, had a cohort of 72 per cent "high ability" pupils, and 91 per cent of its FSM pupils made the benchmark.

In contrast, just 24 per cent of the cohort at Bethnal Green Academy were classed as "high ability" when they started year 10, but achieved outstanding results for those pupils, as mentioned above.

Last year, 330 state schools fell below the 40 per cent "floor target" of pupils achieving five A*-C GCSEs, including English and maths, meaning 330,475 children were being taught in underperforming schools.

This year, *Schools Week's* analysis shows an increase in the number of state schools failing to achieve the minimum target – up to 387 – but fewer pupils are taught in them – 307,100.

A DfE statement released on the morning of the results said the government only identified 312 schools below the threshold. It is not clear why there is this disparity.

Of those underperforming schools, 60 per cent are academies, which is roughly the same proportion of schools that are academies across the country.

This year 20 free schools had pupils take GCSEs, and 7 (35 per cent) did not meet the minimum 40 per cent pass rate.

Schools were offered the opportunity to be rated on their Progress 8 score, a measure that will become the main performance metric from next year and rates pupils' relative performance across eight GCSEs.

Only 10 per cent of schools opted in. Among those, 17 schools (5 per cent) would be classed as underperforming. This is a much smaller rate than when using the floor target measure.

Mr Gibb said schools and pupils were "responding to this government's vital reforms – leading to higher standards and transforming young people's life chances".

GCSEs - Our Alternative Take

BEST FSM PASS RATE: ALL NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

SCHOOL NAME	RELIGIOUS CHARACTER	LOCAL AUTHORITY	PASS RATE	FSM PASS RATE	% FSM	% HIGH ABILITY AT KS4 START	AVG 8 GRADES
Archbishop Temple School	Church of England	Lancashire	87%	94%	11%	59%	B
Ark King Solomon Academy	N/A	Westminster	95%	93%	75%	33%	B+
Bethnal Green Academy	N/A	Tower Hamlets	90%	92%	78%	24%	C+
Thomas Telford School	None	Telford and Wrekin	89%	91%	13%	72%	B+
Gunnersbury Catholic School	Roman Catholic	Hounslow	90%	85%	27%	52%	B+
Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School	Muslim	Blackburn with Darwen	91%	85%	23%	29%	B+
Bolton Muslim Girls School	Muslim	Bolton	83%	84%	32%	34%	B-
Ripley St Thomas C of E Academy	Church of England	Lancashire	84%	84%	7%	54%	B-
La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School	Roman Catholic	Lambeth	84%	83%	37%	40%	B
The Woodroffe School	None	Dorset	76%	83%	7%	47%	B-

BEST FSM PASS RATE: NON-SELECTIVE WITH 20% OR MORE FSM

SCHOOL NAME	RELIGIOUS CHARACTER	LOCAL AUTHORITY	PASS RATE	FSM PASS RATE	% FSM	% HIGH ABILITY AT KS4 START	AVG 8 GRADES
Ark King Solomon Academy	N/A	Westminster	95%	93%	75%	33%	B+
Bethnal Green Academy	N/A	Tower Hamlets	90%	92%	78%	24%	C+
Gunnersbury Catholic School	Roman Catholic	Hounslow	90%	85%	27%	54%	B+
Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School	Muslim	Blackburn with Darwen	91%	85%	23%	29%	B+
Bolton Muslim Girls School	Muslim	Bolton	83%	84%	32%	34%	B-
La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School	Roman Catholic	Lambeth	84%	83%	37%	40%	B
Mossbourne Community Academy	Roman Catholic	Hackney	83%	80%	45%	42%	B-
St Gregory's Catholic Science College	N/A	Brent	80%	80%	28%	37%	B
Harris City Academy Crystal Palace	N/A	Croydon	83%	79%	22%	52%	B
Outwood Academy Ripon	N/A	North Yorkshire	80%	79%	20%	30%	C+

Source: DfE

KEY: UP FROM LAST YEAR DOWN FROM LAST YEAR NEW ENTRY

SUPP: NUMBER SUPPRESSED IF FEWER THAN 5 PUPILS
FSM: FREE SCHOOL MEALS

POINT SCORE*:	A* – 58	C – 40	F – 22
	A – 52	D – 34	G – 16
	B – 46	E – 28	

*USED TO CALCULATE TOTAL POINT SCORE AND AVERAGE 8 GRADES

A-Levels: Institutions widely spread out for 'value added'

The best-performing schools and colleges for "value added" are spread across the country more disparately than for GCSEs.

Focusing on value added (VA) scores – the indicator that shows how much progress students have made between the end of key stage 4 and their post-16 study – institutions from Wiltshire to Rochdale are featured in both tables (right).

Vocational courses appear to give the greatest added value, with a maximum VA of 1.39, while pupils studying A-levels had a maximum VA of 0.5. None of the schools and colleges featured in last year's tables, for the same measures, appear in this year's league tables.

The government pointed out that more than 404,000 pupils last year stayed on for post-16 study, an increase of 6.4 per cent since 2010, though this figure has been affected by the increase of the participation age to 18.

VALUE ADDED - A LEVEL

SCHOOL NAME	LOCAL AUTHORITY	VA
St Augustine's Catholic College	Wiltshire	0.50
Brampton Manor Academy	Newham	0.45
Malmesbury School	Wiltshire	0.43
Rochdale Sixth Form College	Rochdale	0.42
Farmor's School	Gloucestershire	0.42

VALUE ADDED - VOCATIONAL

SCHOOL NAME	LOCAL AUTHORITY	VA
King Solomon High School	Redbridge	1.79
Shirley High School Performing Arts College	Croydon	1.52
Whitley Academy	Coventry	1.38
St George's C of E Foundation School	Kent	1.21
Vyners School	Hillingdon	1.20

Source: DfE

What do you think?

Email your thoughts to: news@schoolsweek.co.uk

NEWS

IN brief

Private school benefit audit not new, CC says

The requirement for independent schools to report "public benefit activities" is not new despite media reports, the Charity Commission says.

The *Telegraph* reported a new requirement on independent schools to annually audit the benefits offered to their communities.

But the watchdog confirmed the requirement has existed for some time, and guidance issued last year was merely updated to give examples.

David Goodhew, the head of Latymer Upper School in London, told *Schools Week* the reports were "a little misleading", adding: "Schools have always been required to report their public benefit activities to the charity commission annually."

A Charity Commission spokesperson said: "This does not change the requirement for independent schools (along with all charities) to report their public benefit activities."

'Good pass' rates to fall in new GCSE system

One in four pupils currently achieving a "good pass" in their GCSEs will no longer do so in future, a report says.

The study by CentreForum and Education Datalab predicts a 23 per cent drop in good passes when GCSE exams move to a numerical grade system, in which 9 will be the highest score, and 5 a good pass.

Former schools minister David Laws, now executive chair of CentreForum, said the report showed there was no cause for complacency in schools.

The new standard for GCSEs is based on expectations in world class education systems.

The Department for Education said the report showed a "stark choice" in education: "Either we prepare today's young people to compete with the best in the world, or we don't."

Wilshaw supports ban on full-face veils

The chief inspector of schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw has told *BBC Newsnight* that full-face veils may affect communication between pupils and teachers, and that schools could choose to ban them.

The education secretary, Nicky Morgan supported Sir Michael, saying that where schools had "a clear uniform policy they want everybody to observe", which included refusing to let pupils or teachers wear the full-face veil, the government would support their decision.

The comments follow a week of announcements from the government about anti-extremism and radicalisation initiatives. On Tuesday, Ms Morgan launched the Educate Against Hate website, described as providing information to stop the "spell of twisted ideologies".

Ms Morgan said: "All of us must work to protect children from the threat that Daesh poses."

Head said students could 'choose' grades, minutes show

ANN MCGAURAN

@ANNMCGAURAN

Exclusive

The head of Watford Grammar School for Girls said she would let girls "choose" their predicted A-level grades if other schools were "manipulating results", official minutes show – raising questions about the role of teacher predictions in university entrance.

But head of the school, Dame Helen Hyde, then told *Schools Week* she "would not allow the students at the school to 'choose' their own (A-level) grades".

Minutes of a governing body meeting at the school reveal that members thought universities were exerting a huge amount of pressure to get applications from A-level students with higher grades.

As a result, some schools were manipulating predictions to ensure their students made it through the first round of selection, the minutes from last September claim.

Subsequent minutes show that the head "feels that morally and professionally the school has to predict accurate grades for students and she will hold firm on this".

She added: "I did not raise this subject. A governor told the board of governors that she thought other schools allowed students to decide or negotiate their UCAS predictions.

"I was surprised and said I would check

with local schools. I did not say I would allow the girls to choose their predicted grades. I am of the personal opinion that a predicting procedure based on student preference would be neither ethical nor accurate."

Having spoken with other schools, she said: "This appears to be an issue in which we differ from others."

According to Dame Helen, one school allowed its students to discuss with teachers the changing of their predicted grade, "which might lead to the member of staff changing it".

She said another school had given staff guidance to be generous in their predictions.

"The philosophy is that the students then get offers and begin to build a relationship with the university. Then if they miss a grade, they could be accepted anyway.

"In the few cases that this generous prediction is not sufficient, the head of sixth form and the deputy head have overruled the member of staff."

In a third case, Dame Helen said a head of sixth form had adjusted predicted grades based on where the student applied and grades expected for the course.

The assistant head for post 16 at Devonport High School for Boys in Plymouth, Sharon Davidson, told *Schools Week* that at her school, "the UCAS predicted grade is an honest, professional judgement provided by the classroom teacher of the course".



But Ms Davidson added that in 2014, while attending a UCAS higher education adviser day at a university, she was "dismayed to hear school representatives declare they were currently elevating their grades to ensure students for competitive courses in particular could get selected for interview".

The examining body Cambridge Assessment revealed last summer that just under half of all predicted grades were incorrect.

Universities still maintain that despite this, schools should attempt to provide accurate predictions rather than ones favourable to pupils' admissions chances.

Lynsey Hopkins, the head of admissions at the University of Sheffield and chair of the Russell Group Qualifications Network, said it would be worrying if schools based predicted grades on any other information: "It doesn't serve our purposes at all to have inaccurate predictions."

She added: "There's a big difference between a best-case estimate to present a student favourably on the one hand, and deliberate, unfounded, prediction manipulation to secure what is likely to be an entirely unrealistic offer on the other."

IMPROVING SCHOOLS? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT, SAYS ARK

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Successful academy chain Ark is launching a new cloud-based service today to break open the market for start-up education technology companies, *Schools Week* can exclusively reveal.

The Assembly service will store data from school management information systems (MIS), which companies can then apply to use for the creation of apps with "school improvement at their heart".

