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FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2016 | EDITION 55

## Morgan praises (delayed) micro:bit

See full story on page 6



Nicky Morgan

## Government backing sought for teaching apprenticeship plan

- No-degree route would help teaching assistants
- University 'wrong way' for some trainees

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

@FCDWHITTAKER

**Exclusive**

A group of schools planning an "entirely vocational pathway" to qualified teacher status (QTS) has sought the backing of government for its new apprenticeship.

The proposal coincides with the government announcing new legislation requiring public bodies with more than 250 employees to recruit a minimum six apprentices per year – including schools.

If agreed, the apprentice teaching assistants (TAs) would start at a level three qualification equivalent to A-levels, and if extended then continue training up to level six, equivalent to a bachelor's degree, and achieve QTS without having to go to university.

The scheme is the brainchild of 11 schools in Buckinghamshire and the West Midlands, which have submitted plans to the Department

for Business, Innovation and Skills under its new trailblazer programme aimed at developing employer-led training.

The application comes at a critical time for both teacher recruitment and apprenticeship creation, with education ministers under pressure to boost the number of trainees entering the profession and meet a pledge made by the prime minister during the general election campaign to generate three million apprenticeship starts over the course of this parliament.

Several of the schools involved in planning the new apprenticeship told *Schools Week* of the need for a vocational route to attract those who would not normally consider a university route into the profession, and to allow talented TAs to progress without having to pursue full-time education.

**Continued on page 2**



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## NEWS

## Schools' plan to train teachers without degrees

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CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Jenny Brinkworth, office manager at Buckinghamshire's Hughenden Primary School, wrote the bid sent to government, and explained that her school had already benefited from employing apprentice business managers and TAs.

She told *Schools Week* apprenticeships allowed those who did not feel confident about going to university and wanted a more "hands-on approach" to enter careers in education.

She said extending the scheme beyond level three was something the school was very excited about, adding: "I can't believe people say they don't advocate the apprenticeship route, because to me it's the best thing ever."

The proposals are also backed by Great Kimble Church of England Primary School.

Gillian Harrington, the school's headteacher said she was keen to be involved in development of a vocational pathway to QTS, to "see if this is a possible way of bringing people into the profession who otherwise might not have thought of entering it".

She added: "I think there are some people for whom school and university is the right way and I think there are other people for whom it is the wrong way. I think there could be other ways to bring people into teaching, and this is about exploring whether this is one of those ways."

Earlier this week, skills minister Nick



Nick Boles

Boles announced new plans that will require all public authorities with more than 250 employees to recruit 2.3 per cent of their staff as apprentices each year.

Schools were included in an official list of organisations expected to fall under the rule, with maintained schools and those in large academy trusts most likely to be affected.

The apprentices can work in any part of an organisation and there is no planned requirement for schools to offer classroom-based roles.

The Department for Education also said the government was not planning any changes to initial teacher training criteria,

which stipulate all entrants to teacher programmes must hold an undergraduate degree or equivalent.

But Jayne Bullock from Collaborative Schools Ltd, a federation linked to the Mead Teaching School in Trowbridge, said the aspiration to "provide a full vocational pathway towards QTS" was something her organisation was keen to explore.

The scheme also has the backing of apprenticeship provider National Schools Training (NST), Walsall College, Buckinghamshire Adult Learning, Profile Development and Training and Hackney Learning Trust.

NST director Lee Povah said TAs often became stuck at level three because they could not afford to leave paid employment for full-time education.

He said an entirely vocational pathway from level two to QTS would be attractive to some of the 243,700 full-time TAs in schools, adding that the pathway would provide an "additional talent pool" for schools.

The proposal has been cautiously welcomed by Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College leaders, who said the route from TA into teaching was one that "many people have already travelled", adding: "This may well be an appropriate way of doing that for many people."

Mr Trobe added: "In the past, people have had to go off and do part-time degrees in order to make that transition, and I think it will certainly be interesting to look at this idea."

## SCHOOLS MUST GIVE COLLEGES 'ACCESS' TO PUPILS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Schools will be forced to let colleges and apprenticeship providers advertise directly to pupils under new legislation announced this week.