Joshua Perry, the director of Assembly, said he wanted to address a "problem with the quality of analytics across the education sector".

He added that potential developers have been put off from creating applications that can be used in schools because of the large costs associated with making them work on different systems.

"We've seen impressive online curriculum providers, quiz tools, gradebooks, learning platforms and behaviour management systems, but one of the common threads that unites start-ups in ed tech is that they usually launch without a link to the MIS.

"That limits uptake – and good companies have folded because of this."

Without an MIS link teachers must input data manually, and it isn't updated in real-time along with other valuable information, such as registers or grades. But with



Assembly gathering all the data, it means developers can build apps through the platform – making it much easier to link to the MIS.

Assembly will also launch its first public product today: a free online tool for schools to compare their performance against national benchmarks, including Progress and Attainment 8.

John Roberts, chief executive of the teachers' union Edapt and a consultant for education companies, told *Schools Week* the new products represent a change in the education technology market.

"It is generally moving away from the model of the one size fits all software solution for schools. More specialist products are now going to appear."

Mr Roberts highlighted the success of products, such as ClassDojo, which capture and allow teachers to share data on pupil behaviour, adding: "Anything we can do to get innovation going and driving forward in the ed tech market is really good."

Last year, the country's largest academy chain, AET, moved all its information communication technology (ICT) services

to Google's cloud service, saying it would allow it to save £900,000.

A total of 3,000 schools are now believed to be using cloud-based services.

However Mr Roberts said many schools were still wary of using new services – specifically those that involve the cloud – because of privacy and security concerns. Although the data is given to another provider, schools remain the legal "data controller" and are legally culpable for any breaches by the provider.

Jon Richards, Unison's national secretary for education and children's services, has said schools must be able to guarantee sensitive data will be secure and confidential.

But Mr Perry said the platform has built-in security measures, such as secure sockets layer (SSL) which ensure data passed from the school remain private. He added that the platform's terms and conditions are "clear and accessible".

Schools can sign up to the platform, developed in partnership with the NEON Foundation, for free.

Some apps will also be free, but others may charge for their use, as with mobile phone app stores. Assembly says the apps will help schools visualise, expand and aggregate their data.

A total of 70 schools in the Mathematics Mastery programme have been trialling the service since last year with a gradebook app to input and analyse test data.

NEWS

DESPAIR OVER CANCELLED BUILDINGS LINKED TO RESULTS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Pupil performance fell at schools where the coalition government cancelled new school buildings, new research has shown.

But it was the fall in morale that seems to have caused the spiral rather than the scrapped buildings.

Analysis of data on the number of pupils achieving five A* to C GCSEs at almost half of the schools that had Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding withdrawn in July 2010 shows they stopped improving their scores between 2011 and 2012.

The graph shows a dip of 12.5 per cent in the cumulative change in results for the schools by 2012.

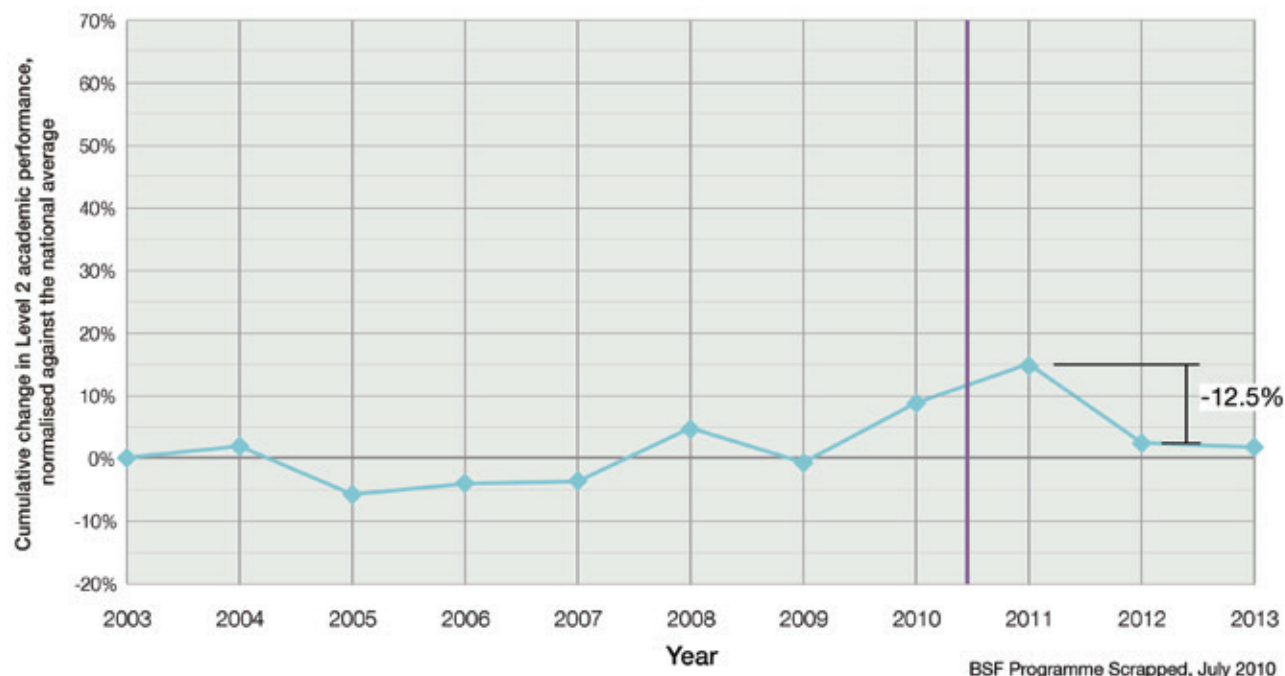
According to Peter Clegg, a partner in the Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios architecture firm, who has published the research in a new book, changes in pupil performance can be put down to a "hope and anticipation value" of the new schools, especially in the deprived areas targeted by BSF.

The 310 schools which formed the basis of the study were selected because they had complete data available.

He said: "In the schools which were promised new buildings and then had that promise taken away again after the policy changed, the data shows a reduction in performance. That promise of a new school is extremely important."

Results dipped nationally in 2012, but only by a few percentage points. National changes are accounted for in the analysis.

Mr Clegg, whose firm specialises in school buildings and worked on scores of BSF projects, accepted other elements may have affected performance, but he said the



Cumulative change in proportion of pupils achieving five A*-C GCSEs, normalised against the national average

sample of 310 was large, adding: "There is nothing else we can deduce from it."

His book, *Learning from Schools*, also includes analysis of results from 75 schools that were rebuilt or had more than 80 per cent of their sites refurbished.

In these cases, despite a rise in performance following the promise of new buildings, performance started to fall again two years after completion.

Mr Clegg said: "There is a hope value, an anticipation value, which results in higher performance. When you promise schools new buildings, performance goes up. But in fact, when they get new buildings, they do well for a while and then fall back down again, which is a shame."

Jonathan Simons, head of education

at the right-leaning thinktank Policy Exchange, was a government adviser when the programme was scrapped.

He told *Schools Week* that a true estimate of a new buildings' impact, or even the promise of them, could only be achieved by comparing those who lost BSF funding to ones with similar intakes that never received any funding.

However, he said the "anticipation effect" shown by the analysis was an interesting finding.

He said: "With a new building, it seems possible that it is hope and anticipation that improved results – perhaps more so than the actual benefit of a new building when it arrived."

Mr Clegg said the government had made

an "absolutely horrendous" decision to scrap BSF, which he said reversed years of work between architects and school leaders on how best to design new school buildings.

He said: "There were all kinds of things that were lost when BSF was scrapped."

"We had spent 10 years looking at what a new school should be and working with heads. But heads aren't that interested now because new buildings are delivered for them, not with them."



Peter Clegg

Exclusive

SCHOOLS FORCED TO OUTSOURCE ICT NOW SPLASH CASH TO ESCAPE DEALS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools tied in to ICT contracts as part of their Building Schools for the Future (BSF) makeovers now must find extra cash for consultants to get them out of their poor value deals, an investigation by *Schools Week* has found.

A majority of schools that were part of the government's £55 billion BSF school rebuilding programme were forced to outsource their information communications technology (ICT) to a private company as part of the deal.

But *Schools Week* has learned many contracts are poor value for money – with some suppliers over-charging for new equipment by tens of thousands of pounds.

The findings follow a series of investigations by *Schools Week* into the way cash-strapped schools are being pushed into financial ruin by soaring debts owed to private firms. Mark Orchison, managing director of technology specialists 9ine Consulting,

told *Schools Week*: "Inherently, schools do not have the in-house legal experience to understand their position and are, in some cases, being held to ransom to extend ICT contracts that are poor value and give very bad service."

The ICT contracts can run for up to 10 years – although schools had the option to leave after five years – and were often labelled as "one-size fits all".

Ormiston Academies Trust has two schools – Ormiston Horizon Academy and Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy – that pay nearly £300 per pupil under the contracts.

The trust said it could slash the costs by nearly half by providing its own IT services.

Stephen Moss, strategic director for ICT at Partnership for Schools, which was responsible for helping deliver the investment in schools, said: "The hope was that schools would feel the managed service was offering them good value. And they would be left to get on with the teaching and learning."

He said schools had received around £1,500 per pupil for new computers as part of the

government's investment, which he described as a "transformative amount of money".

He added: "A lot of schools ended up with a phenomenal amount of kit, but at the end of the five years had a lot of old kit coming to the end of its life. And the government won't give them more money."

He said schools have also struggled to get best use of the contracts because of a lack of available advice following cuts in local authority legal staff.

Schools who do choose to leave the contracts no longer have the capacity to manage their ICT infrastructure, he added, as ICT staff were either axed or transferred to the private company that won the contracts.

Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "When these contracts were being set up in the first place we tried to make it absolutely

clear that, particularly in the ICT system, there were major concerns about the nature of the contract, the length of them, and the potential overarching costs."

But Bob Harrison, who helped some of the private firms put together their bids and is an adviser to electronics giant Toshiba, said: "It's not as simple as 'schools are being ripped off'."

He said many firms had had to put up £2 million just to participate in the tendering process – and needed to be prepared to not get it back.

"Their incentive for doing that was that they would make the money back over 10 years."

The Department for Education said that schools have been given a range of guidance on how to get the best value from contracts.

"Schools are free to work together to get best value on contracts and we know many academies and academy chains already do so."



Malcolm Trobe

NEWS

Curriculum chaos adds

DfE will count cost of using maths commas, schools say

SOPHIE SCOTT

@SOPH_E_SCOTT

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

all children sitting their key stage 2 (KS2) tests in May will be expected to understand the comma as a way to separate numbers higher than a thousand.

However, headteachers, English as an Additional Language (EAL) specialists and science teachers are worried about the impact on pupils.

The UK is the only European country to use the comma for separating large numbers in maths. Every other country uses the comma to denote a decimal mark – so what is written as 1.2 in the UK is 1,2 in the rest of the continent.

The majority of African countries, almost all of Latin America and a number of Asian countries also use the comma as a decimal mark.

One in every five primary school pupils is classed as EAL. They could be disadvantaged because of the change.

Dr Frank Monaghan, senior lecturer in education and language studies at the Open University, said: "It's quite likely that EAL students will be disadvantaged by this odd imposition of the comma to separate groups of three digits and this smacks of Department for Education (DfE) whim rather than thought through reasoning."

He added: "Respect for diversity and common sense compromise are no longer the hallmarks of the DfE, I'm afraid."

Scientific standards, agreed by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), say that spaces should be used instead of commas due to its different international usage.

But in the email, the STA wrote: "Where numbers in test questions have four or more digits, commas will be used as thousands separators for the 2016 mathematics tests onwards."



"Where pupils use a symbol other than a comma as a thousand separator in their answer, no marks will be awarded. Where a comma has been positioned incorrectly but the correct digits are in the correct order the mark(s) will be awarded."

Alby Reid, a science teacher at Reigate Grammar School, said: "It is confusing using

commas in this way as on the continent they are used as decimal points.

"The BIPM set standards for numbers in the same way they set out how much a metre is or what mass a kilogram is.

"Spaces in thousands works well. Unequivocally, there can't be any argument about this – commas are wrong."

This point was also made by the Association of Maths Teachers when the maths curriculum was last redrafted in 2012. The government was urged not to use the comma in thousands.

The DfE said the decision was made to support pupils in becoming familiar with numbers in different format and the use of a comma was not compulsory in an answer, but that students should be encouraged to use the comma correctly.

All questions with numbers over a thousand will, however, include commas.

Clare Jones, headteacher at Bignold Primary School in Norwich, where 22 per cent of children are EAL, said: "It just goes alongside the whole way the DfE is communicating changes to things as a whole.

"This was at the end of an email about the KS1/2 tests and just announces that the comma should be used as a thousand separator, and if another symbol is used it should be marked as wrong."

The national curriculum, updated last May, does not set out that commas should be used as a separator in numbers higher than 1,000.

Ms Jones added: "It's just another thing that has been thrown out there for teachers to now do. It could be very problematic for a lot of children and comes halfway through the year."

The comma is used differently in computer programming – a subject pushed by the government in its bids to replace ICT with computing science in the curriculum.

Computer science teacher Alex Weatherall said: "Commas in numbers would not work as most programming languages would then treat them as a list of separate numbers.

"Basically it's a stupid idea to mandate it, especially given the different uses across Europe. Spaces would be much better."

FUNNY PHONICS LEAVE BLOGGER

Parents and professionals have been left baffled by a list of nonsensical words in a phonics book with no clear way to pronounce them.

An anonymous blogger, known by the pseudonym "itsmotherswork" recently shared an image from a Project X Code book that her youngest daughter was reading.

The words (pictured far right) include "cear" "ghermb" and "guell". Many commenters on social media were also confused about the correct pronunciation.

The phonics screening check, introduced in 2012, is an individual, oral assessment of pupils that requires them to read words and pseudo-words. Children are taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) such as the pronunciation of "ch" in different words.

The blogger has four children aged 8, 10, 13 and 15, and said she could see how the emphasis on phonics had increased over the years as each child had learned to read. This has affected her youngest child's enjoyment of reading.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, the blogger said: "The book she brought home this time had quite a dull text, where it was obvious that the story was reinforcing learning of certain phonemes ("aight" in straight and "eil" in unveil and abseil).

"She read these fine, but then it had a list of complete nonsense words at the end, and she simply rejected them outright, saying 'they're not words'. And she was right!

"I tried them out, and so did my 15-year-old, but there

were a number of possible different pronunciations of some – 'plere' as in here, or there, or were? And some were strings of letters that I've never seen together in any English word. I don't know why the publishers thought the list was necessary and it wasn't very clear what it was for."

Susan Godsland, a retired phonics teacher, told *Schools Week* the words were misleading.

She said: "If the authors had used the GPCs actually used in the phonics checks, they wouldn't have chosen those words because they contain GPCs usually not taught by that stage.

"English spelling is contextually based: some spellings never appear next to other spellings, such as the 'mb' after 'er'."

to teachers' workload

Constant changes to assessment make life miserable for teachers

Constant changes by the government to assessment arrangements for this year's end-of-primary key stage tests are a "dog's breakfast" and add to workload, teachers say, despite promises by the education secretary to reduce red tape.

Since January 5, the Department for Education (DfE) has updated the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) section on its website eight times, making changes to almost 30 different parts of the documents, including bringing forward key dates.

Deputy headteacher Michael Tidd (pictured), who works at Edgewood Primary School in Nottinghamshire, said: "How teachers are meant to keep up with all these changes is a mystery – and a mystery that's all the more puzzling given the government's promise to help temper workload problems by providing adequate lead-in times for significant changes.

"It's a real dog's breakfast, and a cause of much anxiety, particularly for year 6 teachers who are already dealing with other significant changes to both the curriculum and assessment arrangements, and are still waiting for significant information relating to the teacher assessment process."

In October 2014, the education secretary, Nicky Morgan and then-deputy prime minister Nick Clegg launched the Workload Challenge in a bid to find out what caused bureaucracy in the profession.

In response, Ms Morgan promised to reduce the burden on teachers by making sure there were "minimum lead-in times for significant curriculum, qualifications and accountability changes".

Last week, *Schools Week* reported how the DfE had amended the due date for year 6 teacher assessment of pupils' writing during the Christmas holidays. Teachers are now expected to submit data a month earlier.

The DfE said the change would allow more time for moderation. Schools will not know if they are to be moderated when they



submit the results of the writing assessments, unlike in the past.

A further slew of amendments were made to the guidance after teachers came back from the Christmas holidays.

Ben Fuller, a lead assessment adviser at Herts for Learning, said the ARA was usually finalised at the start of the academic year.

He said: "It normally doesn't get changed during the year, but this year when it came out it was already missing the teacher assessment moderation because that hadn't been decided by the DfE."

Earlier this month, *Schools Week* published a table created by Mr Tidd aiming to explain the assessment criteria for children working below the national curriculum standard, having not been able to find an easy-to-understand version from the DfE.

Mr Fuller added: "There have been a lot of changes and when these changes are being made has caused problems."

He also said there was information schools are still waiting for the DfE to confirm. The government has still not outlined the "expected" standard that pupils must achieve in the KS2 SATs this

summer, after the removal of assessment levels. All that is known is they will receive a "scaled score".

A government spokesperson defended the late changes: "With major changes to assessment we said we would have a lead-in time but the most important thing is that there are better outcomes for children.

"The assessment system was not fit for purpose. As we've gone through the reforms some things have jumped out as a problem and we have had to change them, but we are getting there now."

He said there were no plans for further dramatic changes, and urged teachers to wait for further proposals aimed at reducing their work burden.

"We do take workload seriously, we have made announcements about digital apps this week with huge potential, and in coming weeks we will be saying more on this."

Exclusive

SCHOOLS CUTTING KIDS FROM KS2 RESULTS DUE TO LACK OF ENGLISH

Schools are having up to a third of their pupils' key stage 2 (KS2) results removed from the published league tables, *Schools Week* has found.

Analysis of the KS2 results, published last month, compared the number of pupils at a school eligible to sit the tests with those whose results were included in the performance tables.

In three cases, more than 30 per cent of pupils had their results "disapplied" and struck from the final metrics.

One reason for the high figure may be the proportion of pupils classed as having English as an Additional Language (EAL).

At Hazel Community Primary School in Leicester, the results of only 28 of its 44 year 6 pupils are included in the league tables. Data for the other 16 pupils is missing. Government data shows that 77 per cent of its pupils have English as an Additional Language.

Similarly, at Ark Franklin Primary School, almost a quarter of pupils were disapplied from the tests.

A spokesperson said: "Ark Franklin is in an area with a great deal of mobility and they have many children newly arrived to the UK for whom English is not their first language.

"There were 85 pupils in total who took their SATs at Ark Franklin last year. After the tests, the school successfully applied to disapply 21 pupils who were newly arrived to the country, meaning the final reported numbers are from a cohort of 64."

Not all schools with a high proportion of EAL pupils disapply their pupils, however. Richard Cobden Primary School has all pupils included in its results, despite 93 per cent of its cohort being classed as EAL, and 3 per cent having special educational needs (SEN).

Green Wrythe Primary School in Carshalton, Surrey, had one in five children removed from its results. But just 24 per cent of pupils were EAL and 3 per cent SEN. The school refused to provide an explanation.

Across the country, only 2,300 of last year's 572,850 pupils were disapplied from the tests.

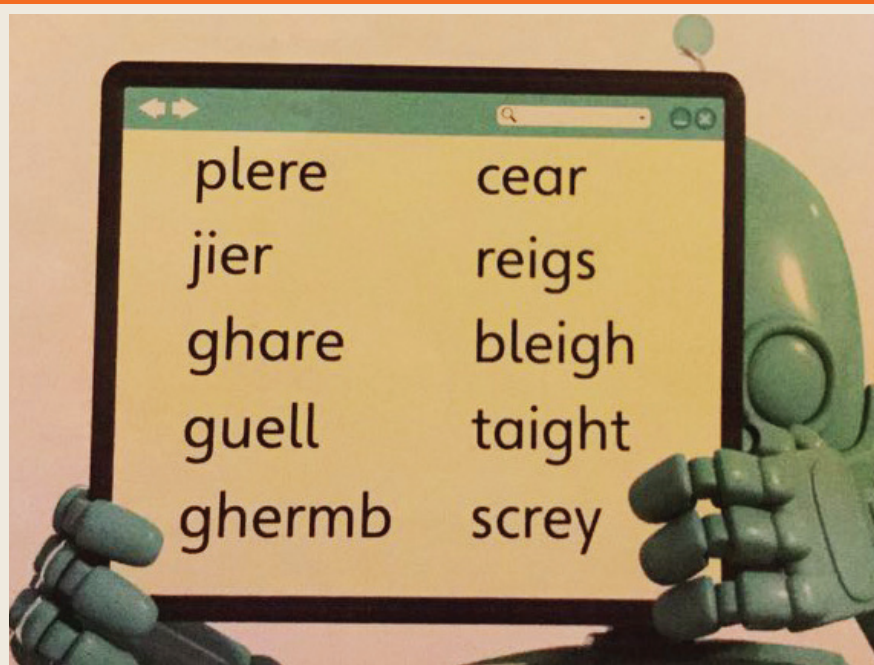
BAFFLED

Ms Godsland said children should spend teaching time learning "real words with real spellings".