The plans mean schools could be required to hold independent "careers fairs" and let companies of all sizes speak with pupils.

The proposed laws would require schools to let pupils hear from apprenticeship providers and further education (FE) institutions as part of their careers guidance.

Education secretary Nicky Morgan announced the move on Sunday, saying it would reduce "an outdated snobbery" towards apprenticeships.

But questions remain over who will make the decisions about which organisations can promote their products in a school, and the body which represents training providers has called for specific guidance to ensure organisations of all sizes and sectors are fairly represented.

Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation believed the key to effective promotion of different career choices was giving all providers

access to students and parents.

Mr Segal said it was important any subsequent statutory guidance to the new legislation addressed those issues and suggested careers fairs organised in schools may be an answer.

He added: "We certainly need a system where existing relationships are respected and where smaller niche providers catering for specific skills priorities are not excluded."

Speaking at the weekend, Ms Morgan said that while going to university is right for many young people, "for other young people the technical education provided by apprenticeships will suit them better".

Several companies with large numbers of apprentices already have close links with schools. Weapons manufacturer BAE Systems is the sponsor of a school in Cumbria, while Rolls-Royce is a co-sponsor of the Cabot Learning Federation, which has schools across south west England.

It is not yet known how these relationships will be affected by the need to allow alternative providers to promote their jobs within a school.

Unions have been cautious in their views about the government's use of the law to force schools into providing broader careers guidance.

NAHT general secretary Russell Hobby

said the proposed legislation, which will be explored further in the government's forthcoming careers strategy this spring, was not the answer to issues with post-16 provision.

He said: "If we want to help our young people, more legislation isn't the answer. What's needed instead is support and funding."

"We should also ask what more the post-16 providers can do to engage with schools. Without all this, schools will always find it difficult to deliver."

Mr Hobby agreed with the government that access to high quality school-based careers guidance was very important for young people, adding: "There are many routes post-16 and students deserve frank advice about their merits."

Leaders within FE have long complained that schools do not always give impartial information to pupils about their options, particularly when schools are trying to sell their own post-16 provision.

Schools are already legally obliged to provide careers guidance.

A rule change in 2012 saw local authorities stripped of this responsibility with schools taking over.

But a report by Ofsted in 2013 found that three-quarters of schools failed to equally promote vocational options.



## NEWS

## EARLY YEARS TEACHER COURSES FACE CLOSURE

SOPHIE SCOTT

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Exclusive

Early years settings are facing a looming teacher shortage, experts have warned, at the same time as the government plans to extend childcare into schools.

Universities, unions and specialists have all spoken to *Schools Week* about the difficulties in recruiting early years teacher trainees.

In October 2014, childcare minister Sam Gyimah advocated school-led nurseries, saying "joined up provision" would be better for parents and children. Ofsted also backed this call.

But *Schools Week* has been told some university courses offering training for Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) are facing closure due to low numbers.

About 45 providers across the country offer the training and are collectively expected to recruit 2,000 university graduates to start in September 2016. There is, however, a scarcity of applicants.

Deborah Lawson, general secretary of Voice the union, told *Schools Week* the low numbers mean "the sector is heading towards a recruitment crisis equal to that which we are experiencing in teaching".

To gain EYTS, trainees must have the same qualifications as those hoping to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) – a degree, at least a C grade in English, maths and science GCSEs, and pass a numeracy and literacy test.



Sam Gyimah



Laura Henry

But EYTS does not guarantee the same terms and conditions as QTS. There is no set pay scale and some providers only pay wages for 35 weeks a year, rather than an annual salary.

Ms Lawson added: "We have concerns about the differing terms and conditions and how that will impact on those working in early years.

"It seems the sector is expected to continue on minimum funding and maximum good will. Good will doesn't pay the mortgage."

The Department for Education (DfE) did not provide figures for how many early years teachers have gained EYTS.

University lecturers told *Schools Week* recruitment onto the new courses had been difficult.

Sally Pearse, principal lecturer in early years teacher education at Sheffield Hallam, said "the exclusion of graduates" who have gained EYTS from being able to switch into teaching made it a less attractive option.