Its motherswork added: "Nonsense words aren't a problem in themselves; all my children have enjoyed books by Dr Seuss and Edward Lear. And what's the Gruffalo, if not a nonsense word brought to vivid life?"

"My problem with this particular book is that children are reading for meaning. It's possible to invest a nonsense word with meaning through the context it sits in.

"A list of nonsense words, especially when their phonics learning value is dubious, as was the case with these, has no meaning or interest for a child – as my daughter made clear."



NEWS

Regional Schools Commissioners: what did the big investigation reveal?

Eight commissioners are now in charge of academies across the country and their powers are set to grow in the future.

But what did a cross-party group of MPs find during their several month investigation into the role and its conflicts of interest?

WHO THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY WORK



MARTIN POST, SOUTH CENTRAL ENGLAND AND NORTH WEST LONDON



SIR DAVID CARTER, SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND, NOW NATIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER.



DR TIM COULSON, EAST OF ENGLAND AND NORTH EAST LONDON



JANET RENOU, NORTH



DOMINIC HERRINGTON, SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND AND SOUTH LONDON



PANK PATEL, WEST MIDLANDS



VICKY BEER, LANCASHIRE AND WEST YORKSHIRE



JENNY BEXON-SMITH, EAST MIDLANDS AND HUMBER

LAURA MCINERNEY
@MISS_MCINERNEY

"It's hardly surprising that most people have never heard of RSCs, and even those who have are unclear about their role," said the chair of the parliamentary education committee, Neil Carmichael, as he launched a report on Wednesday into the working of the government's regional schools commissioners (RSCs).

The eight commissioners were introduced in 2014 as a middle tier between the charitable trusts running academies and central government, which manages their contracts.

All has not gone well, with disparities in quality and approach irking school leaders.

Last year, *Schools Week* revealed how Jenny Bexon-Smith, commissioner for east Midlands and the Humber, had written to a school criticising it for allowing teachers discretion over their lesson plans. In November, Dominic Herrington, also an RSC, asked schools to send him evidence of teaching quality – or face a management takeover. This led to the commissioners being described as a "shadow Ofsted".

The cross-party education committee sought evidence and interviewed witnesses throughout the autumn, and Wednesday's report makes more than 20 recommendations for improvements.

Mr Carmichael added that the government's approach so far on RSCs involved "acting first, thinking later".

3 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OFSTED AND RSCS? NO ONE KNOWS!

There is no clear delineation between who is responsible for different parts of the school system.

Local councils retain responsibility for the safety of all children in their area, but they cannot force academies to behave in a certain way.

Ofsted is able to fail a school for poor safety, but it cannot take away its operating contract or force a management takeover.

RSCs are supposed to be hands off, because academies are theoretically freed from oversight, but they are the only ones who can force academies to behave a certain way or cancel contracts.

Hence, there is confusion.

Academies also now find they are being visited by RSCs, Ofsted, RSC office staff, people from the Education Funding Agency, and so on.

The committee sensibly recommends everyone work together to decide who is responsible for what, how information can be shared, and how to limit the number of visits.

1 JUST ONE IN 10 PARENTS KNOW WHO THE RSCS ARE

Given that each commissioner is paid more than £110,000, with some on £140,000, the committee is concerned by evidence from PTA UK that fewer than one in 10 parents know who the commissioners are.

It is not, however, a surprise. There is almost no published information about the commissioners. There is no clear list of responsibilities, or aims. There is no complaint mechanism for challenging or overturning decisions that could harm a community.

There is no standard framework for consultation or how they should make decisions.

Ignorance might not be a problem if the role wasn't becoming so powerful. Once the education bill passes through parliament, RSCs will be able to: open academies; close academies; force academy trust takeovers of council schools; turn up at schools; and put conditions on schools.

If parents don't like what a school is doing, it will be the RSC they complain to if the school isn't listening. The whole system needs to be clearer.

4 RSCS SHOULD STOP MAKING DECISIONS IN SECRET

At present there is no published framework for how decisions will be made by the commissioners.

Reasons for decisions are not public. Neither is the advice or evidence the commissioners consider.

Witnesses said this lack of transparency was a significant concern. Headteacher Pamela Birch, who sits on the committee that advises one commissioner, said she felt there was a great deal of integrity to decisions but admitted that transparency would make people feel more comfortable.

The former national schools commissioner, Frank Green, (David Carter has now replaced him) said that more detailed decisions would be available to the public, but this has yet to happen.

The committee recommends publishing a framework for decisions, and publishing reasons for decisions. Minutes could be kept confidential – something many witnesses felt was important for honest discussion – but final reasons are made clear to the public, just as they are for most local council planning decisions.

2 THE DFE DOESN'T KNOW HOW WELL THE RSCS ARE DOING

In a worrying chapter of the report, the committee describes how senior politicians, such as the junior schools minister Lord Nash, kept saying that the RSCs were being held to account against a series of metrics.

When the committee asked for evidence of this the Department for Education (DfE) were not forthcoming.

"The DfE struggled to provide information on performance against KPIs [key performance indicators] within five weeks of our requesting it," the report states.

More than the missing data, though, the committee worries that the metrics are too narrow as they focus only on academies, and some focus on the number of them rather than quality.

One recommendation is that RSCs be "held accountable" for pupil outcomes across a whole area, similar to the way local councils are rated. Given the growing powers of the RSCs, the move makes sense but would make RSCs very similar to councils, which could prompt people to wonder if they are really needed at all.

5 LONDON NEEDS ITS OWN RSC (AND MAYBE MANCHESTER TOO)

The regions that RSCs work across are unusual. No other government or education organisation uses them. One of their most unique qualities is that the boroughs of London are separated into three other areas.

For example, the east London and east of England region goes all the way from West Ham near the centre of London to Great Yarmouth, way up the Norfolk coast.

The committee recommends altering the bizarre set-up so that the regions are the same as Ofsted and local government regions.

Doing this would require a London region to be established, with its own commissioner. The other commissioners would simply be reshuffled.

Hints have also been dropped about electing commissioners in the future. A nod to the Conservative plan for northern devolution is also mentioned. Manchester has been suggested as a future region if greater powers are devolved to bodies in the city area, a move many would welcome.

The Telegraph

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NEWS



**Yes Sarge... Another RSC collision on the county boundary...
And I think there's an Ofsted inspector in a ditch...**

EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss_mcinerney | laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk

In a week when the government is intent on talking about extremism, it is notable the education department doesn't appear to have learned from its biggest anti-radicalisation issue of the past few years: the Trojan Horse investigations.

Beginning in 2014 after a letter was sent to ministers tipping them of an "Islamic hardline plot" to take over schools, the ensuing months of inspections, sackings, stories, and whispers led to a lot of speculation about the rights of religious groups to educate children within particular moral frameworks.

What went surprisingly unnoticed was the confusion over responsibility for the schools. A recent parliamentary report said there was no evidence that a systematic radicalisation plot really existed in the Birmingham schools, but let us imagine it had and it had been in an academy: who would be responsible for resolving it?

Ofsted doesn't have the power to take a school away from the people operating it. A local authority can't tell an academy what to do. An RSC doesn't have responsibility for safeguarding. Involving the police is perhaps necessary but without intelligence they

probably wouldn't even know. It's not as if cops routinely check out reception class teachings (and nor should they).

We are therefore in a mess. Conservative politicians wanted "free" schools. Academies are supposedly "autonomous". But the fact is that children are precious and governments must be seen to be helping them.

So Nicky Morgan created regional schools commissioners to be her eyes and ears. The problem is no one knows what they should be doing, or even who they are.

The sensible recommendations

of the education committee this week should help to resolve this, but only if the government listen.

One hopes they will, and so avoid future collisions.

Unfortunately, as Sophie Scott's rather brilliant investigation into primary reforms this week shows, education reforms have a tendency to falter. We can only live in hope that this one won't.



Questions raised over south-west free schools after dire results released

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Fears about the quality of free schools in some parts of England have been raised after government statistics showed regional variations in the proportion of "high quality" schools in each area.

Figures published in the parliamentary education committee's report into the regional schools commissioners show that just 56 per cent of free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools in the south-west, inspected between 2011 and 2013, were rated good or outstanding.

The proportion of "high quality" free schools is a government-chosen performance target.

Elsewhere across the country in the same period, the proportion of "high quality" free schools are all higher, with most areas rating over 70 per cent.

The education statistician John Howson told *Schools Week* the variation could be down to low "absolute numbers" in those regions, leading to a situation where one or two inspection results could make a big difference to overall figures.

But he also expressed fears about the quality of provision in some free schools, especially studio schools and university technical colleges, which have seen problems with recruitment, and pointed to the recent closure of the Black Country UTC as an example.

Professor Howson said: "I fear some studio schools may be used as places to send pupils at 14 some schools want to move on. See the UTC in the West Midlands that closed last summer as an example."

UTC and studio schools were introduced to provide a more vocational, hands-on route for learners. They specialise in a specific career or skill area, such as engineering or tourism.

Regional schools commissioners have a duty to monitor the performance of free schools in their regions, and take action when they are underperforming.

GCSE results released yesterday show how a free school opened in 2012, St Michael's Catholic secondary in Camborne,

Cornwall, had a pass rate of just 28 per cent.

It opened with just 60 pupils and in May last year the school announced that it was no longer "financially viable". It has since merged with Camborne Science and International Academy.

RSCs also advise ministers on free school applications and on whether approved projects are ready to open. The RSC responsible for the West Midlands is Pank Patel, while the south-west is still under the oversight of Sir David Carter, who has recently been announced as the next national schools commissioner.

He will replace Frank Green at the end of this month.

COMMENT

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Ofsted clamps down on schools advertising 'mocksted' results

 **Kevin Hewitson, Northampton**

Education is a business, albeit by the back door, and we should not be surprised by business strategies and practices being employed in education. Marketing is just one of those practices. I would conclude that £11k is a good investment. Given that pupil funding can range from £4k to £8K per pupil the ROI makes it worth it. Even if the statement is pulled if it has attracted say 3 students on min funding it's been worthwhile.

The feminism A-level debacle shows how biased we are about 'best thinkers'

 **Lynne Duval @Lynnestaffs**

Amazing we are still having to fight for women not to be written out of history

School efficiency tool criticised as 'dodgy' metric

 **Ross Bowell @mcrossieb**

Gov.UK page content looks half-hearted - what can we rehash/bodge to meet government commitment? And I applaud that pragmatism.

Gove was 'despised', says Nicky Morgan's new mental health tsar

 **Stephen Rayner @SRayner11**

Not a political cheap shot but a serious and disturbing point about ignorance of young people and their learning

Jim Adams @jim1902adams

In 18 months NM has achieved the impossible. Making Gove seem not so bad after all.

Government spends £3m in scramble to get 400 'master' computing teachers

 **John BH @PutneyDebates**

Small change, relative to some of their other waste. But a waste, nonetheless.

Councils charge £6k 'penalty fee' to schools for academy conversion

 **RogerOThornhill @ROTSchools**

"We expect councils to support schools converting to academies". Why? It's your programme DfE - you pay for it.

Christian Bokhove @cbokhove

Understandable. DfE response very concerning.

ICT teachers struggling with transition to computing

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ian Taylor, Bristol



Let's face it, the DfE will never admit that it has ever made a mistake. When it says there have been 15,000 hours of training for teachers that averages out at less than one hour per school over all England's schools. Just about enough time for the trainer to say "good morning everyone".

So we will have thousands of ICT teachers who will not be able to teach Computer Science, and at the same time they will not be allowed to teach GCSE or A Level ICT, a subject which is several times more popular with students than Computer Science.

You could not make this up!

But then the DfE thinks anyone can teach. No qualifications are required to be a teacher. So how hard can it be to teach Computer Science? You only need degree level computing to teach it so obviously anyone can teach it.

One thing is for sure at the end of all this. It will be the teachers' fault that they cannot teach Computer Science because the government did its bit by putting in a whole £1.5 million per year for 3 years for training!

Given the slugging off the profession has had for 5 years, and the low pay, anyone who has degree level Computing is hardly likely to go and be a school teacher.

A 3 year Computing degree needs about 5000 hours of study, so the government has provided enough training budget to train the equivalent of 3 teachers for 8,000,000 school students. Yes, that sounds like enough Nicky Morgan.

REPLY OF THE WEEK

RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



Contact the team

To provide feedback and suggest stories please email news@schoolsweek.co.uk and tweet using @schoolsweek

To inform the editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication, email laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk with Error/Concern in the subject line.

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

Correction

In last week's edition ('£100,000 funding boost for trust', Edition 53, Jan 15, 2015) we said that a private equity firm, Impetus-PEF, was providing a multi-academy trust with £100,000 of funding.

Impetus-PEF is a charitable foundation, funded by many private equity firms, and also receiving some government grants.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

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PROFILE

“IT’S THE QUALITIES OF DEVELOPING OTHERS, CHALLENGING, QUESTIONING, BUILDING TRUST, BEING HUMAN”

ANN MCGAURAN
@ANNMCGAURAN

Joyce Matthews, leadership development specialist

What will Joyce Matthews do next? The school leadership development specialist and samba player is thinking about her next possible career move. Could she see herself as an adviser at the Department for Education?

“Yes – I’d be chief questioning officer. I’d go in and cause trouble!” She quickly adds: “I’m very nice. Honestly – very meek.”

Her latest book, *Invent a Job for Teachers: How to create a job worth leaving school for*, encourages teachers to imagine themselves in their next role. “Chief questioning officer” Matthews does have a ring to it. Open, feisty and down to earth, this practitioner in neuro linguistic programming would also bring a dose of Glaswegian humanity to the higher echelons of policy making.

As a former head of PE, she’d get the department into shape too. The idea of her coaching a leadership dodgeball team that featured Nicky Morgan, Nick Gibb and Lord Nash makes me chuckle.

Matthews has also worked as an advisory teacher, lecturer, mentor, coach and partnership development manager for the Newcastle School Sport Partnership. She is a National College of School Leadership (NCSL) certified lead facilitator with 28 years’ experience in developing and facilitating learning in the education sector.

Her leadership mentoring and coaching assignments for the NCSL and others have taken her to Brunei, China, Canada, Zambia and Japan in just the last two years. On the day we meet she is facilitating at training organised by the University of Nottingham, which has a campus at Ningbo in China, for a group of headteachers from Guangdong. “They are a great bunch of deep thinking principals – we can also learn a lot from their system.”

She is managing director of her own company and has clearly enjoyed her many assignments here and abroad: “I get to learn, I get to meet lots of interesting people, and I get to travel.”

Matthews is also the author of three other books – #Unschoolleaders, *Inspiring #Unschoolleaders* and *The School Leader’s Guide to Outstanding Writing*. “I’ve written about leading others, so I can learn it inside out. I think the theme has evolved from me working out how to help

others to lead, to being more about me.”

Matthews believes the qualities that make a good leader are the same as those that make a good facilitator or coach. “It’s the qualities of developing others, challenging, questioning, building trust, being human.”

She tells me that 80 per cent of all learning is modelling. It’s obvious that she was observing, imitating and seeking out role models right from the start.

Matthews was born near Glasgow, and was always interested in sport. “I wanted to be [Olympic gold medal gymnast] Olga Korbut. I saw her and I wanted to be a gymnast.”

She did gymnastics with her father Jack – no club could take her on as they didn’t have the coaching infrastructure. Her father, an accountant who had been a “great gymnast during his time in the army”, filed down an old metal swing for her to use. “He ran with me as well. He taught me everything.”

Matthews decided at seven that she wanted to be a PE teacher like the tracksuited woman who moved into the house next door. “She wore a beautiful tracksuit with tapered legs – blue with a white stripe down the side. She was lean, she was elegant. She had an Avengers Purdy haircut. A role model. I thought ‘I want to be Olga Korbut. I can’t quite be her – so I’m going to be Mrs Thompson.’”

Her mother Margaret was a primary teacher and taught all her working life, apart from 11 years off to raise her three daughters, while her uncle was a headteacher. Matthews’ mother taught in a “very rough primary school where they used to remove the children’s shoes before they belted them so they wouldn’t run home”. This was where

JOYCE MATT

Matthews started in the nursery when her mother returned to teaching.

As the youngest of three sisters, she learned the essential art of standing up for herself. “I was always having to stand my corner and fight my place and from when I was tiny I can remember if you were offered a biscuit my sisters would say ‘Joyce doesn’t want one.’ So I had to find a voice pretty quickly!”

Matthews was hardworking, but unafraid to be different. “I would like to think I kept my head down but there was always that little bit of rebellion. There was the time I was dancing at a school show and dyed my hair purple. We were at the Edinburgh Festival and I thought ‘this is it – I’d better be seen.’”

At secondary school – Park Mains High in Renfrewshire – Matthew’s biggest influence was a PE teacher in her first year, Miss Falconer. “She was young, dynamic and enthusiastic and I think she saw potential in me. She was the one who told me at 13 you need to join the hockey club. Thirty-seven years later I’m still playing. My gym knickers are older than some of the girls on our team! I now play for Peebles hockey club, who are a great team.”

Her years at Dunfermline College of Physical Education – where she got a 2.1 in human movement studies – sound joyful. “I absolutely loved it. I loved learning and playing sport.”

It was here that she met her future husband Stephen, a police officer. “I’m at this PE college and these four boys walk into the dining room – in their shorts – and I

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

Does your family think you've lost your Glasgow accent – are you ever tempted to make it stronger when people annoy you?

They don't think I've lost it because I always have it on at home, but I do hear myself using more "Weegie" words or phrases when I'm stressed or annoyed.

How did sport make you the person you are today?

It gave me the opportunities to learn about myself and what I'm capable of, and I haven't finished playing yet.

Your house is on fire – what two items would you grab?

My laptop and my hockey bag. Everything else I need is in my head and my heart.

What's your idea of a perfect day, and who would you spend it with?

Hockey match in the morning, cuddle up with a book in the afternoon, meal out with family and an evening dancing to '80s music with my Weegie friends. A perfect combination of friends, family and me time.

Where do you see yourself living in future and for what reasons: city or country?

City, for choice of opportunities. I can always choose to visit the countryside when I fancy a break.



Son Crawford's Masters graduation from Oxford University, 2015



Above: Skiing in Lake Louise, Canada, 2014

Playing hockey for her former team - Sunderland Games Club



Primary 1 at Mearns Street Primary School in Greenock - third row from the front, the end child on the right nearest the teacher.



With one of the principals in Brunei



Playing tag rugby with sons Crawford (left) and Sinclair (right)



Graduation day at the University of East Anglia, 1992

HEWS

say to the girls: 'I'll have the one with the black eye.' That was it. He'd been playing rugby at the weekend and was rather battered and bruised. He was doing a postgraduate diploma."

She began her teaching career as a head of PE at North Axholme Comprehensive in Crowle, Scunthorpe. While head of PE at Northgate High School in Dereham, Norfolk, she saw a notice for a philosophy (teaching) degree at the University of East Anglia and signed up. "I got pregnant in the middle of it. I love a challenge! I graduated with my son Crawford [now 24] on my hip."

Crawford is doing a doctorate in history at Hull University, while Matthew's other son Sinclair is 21 and a ski instructor. Both play rugby league at international level.

She got involved with samba drumming because Sinclair played in a samba band when he was younger. "I used to take him to gigs and stand in the audience and you can't keep your feet still. He left and I joined!"

Ms Matthews is also a member of an improvisation group. "I saw they had advertised a weekend course and I thought 'I'm going to try it and push myself.' I did one show that was a competition where the audience votes. It was scary, but it was great."

How she finds the time is anyone's guess, but she has also joined a creative writing group. I predict her next book will be another essential read.

Curriculum vitae

Born: May 1965

Education

1970 – 1971	Mearns Street Primary School, Greenock
1971 – 1977	Bishopton Primary School, Bishopton, Renfrewshire
1977 – 1983	Park Mains High School, Renfrewshire
1983 – 1987	Dunfermline College of Physical Education. Degree in human movement studies
1990 – 1992	University of East Anglia. Degree in philosophy of teaching Plus training as a neuro linguistic programming practitioner, lead facilitator and in online facilitation and tutoring

Career

1987 – 2001	Head of girls' PE at positions in Scunthorpe and Norfolk
2001 – 2005	Advisory teacher for PE in Newcastle
2003 – 2006	Visiting lecturer for BA (with QTS), Northumbria University
2003 – 2011	Partnership development manager, Newcastle School Sport Partnership
2011 – 2013	Lead facilitator for middle leadership development programme, National College for School Leadership
2011 – present	Managing director, Joyce Matthews Limited – School Leadership Development
2012 – present	Operational associate for international assignments, National College for Teaching and Leadership

OPINION



JULIE MCCULLOCH

Primary leadership specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders

Partnering up is the future for academies

In 2011, two thirds of primary academies were standalone – but by 2015 65 per cent were in a multi-academy trust. For many schools, outcomes have improved because they support each other

The government's academy programme is growing fast. Sixty five per cent of secondary schools and 18 per cent of primaries now operate outside of local authority control, with their numbers set to swell rapidly over the next few months.