She called on the government to look

again at the plans and "map out a more coherent early years career pathway" including clear routes to senior positions.

Laura Henry, managing director of an early years' consultancy, agreed. She said: "There does not seem to be an incentive for people to gain EYTS if they can get better outcomes by going

down the QTS routes."

The lack of early years teachers is a problem for schools, which are increasingly being encouraged to expand into younger age groups.

Last January, the government announced a £5 million scheme to partner teaching schools with nurseries in a bid to "share best practice" and "drive up standards".

The number of all-through schools, offering provision from 4 to at least 16, has also increased. At least 40 have opened in the last 18 months, with many enrolling pupils from the age of three.

The DfE said EYTS was designed for those who wish to specialise in work with babies and young children and as 80 per cent of the sector was privately-run, the government cannot mandate pay conditions.

A spokesperson said: "We are raising the bar and improving the care children receive by encouraging more graduates into the early years sector."

## Ofqual launches new timetable for exam reforms

The exams watchdog is set to reveal a new timetable today so teachers can keep track of when specifications will be ready for reformed GCSEs and A-levels.

The tables – seen exclusively by *Schools Week* – show detailed information about the progress of reformed subjects submitted to Ofqual for accreditation.

They will be updated every week and show when specifications for subjects due to be taught this September have been signed off by the watchdog. Teachers can then normally view the specification on exam boards' websites. Specifications give details of what students must know, and enable teachers to plan lessons.

It follows concerns that teachers are under a "great deal of unnecessary pressure" over the introduction of the reformed subjects. Currently 50 specifications are accredited – 32 per cent of the total specifications expected to be submitted.

Biology specifications have been submitted by all exam boards at least twice but as *Schools Week* went to press none were agreed. Others, such as Latin and art, are completely signed off.

Chief regulator Glenys Stacey said the tables are part of a drive to make more information available.

She said: "We know it's vital that parents, students and particularly teachers are kept up to date on the progress being made with accreditation."

There will be 20 new GCSEs and A-levels taught from September. Examples of the tables can be viewed at [www.schoolsweek.co.uk](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk)

## SIXTH FORMERS SIGN UP TO BE TEACHERS

JOHN DICKENS

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A new government-funded scheme to recruit top A-level students into teaching has attracted 50 applications.

The Future Teaching Scholars programme offers "high-quality" A-level students a £15,000 grant to take a maths or physics degree before going into a guaranteed on-the-job teacher training place.

The original January deadline for applicants was recently pushed back until the end of March, fuelling speculation there had been few applications.

But *Schools Week* understands Department for Education (DfE) officials are confident they are on course to meet the applications target.

A DfE spokesperson said: "Recruiting high quality science and maths teachers is part of our plan to spread educational excellence everywhere.

"In just under a month we have had 50 applications for the first cohort of the Future Teaching Scholars and are continuing to invite applications."

The spokesperson would not confirm the recruitment target.



The scheme – due to start this September – is funded by the DfE, but run by the Education Development Trust (previously known as CfBT) – a charitable trust which also runs an academy chain.

The DfE advertised the contract for promoting, recruiting and delivering the programme as being worth £16.4 million. In return the trust is expected to recruit three cohorts and deliver the programme between 2015 and 2024.

*Schools Week* approached the trust for comment, but was told to direct queries to the DfE.

The programme is part of a £67 million package announced last year by David Cameron to recruit 2,500 more maths and physics teachers.

Degree students get £5,000 for every year of their three-year course, alongside training and classroom experience before moving on to teacher training.

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SEE PAGE 9 FOR MORE INFO.



## NEWS

## WILSHAW: FACE VEILS COULD LEAD TO OFSTED FAIL

Schools could be judged inadequate by Ofsted if inspectors believe the wearing of face veils, by teachers or pupils, is hindering effective teaching.

Ofsted chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw said on Tuesday that he gave his full support to school leaders who had "decided to take a stand against the inappropriate wearing of the veil".

He added: "I have also made clear to my inspectors that where leaders are condoning the wearing of the face veil by staff members or by pupils when this is clearly hindering communication and effective teaching, they should give consideration to judging the school as inadequate."