Increasingly, however, those schools aren't operating as standalone institutions, but are finding new and effective ways of working together. Back in 2011, two thirds of primary academies were standalone, with only a third being part of a group. By the end of 2015, the picture had flipped, with 65 per cent of primary academies now forming part of a multi-academy trust (MAT). The greater size and capacity of most secondary schools means that the picture here is less pronounced, but the trend is heading in the same direction, with close to half of secondary academies now part of MATs.

So what do we know about the effects of these changes on England's schools? It's fair to say that the jury is still out on the effects of academisation per se. Last year's education select committee report into academies and free schools put it baldly: "Current evidence does not allow us to draw conclusions on whether academies in themselves are a positive force for change."

The same report was at pains to point out that "academisation is not always successful nor is it the only proven alternative for a struggling school. Both academies and state-maintained schools have a role to play in system-wide improvement."

So far, so mixed. Where things get more interesting, though, is if we look at the emerging evidence about partnerships.

Another education select committee report, this time focused on school partnership and co-operation, found significant evidence for the benefits of formal collaborations between schools, describing them as "an increasingly important part of a self-improving or school-led system". Eighty seven per cent of headteachers and 83 per cent of chairs of governors interviewed by the authors described partnership with other schools as "critical to improving outcomes for students".

Interestingly, the benefits of collaboration aren't confined to multi-academy trusts. A report by the National College for School

Leadership into "hard" federations (groups of maintained schools with shared governance) found that schools in federations performed better than schools with apparently similar characteristics that had not federated.

However, not all partnerships are as effective as others, according to studies by the Sutton Trust. Its investigations into the impact of academy chains on low income students, Chain Effects and Chain Effects 2015, found "very significant variation in outcomes ... both between and

It is shared accountability that makes a difference, rather than the type of school

within chains". It identified five chains that are promoting high attainment for disadvantaged pupils.

However it also found that some chains were highly ineffective, and were failing to improve the prospects of their disadvantaged pupils. The reasons for these differences weren't always clear, but the authors note that the groups with the best outcomes for disadvantaged pupils had two things in common: they had been running schools for a number of years, and had expanded slowly.

So what does all this tell us? It's still early to attempt to draw any lasting conclusions on the effects of the significant structural changes taking place in English schools. The evidence so far, though, suggests that, done right, formal partnerships can help schools to effectively navigate these choppy waters.

It is shared accountability that is most likely to make a difference, rather than any advantage or disadvantage in school types. The reason is simple but profound. As the head of a school that had recently joined a Mat put it: "We are accountable for each other, and therefore it is imperative we support each other to improve."

ASCL, together with the National Governors' Association and the education law firm Browne Jacobson, has produced guidance, Forming or Joining a Group of Schools: staying in control of your school's destiny, to help school leaders and governors to explore the potential of formal collaboration between schools.



MARC ROWLAND

CEO of the National Education Trust

Here's how to make the pupil premium work

We shouldn't judge disadvantaged pupils purely by the academic achievements of students in the best schools, but if used well, the premium is the way to lift barriers to learning

According to the Fabian Society, the number of children in poverty will increase from 2.5 million today to 4.4 million by Christmas 2030. Whether that terrifying prediction comes to pass remains to be seen, but we can be certain that child poverty is not going away. The challenge of tackling educational disadvantage continues. There should be no let-up in our efforts.

At the same time, social policy in areas such as housing do not make things easier. Neither do budgetary challenges in schools. While things are not going to become easier, educational disadvantage can be overcome. I believe this because over the last three years I spent time in schools doing precisely that.

History is littered with examples of poor leadership leading to devastating outcomes for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. Some of the worst come from maritime history. Read about the Medusa, the Amphitrite or the Batavia for starters.

Similarly, school leadership plays a critical role in tackling educational disadvantage. It is crucial school leaders ensure everyone understands their role in making school a great place to learn for all: from the school reception to midday supervisors to governor meetings. The same applies whether the school has 2 per cent or 72 per cent of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The most effective schools benchmark outcomes for disadvantaged pupils against the very best schools. Last autumn, I spent some time at Burnt Mill Academy in Harlow. This school never talks about "expected levels of progress" or says "you should see the attainment on entry". They benchmark against the highest performing London schools and expect to outperform them.

The term "closing the gap" should be confined to the past. Our focus should be attainment for all. Closing the gap puts limits on what disadvantaged pupils can achieve. It assumes they can only do as well as the average score of their more fortunate peers. Further, the terminology discourages schools from doing the most important thing: improving the quality of teaching every pupil receives each day.

In the early days of the pupil premium, one of the mistakes made – extra funding for children on free school meals – was treating disadvantaged pupils as a homogenous group. Increasingly, secondary schools are using their pupil premium to create time to get to know their disadvantaged pupils

better, so their support can be increasingly personalised.

There is a need to think about success beyond narrow academic outcomes

If analysis of the barriers an individual pupil faces shows parents are not reading at home to children, it should flag up that the child needs to receive even more support in being read to at school. This is what the pupil premium is for.

If a school is experiencing high turnover among staff, that is a significant barrier for disadvantaged pupils. It's no good spending funding on catch-up intentions, ICT hardware or music lessons if there is a different teacher in class each month. If recruitment and retention is a challenge, offer excellent continual professional development; increase non-contact time used to plan and evaluate approaches to maximise impact on disadvantaged learners.

One area where there could be significant improvement is in primary-secondary transition. If a pupil in year 6 has received intensive support throughout primary school, the secondary school has got to have this information. Both phases have to take responsibility for continuity of care, otherwise the learner suffers.

There is a need to think about success with the pupil premium beyond narrow academic outcomes. If a pupil achieves age-related expectations at the end of primary but that only lasts two terms at secondary, it can't be considered a success. While five A*-C grades, including English and maths, may open a door, it doesn't necessarily mean a student will have the confidence or connections to maximise those hard won achievements.

It is important to remember that success may look very different for some young people with multiple barriers to learning. I would never suggest we should have low expectations for young people with special educational needs, but we need to look at the catastrophic employment statistics. For every young person, success with the pupil premium should be about opportunity and independence.

These things take time. The pupil premium can create time to support disadvantaged pupils and creates an opportunity to do more with more.



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REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit
www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Emma Hardy, former primary school teacher and union organiser @emmaannhardy

Education. What's it all for?
By @EddiePlayfair

Some have called this a pointless debate. I have referred to it in the past as a discussion that can only be had with a couple of bottles of red wine to take away the pain of the endless circling debate. Twitter is filled with people claiming that any answer given that is not about making people cleverer must be wrong. If we don't have a collective agreement on the purpose of education, how can we ever decide if our education system is effective? Here Eddie Playfair offers his contribution to the education select committee investigation into the purpose of education. I loved this part: "Education has to help us join the world while opening up the possibility of changing it for the better."

On going into care. And being brave.
@Headguruteacher

There are few blog posts now that make me cry, but reading this moved me. Tom always writes with such respect and such genuine warmth and this post is no exception. When our students don't always follow the mythical line of progress and schools are condemned I can only conclude that politicians and the media forget that life happens to our students. The way Tom recounts the reaction of staff when this pupil leaves reminds us that schools are more than just places to learn, they are places of support and love too. "And then the taxi came. Time to go. We said goodbye. And, once he'd left, we all crumbled. It wasn't his sadness – it was his

bravery. He was doing something so much harder than anything most people ever have to do. He got up to face it – I could barely look at him in case he saw me cry when he was doing his best not to ... Stephen – take care. We're proud of you and we'll be there when you need us."

Ch-ch-ch-changes in education in England
Mike Treadaway

After being lured to read this by the catchy title tribute to the brilliant David Bowie I found myself becoming frightened. I fear that teachers are not aware of the consequences of changes to testing. More schools will become "failing". No teacher, governor or head wants to face the dire, demotivating and crushing consequences of being deemed to be failing. "It's very unlikely that any schools think that they have 'got it made' but I do wonder if they are aware of the changes and challenges which will come over the next few years. In particular, the new 'expected standard' will be far more challenging: Broadly equivalent to level 4B or above in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 Grade 5 or higher at Key Stage 4 ... When the new Grade 5 standard is introduced in place of the current C grade standard, we calculate that the percentage of children who secure this "good pass" level in English and Maths will initially fall by around 23 per cent, from 58 per cent to 35 per cent."

With test changes like these happening, is it any wonder the curriculum diet for our children is narrowed and our belief in the true purpose of education is forgotten?

The Narrows
@Sue_Cowley

Our beliefs about the purpose of education will affect our reaction to the narrowing of the curriculum to ensure children pass tests. Some teachers will see other subjects as secondary to a secure grounding in maths and English, but at what age can you sacrifice the entitlement to a broad and balanced education? How are the year 2 teachers feeling in your school? How are you feeling after reading the Datalab blog? Here, Sue highlights some of the many problems in getting children to resit SATs in year 7. "Why on earth would we decide to compound problems of transition by adding the stress of a test they must 'pass' after less than 100 days at a new school? The biggest reason why this idea is so worrying is because of what will happen to the curriculum for these children. I can already imagine the interventions, the narrow set of subjects, and the after school classes. What kind of way is this to inspire children as they begin a new chapter?"

BOOK REVIEW

A Generation of Radical Educational Change: Stories from the field

Edited by Richard Pring and Martin Roberts

Publisher: Routledge

ISBN-10 1138941913

ISBN-13 978-1138941915

Reviewer Anthony Radice: head of English and father of five



This is a rather disparate and anecdotal collection of musings on education over the last 40 years. The things most of the contributors have in common are an adherence to progressive ideas (Plowden is always mentioned with warm approval); a contempt for those outside the professional fold, particularly politicians and the apparently clueless ordinary parents to whom they appeal; and a dislike of government interference, which is connected in their minds with nasty rightwingers who want to specify what schools teach.

Ordinary folk are conspicuously absent from the book in general, which breathes the rarefied air of the chosen few, those champions of "local accountability" who did whatever they liked in the heady days before they were actually held accountable, in any meaningful or direct way, to the parents on whose children they inflicted their noble ideals.

Overall, the book is critical of the top-down approach to educational reform, lamenting what it sees as the indifference of government to "professional opinion and serious research". But for all their faults, politicians are aiming to represent the views of ordinary people, while the priesthood of professional administrators and academics has no such accountability. This cry of pain from the comfortable professional class is unlikely to find much sympathy with ordinary people.

But then, they'll never read it anyway. Aimed at "aspiring headteachers and policy makers", the tone of the book is that of an internal discussion between initiates, not a broader appeal to the population at large. One wonders whether it would be considered by some of the contributors a distasteful sort of demagoguery even to attempt to appeal to those not initiated into the labyrinthine mysteries of modern public education.

The title suggests that the book aims to report what is actually going on in schools. The "field" suggests the arena of battle. Nonetheless, with the exception of one journalist, and, of course, the venerable Lord

Baker, all of the authors have spent most of their careers as administrators or academics rather than classroom teachers. It's a self-enclosed and self-congratulatory group, convinced of its own rectitude, and drawing much of its "evidence" from the writings of other group members, or even from the authors' own previous publications. From their sanctuary of impervious left liberal righteousness, the group looks out with horror and disgust at the antics of the nasty rightwing reactionaries that have spoiled their fun, and the foolish electorate that insists on repeatedly voting them into office

There is also an aloof refusal to engage with the example of the independent sector, to which so many of these ignorant, reactionary parents have fled, especially in London. How odd that they should insist on doing so, even while the ILEA was creating such a wonderful, "locally accountable" system.

The honourable exception in amongst all the stifling self-referential self-congratulation is Tim Oates, who delivers

a brief and stimulating chapter on the importance of stability in assessment, in order to be able to measure the impact of reform. Unlike the other contributors, he actually engages directly with key ideas, instead of avoiding them by simply sticking political labels onto opponents, or pretending that the debate does not exist.

I avoided reading education books for years because they all seemed to be like this: detached, academic, jargon infested, and above all, determined to prevent a breakout of dangerous common sense in the sanctuary of the education theocracy.

If you want to enter the priesthood of educational administration, perhaps you'd benefit from learning some of its mystical language by reading books like this. If, on the other hand, you're interested in actually promoting learning in the classroom, don't bother. Do it for yourself instead. In a refreshing, if brief, departure from the ivory tower, Pring notes the phenomenon of teachers using social media for professional development in positive tones.

More typical of the contributors' attitudes, however, is Peter Wilby's dismissal of the "poorly informed comment" of blog writers, unless they be his allies, of course, as in the case of the Local Schools Network, who show an admirable determination to support local bureaucrats in their efforts to criticise the creation of schools such as Katharine Birbalsingh's Michaela Free School.



NEXT WEEK
The Rise of the Robots'
by Martin Ford
Reviewed by: Matt Hood

What research are you working on?

We've been looking at what "outstanding" means. We started off to try and pin down what it meant. We found that part of that is the word outstanding equals Ofsted, and interestingly that was for both teachers and students.

The research emerged from two separate projects. One was in the further education and skills sector: that was quite a large-scale project. We spoke to 30 different colleges, we'd framed FE practitioners to be action researchers, and they sent back to us their understanding of what outstanding was.

The other bit was looking at one outstanding school in a lot of detail. We interviewed students. We also interviewed people in the office. For instance one of the premises managers told us that he knew if a lesson was outstanding or not! So he might be outside in the corridor fixing a light bulb or something, and he would know if it was an outstanding lesson just by listening to the conversations, the tone, and the interactions between students and teachers – which was interesting.

You say this research is interesting, why is that?

The headline finding is that there's a disconnect between what the inspection

RESEARCH CORNER**Q&A****ANDREW CLAPHAM**

PRINCIPAL LECTURER, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY



Legitimation, performativity and the tyranny of a 'hijacked' word

says outstanding is and what our informants say outstanding is.

Of course, there are loads of similarities, a lot of the things in the common inspection framework like attendance and behaviour and all those things, they come up obviously, but there's a tranche of vital emotional elements that just don't feature in the common inspection framework. And the argument is that this kind of negates any

claim for outstandingness.

What's the main message?

That this word "outstanding" has, in many cases, as one of our informants told us, been hijacked by the inspection narrative.

When we dug a little deeper, we found out that what year 9 and year 10 pupils were telling us what they thought outstanding was, plus a whole range of other people

– dinner ladies, chairs of governors, headteachers – what they told us was that the really important parts of being outstanding didn't feature anywhere in the Ofsted common inspection framework.

What's unique about this particular approach is that no one is actually talking about the emotion of inspection. People think there are other things about being outstanding: trust, empathy, relationships, fun, understanding, intuition – all of these parts are absolutely vital for outstanding practice, but as I said, don't feature anywhere in the inspection framework.

You can understand why, because how is an inspector going to go and see whether those things are there or not?

What do you hope its impact will be?

I'm a policy sociologist, so I look at inspection as a policy and I see how people enact that, and not implement it. There's a nuance there between the two. I look at how people enact it in their day to day work, and that can be students as well as teachers. I am hoping that a report like this will influence policy, and enable inspection to take account of these hard-to-measure emotional aspects of outstanding practice.

Recommended study: Stephen Ball's work on performativity.



A week in Westminster

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

THURSDAY:

No more Chris Wormald! The much-loved chief of the Department for Education (DfE), and favourite of this column, is to become the chief of the Department of Health. We grieved in the office by sharing our favourite of his moments: including the time he defended the DfE Christmas party at which senior civil servants wore hats with "new year's resolutions" written on (which happened to involve cutting people's jobs - erk).

Don't worry though, we already shot an email over to some health journos to mention his large taxi fare bills.

Aw, bye bye Wormald. We'll miss you.

FRIDAY:

Dunno. Pub?

MONDAY:

I spy with my little eye a rather weird line in the DfE's latest budget release.

The spreadsheet gives all expenditure over £500 on a government procurement card (so not standard things bought centrally or planned in advance).

Most things are quite dull – legal books, computer equipment – but on December 8 a transaction of £804.96 is described as being for "external meeting facilities for a senior civil servant workshop, no internal facilities available". Given the DfE's offices are the size of a small palace this seems unlikely unless someone forgot to book the room, but then I guess we don't know the size of the civil servants.

Even more curious is that the transaction was paid to "My Donate". A quick check on Companies House reveals no business listed with that name. BT operates a charitable giving website with the same name. Which leaves the question: which charity charged £804.96 to a super-sized gaggle of civil servants for a meeting room?

TUESDAY:

Today was Educate Against Hate day,

named after the government's newly launched anti-extremism website. We like to imagine the bods paid to come up with that name sitting round a table ... "Being rad is sad" ... no ... um ... "Hate mate?" Helpfully the phrase "educate against hate" was ready to lift off the shelf as it has been used for many years in LGBT circles, with an entire programme dedicated to it in America. No doubt they will be glad of the confusion the UK's new website will now cause.

Elsewhere, at the World Education Forum, Nick Gibb gave a speech and used scientific evidence (read: the work of a few select psychologists) to show how everything he thinks is correct.

There was one weird bit where he changed from talking about the wonders of education technology for homework to suddenly suggesting web-based learning was the least effective form of instruction. Shrug?

He also mentioned hanging out with a former accountant who became a teacher. Week in Westminster wonders if Nick Gibb, who used to be an accountant, wishes he had become a teacher. Also we pondered if Gibb's years spent as an

auditor, looking at currency, didn't have something to do with the DfE suddenly deciding to bring back commas in maths teaching (see page 6). He wouldn't just decide something like that on a whim now, would he?

WEDNESDAY:

Lest anyone be concerned that radicalisation is not a real threat, fear not, MP Jim Shannon has another enemy for you to worry about.

During a parliamentary debate to discuss the inspection of unregistered education establishments (page 2), such as Sunday schools and madrassas, he said that new measures would mean Ofsted inspectors visiting bell-ringing classes and Sunday schools. "They'll be sitting at every corner with their black shirts on waiting to do the business."

Blackshirts is the nickname of the 1930s British Union of Fascists. Quite the remark.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEK FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

School Bulletin



Bristol biker

A student from Bristol has been ranked seventh in the UK and 22nd in the world for trial bike riding.

Victoria Payne, 17, attends King's Oak Academy and rides for the Malcolm Rathmell Sport team and competes in races across the country and Europe.

She also rides for the Great Britain Youth Squad, dedicating more than 10 hours per week to practising, plus gym work. Victoria has ridden since the age of six and her most notable achievement to date was winning the 2014 British Championship youth class.

"I think it's brilliant to be seventh in the UK, I have trained and worked hard for this," Victoria says. "I would like to thank my family and my sponsors for their endless support and encouragement."

Thomas Taylor, Victoria's tutor says: "Staff and students at King's Oak are immensely proud of Victoria's achievements and wish her continued success with her trial bike riding career."



Victoria Payne displays her trial bike riding skills at King's Oak Academy



Minerva Primary Academy pupils demonstrate the first aid skills they have learned during the SkillForce Junior Prince's Award

Awards scheme goes national

An awards scheme to help schoolchildren become self-confident and resilient has been launched nationally. The SkillForce Junior Prince's Award scheme comprises 40 hours of activities that include teamwork challenges and community projects.

It is delivered in schools by SkillForce instructors, who are predominantly ex-Service personnel.

So far, the scheme has reached more than 3,000 pupils from Yorkshire, Birmingham and London and is now being offered across the country.

To mark the launch, pupils at Minerva Primary Academy in Bristol showed some of the first aid skills they are learning as part of the award project. The demonstration included working in small groups on resuscitation mannequins and practising the recovery position.

Principal Peter Hallam says: "We are thrilled to be the first school in Bristol to launch the SkillForce Junior Prince's Award, which is enabling our pupils to develop qualities and skills that will support them for the rest of their lives."

Students' app could save a life

FEATURED

A life-saving app developed by three pupils from Suffolk for use in schools across England is now available on the iTunes app store.

The first aid platform, called Fab, short for First Aid Buddy, was devised by year 11 students Gemma Marsh, Ned Nettleton and Alfie Sagon at Ormiston Sudbury Academy. It is designed to be a pocket first aid assistant for children that demonstrates basic triage principles for all minor injuries in a simple, concise and easy to use format.

The app also caters for the inclusion of an emergency number which will alert the parent or guardian of a child at the same time as presenting a first stage treatment synopsis. With a bright colourful interface, the students hope it will be easy to locate on a phone in an emergency.

Fab team member, Gemma says: "I've been doing life saving at my local swimming pool for the last eight years and during that time, I have learned basic first aid to be able to deal with incidents like choking, resuscitation and how to deal with different types of casualties.

"I feel it is better for young people to be prepared and know about these things as they can often happen to children and young people."

The group's idea was brought to life after Gaia Technologies and Ormiston Academies Trust ran an app development competition across its 27 secondary schools.



From left: Alfie Sagon, Gemma Marsh and Ned Nettleton show off their Fab app

Ormiston Sudbury Academy headteacher, Caroline Wilson says: "I am extremely impressed by the app our students produced. They researched rigorously to find a gap in the market of first aid support and supplied an exceptional product to fill that gap.

"They worked hard to perfect the platform, the result being a highly

professional tool. We are very proud of their achievement."

Jon Rashid, head of 3D development at Gaia Technologies, says: "We believed right from the start that this was a well thought-through proposal and were happy to provide technical support throughout the process. Hopefully this will be the first of many more such projects."

MONEY MANAGING SCHEME EXPANDS

Funding for a financial education programme that helps primary schoolchildren to manage money and learn how to save has been expanded.