His comments sparked criticism from the Muslim Council of Britain, which criticised Sir Michael for using the "megaphone of the media".

A spokesperson added: "It is a shame that the niqab – the full face veil that a minority of Muslim women wear – has become a polarising issue when it need not be."

Kevin Courtney, the deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said schools should be allowed to develop their own "sensible and appropriate" policies on the wearing of religious clothes.

The Department for Education said it was "pleased" leaders restricting veil use "to support effective teaching and learning" were receiving Ofsted's backing.

"It is clearly right that if the wearing of the veil is interfering with education in schools that should trigger action from Ofsted," it added.

## Headteachers' salaries up as schools become academies

JOHN DICKENS  
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The average salary for an academy headteacher has risen by nearly five per cent in 12 months, and the pay packet for primary school leaders is slowly catching up with that of their secondary peers.

A new benchmarking report by the accountancy firm Kreston International has revealed the salary of the leaders of 500 of the academies with which it works.

Their survey found most of the increase in pay for headteachers has been fuelled by that in the primary sector.

Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "One of the things we are seeing is that there are significant additional responsibilities when a school becomes an academy.

"But this is more noticeable when a school moves from a maintained primary to academy, which may be one of the reasons behind the pay growth in the primary sector."

The average salary for a primary head rose from £63,809 in 2014 to £66,702 last year.

That meant their pay last year was 72.5 per cent of what a secondary head was earning on average (£91,906), compared to just under 70 per cent in 2014 (£91,880).

But Mr Trobe called for caution on comparing figures.

"The roles of headteachers are no longer consistent from one year to the next. Executive heads and multi-academy trusts (MATs) are taking on additional schools and additional responsibilities."

The survey found the proportion of MATs had risen from 10 to 23 per cent.

Other notable findings included the "surprising" range of school business managers' salaries. They ranged from just above minimum wage to more than £75,000.

"Part of this variability will be due to experience and qualifications," the report said. It also found nearly one in three business managers do not have a formal accounting qualification.

"What was surprising was that when we asked those without any qualification whether there were plans to study for one in the next 12 months, a resounding 84 per cent said not. Apparently not everyone wants to be an accountant."

Stephen Morales, executive director at the National Association of School Business Management, told *Schools Week* the disparity was due to the different roles but single title of "school business manager".

"In some cases it may be a finance officer, but in others it may be the finance director of a multi-academy trust."

He added: "While you need to have strong financial acumen, I'm not surprised 84 per



Stephen Morales

cent did not want to become a qualified accountant. That is not necessary."

Mr Morales called for greater consistency of what is expected from school business managers.

The report highlights that six out of ten academies expect to run a budget deficit in the next two years. Factors include cash shortages, buildings not properly maintained and pressure on teaching numbers.

Joe Scaife, chair of Kreston's Academies Group, said schools would look for safety in numbers by joining multi-academy trusts, ask parents to dig deep in their own pockets to help out or create new sources of income through such means as hiring out buildings.

He added: "Academies face a wake-up call to become even more business-like in their operation and make some tough choices.

"In some cases, they will need to recruit entrepreneurial managers who can generate new revenue streams whilst leveraging the most out of existing resources."

## FLOOD-HIT CUMBRIA UNIVERSITY COULD LOSE STUDENT TEACHER PLACES

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Exclusive

Cumbria has recently been knee-deep in water, many schools damaged, and now its university's education department is desperately waiting to hear if the cap on recruitment to its teacher training courses can be lifted so applicants still have a chance.

Interviews for prospective teachers were postponed after storm Desmond battered the county at the beginning of December.

From this year, new government rules impose a blanket ban on recruitment of trainees at universities once a national target has been met, meaning that if other universities fill the quota first, Cumbria will be unable to offer its delayed applicants a place.

The controversial move was introduced as part of a government drive for more trainees to learn on the job in routes such as School Direct. But the policy has led to chaos and the government has had to amend its policy after protests from some of the country's top universities.

In November, PE courses at universities were closed just one month after recruitment opened.