LifeSavers

The £500,000 funding for LifeSavers, a joint Church of England and Young Enterprise financial education programme, was announced by the Treasury last week, meaning it can expand beyond the pilot scheme currently underway.

The programme uses a three-stranded approach, which includes practical, hands-on transactional learning about money through school savings clubs; values-based financial education resources and training for teachers; and offering support for parents, carers and the wider community to help children learn about money.

LifeSavers is being used in six primary schools in Bradford, Nottinghamshire and south east London but will now be rolled out to a further 120 schools.

Young Enterprise chief executive Michael Mercieca said: "I would like to thank the Treasury for this generous funding towards the LifeSavers project.

"Young Enterprise is delivering this project, working with the Archbishop's Task Group on Responsible Credit and Saving, so this extra funding means we can reach more than 40,000 primary school children with this rewarding opportunity."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Floreat Education Academies Trust (Feat) has appointed **Janet Hilary** as its first chief executive.

Ms Hilary, the current executive principal of the trust, will begin the position from 1 February.

The trust's founder and current managing director, James O'Shaughnessy, becomes a senior adviser as he balances his role at Feat with his new responsibilities as a member of the House of Lords.

Ms Hilary has been a head for the last 20 years, including at national training school St George's CE School in London, Battersea. She says she is a "true believer" in character education "and that is why Floreat is such a natural home for me".

As chief executive, Ms Hilary says she will create a group of "truly world class" schools by training inspirational teachers in-house and working in close partnership with parents.

Ms Hilary says she is also passionate about encouraging more women to take the top jobs in education. She ran a national conference for empowering women in school leadership in 2015.

"I'm here and reaching back to bring all of the others with me," she says.



Janet Hilary



Kate French



Debbie Stokes

Kate French has been appointed as the full-time lead for welfare, inclusion and special educational needs and disability (SEND) at The Education Fellowship.

The role is the first of its kind at the multi-academy trust and will involve Ms French overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Fellowship's SEND policy.

Ms French will also manage inclusion for students with additional educational needs, lead the development of differentiated learning across all academies, as well as mentoring individual teachers who require development and training in classroom skills.

She says: "We recognise that for some children there are barriers that we need to break down, whether they are social, emotional, cultural barriers, which stop them learning and this role is there to breakdown those barriers."

To achieve this, Ms French says the trust will have a lot of engagement with other agencies as well as taking part in a families and schools together project.

Ms French has worked in a range of schools across Northampton and Wellingborough for 23 years.

She completed a degree in education at the University of Northampton and then a masters at the University of Leicester.

Debbie Stokes, current principal at Greensward Academy in Essex, has announced her retirement after 32 years at the school.

The 65-year-old will step down from the top role, which she has held since 2008,

in the summer.

Ms Stokes joined the school as a supply teacher but swiftly made her way up through the ranks of assistant head of year, head of year, head of lower school, head of pastoral and then head of education.

She says her fondest memories are from being a classroom teacher and head of pastoral systems and sharing breakthrough moments with pupils.

"I've had some sad cases including a child who had an alcoholic mother who knew they were going to die eventually and how they have managed to get through," Ms Stokes says.

"I also took a disabled child on a ski trip which I thought was amazing. He was wheelchair bound and taking him away and watching him skiing and enjoying being the same as everybody else was an absolute highlight."

A national leader in education, Ms Stokes once gained a National Teaching Award for community contribution following a nomination from a parent.

She studied science at York St John University before completing a master's in education at Anglia Ruskin University.

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William Howard School

HEADTEACHER
Salary: Group 7 – up to £100k
 WILLIAM HOWARD SCHOOL, BRAMPTON, CUMBRIA

Part of the William Howard Trust, leading the way in education in North Cumbria, William Howard School is a popular and oversubscribed school. It is a vibrant and inclusive community where students and staff are valued, encouraged and supported to fulfil their potential. We are looking for an outstanding headteacher, with the passion and vision to lead and develop the school on its journey to outstanding.



Download our application pack at www.williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk
 Closing date for applications Friday, 5 February 2016



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Transform Teaching School Alliance is a dynamic and innovative partnership of 50 member schools in and around Nottingham, Nottinghamshire and Derby.

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- Free and confidential career coaching
- Advice and support to complete your application
- A taste of the Transform Professional Journey for teachers and leaders
- Free lunch and refreshments
- Workshops for NQTs and applicants for Teacher Training

For further information and to register your interest please contact the Transform Team on **0115 982 5090**, visit www.transformteachingschool.co.uk or just turn up on the day.

TRANSFORM
 Teaching School Alliance
 'Together we Achieve'



HEADTEACHER Hanover Primary School, Islington

SCHOOL GROUP: SIZE 3

SALARY: L18 – L24 (£65,325 – £74,518) PER ANNUM

SALARY NEGOTIABLE FOR OUTSTANDING CANDIDATE.

START DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

This is an exciting opportunity for an excellent leader to build on the work which has already been done in the school to drive our focus on high achievement. You will be ambitious for the school, be able to build good relationships, and embrace the vibrancy and inclusiveness we value.

You will:

- Lead the school community
- Value every child's achievement
- Have a proven track record of school improvement
- Proactively lead the development of teaching and learning so that it becomes outstanding
- Have an understanding of current changes in education and future direction, including governance structures
- Continue existing and develop new partnerships with other schools

Why Hanover could be the school for you:

- A richly diverse school with a strong community ethos
- A supportive governing body and good infrastructure of staff and team leaders
- A 'Good School' that wants to be better

- A school building that was completely refurbished in 2011-12
- In a great location – situated in the heart of Islington by the Regents Canal, we are close to the City and have excellent transport links

If you believe you have the vision, drive, determination and enthusiasm to grasp the opportunities this role offers, we would love to hear from you.

Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged. Please contact our School Business Manager, **Mel Burrows** on **(0207) 689 8949** to arrange a suitable date.

To apply, please click here or apply online via www.islington.gov.uk following the jobs link. If you require assistance, please email Schools' HR on schoolsrecruitment@islington.gov.uk.

Closing date: Noon, Monday 1st February

Interview: 8th and 9th February 2016





THE GARDEN

Assistant Headteacher The Garden School, Hackney £62,000 - £67,500

We are interested in hearing from candidates with experience of successful middle or senior leadership gained in special education who have

- Experience as an outstanding classroom practitioner for pupils with autism and learning difficulties in a special educational setting
- Recent proven experience of leading, motivating and inspiring individuals and teams in such a setting

The successful candidate will have

- A thorough knowledge and track record of leading the development and delivery of an outstanding curriculum for primary and secondary students with complex needs and autism.
- The ability to analyse data to evaluate the performance of pupil groups, pupil progress and plan an appropriate course of action for whole school improvement.
- An understanding of the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum
- The leadership, professionalism, inter-personal and communication skills to motivate and inspire class teachers.
- The proven ability to work collaboratively in a multi professional team to secure successful outcomes for children and young people.

We can offer

- A talented, hard-working and supportive school team
- A purpose built school with excellent facilities and a friendly working environment
- An exceptional opportunity to develop your career in school leadership
- A comprehensive induction programme and excellent opportunities for CPD.

At The Garden we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff to share this commitment.

For this post pre-employment checks will be carried out, references will be sought and successful candidates will need to undertake an enhanced CRB check. We welcome applications from all sections of the community, regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age.

Closing date for applications: Friday 29th January 2016

Interviews: Week beginning Monday 8th February 2016

Applications and enquiries to: recruitment@thegarden.hackney.sch.uk



HEAD TEACHER

GLENESK SCHOOL, EAST HORSLEY, SURREY

Founded in 1925, Glenesk is the only independent Pre-Preparatory school in East Horsley, Surrey. A small school, where every child is known and nurtured, we place an emphasis on developing both a child's character and academic abilities.

We are now looking to recruit a Head Teacher to lead this thriving, community focused school on to further success.

Closing date for applications is 09:00 am 05 February 2016

Post to commence September 2016

Attractive remuneration package provided

If you would like to apply for the above post, an application form and further information can be downloaded from www.cognitaschools.com

Cognita Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and other third parties to share this commitment. Safer Recruitment practice and pre-employment background checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed.



Parnwell Primary School

Deputy Headteacher (L6 - L10)

Start Date: Easter 2016



We are seeking to appoint an experienced, enthusiastic and ambitious Deputy Headteacher to join our friendly team and deliver a high quality education from Easter 2016.

The Governors are also offering a generous relocation package to the right candidate.

Application Deadline: 31st January 2016



For more details and to apply, please visit:

teachpeterborough.co.uk/school/parnwell-primary-school

Or contact Rebecca Ims on 01733 349182 or RIms@parnwellschool.co.uk

HEAD TEACHER, HALTON

Apply by: 12noon on 28th January 2016.

Starting date: September 2016

Salary: Group 3 school

Location: Widnes, Halton, Cheshire.

Contract type: Full Time

Contract term: Permanent



Lunt's Heath is an outstanding Primary School located in Widnes, Cheshire. It is a popular, happy and friendly school where children enjoy learning and are given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our aim is to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where children feel valued and respected and are motivated to become independent and confident learners and thinkers and who will become responsible, trustworthy and caring members of society. We seek to appoint an enthusiastic and inspirational Head Teacher to continue to develop the ethos of this school, which has an excellent reputation.

Due to the retirement of our highly successful Head Teacher, this is an exciting opportunity to lead a thriving and high achieving school which has an effective senior leadership team in place. Our new Head Teacher will build on our success, but will bring their own vision and experience to enable the school to continue to grow and develop.

THE PUPILS, STAFF, GOVERNORS AND PARENTS ARE LOOKING FOR

SOMEONE WHO WILL:

- * have a background in teaching but also a proven track record in leadership and managerial ability;
- * strive to maintain the special nature of our school.
- * continue to provide our pupils with a happy, safe and secure environment
- * offer a reassuring presence to maintain all the qualities that make us an 'outstanding' school (Ofsted 2014);

AT OUR SCHOOL YOU WILL FIND:

- * happy, bright, well balanced and enthusiastic children;

- * a caring, supportive environment between staff and children;
- * an inspirational, forward looking leadership team and dedicated, experienced staff;
- * supportive governors and parents;

Responsible to the Governing Body and the Local Authority

Salary: Group 3 school, in the range of L18-L23.

For an application form, please call the school office on 0151 423 3322. Informal visits to school are encouraged, please call the office as above.

Closing date: Thursday 28 January at 12noon.

Shortlisting: 1 February 2016. Interviews: 10/11 February.

Safeguarding statement: We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We follow safer recruitment practices and appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

To apply, please call: 0151 423 3322



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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN a *Schools Week* mug



What's the caption? tweet a caption @schoolsweek



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins a mug. Tweet a picture of your completed spot the difference using @schoolsweek in the tweet.