A week later, history courses were threatened with closure until a number of providers complained, and the rules were tweaked to allow higher education institutions to continue recruiting until

they had offered places to 75 per cent of the number of applicants from the previous year. For example, 15 if they had previously admitted 20 trainees.

The next day, the 75 per cent rule was extended to English and primary teacher training routes.

Jackie Moses, director of the Institute of Education at the University of Cumbria, said: "Because of the changes, we need to recruit as speedily as possible. We lost about three weeks in December because of the flooding, and then it was the Christmas holidays.

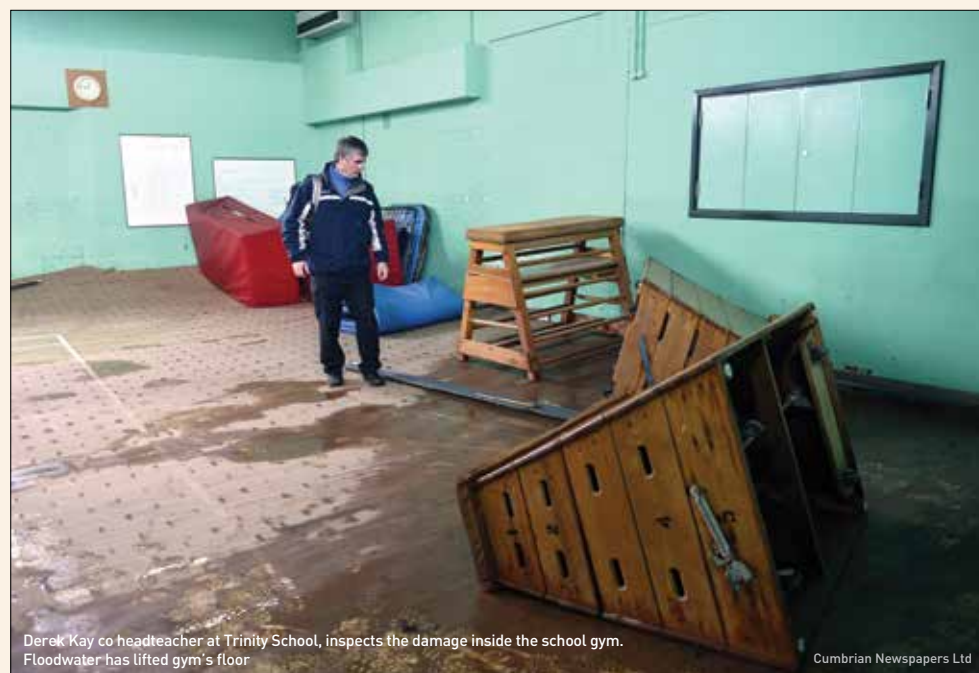
"There is a lot of misconception about the accessibility of the region now, and candidates are reticent about putting travel plans in place."

Ms Moses wrote to the National College of Teachers and Leaders (NCTL), which oversees the targets, to ask if the university could have leeway against the recruitment cap in primary teacher training courses because of the "exceptional circumstances".

The university has yet to receive a firm answer.

Last year, 216 people were recruited to become primary teachers. So far, just 148 acceptances have been received, but the route is now closed. The university faces penalties such as fines or withdrawal of its accreditation if it continues recruiting but 50 people are still awaiting interview.

Ms Moses said she was concerned the system put pressure on universities to



Derek Kay co-headteacher at Trinity School, inspects the damage inside the school gym. Floodwater has lifted gym's floor

Cumbrian Newspapers Ltd

"recruit as fast as possible" rather than looking for the best applicants.

The national cap on numbers does not vary by region, but the NCTL said when announcing the changes that it reserved "the right to control recruitment" in specific parts of the country to maintain "the regional balance of provision".

The storm caused serious damage to the region, and dozens of schools were closed before Christmas. School Direct schools, such as Richard Rose Central Academy in Carlisle, were also closed when the

flooding was at its worst.

Ms Moses said: "I think many of the School Direct schools are understandably worried most about getting back up and running for pupils, rather than teacher training right now."

The Department for Education said: "We know many institutions are still feeling the impact of recent flooding and it is right that we provide support. We are working with the University of Cumbria regarding their initial teacher training recruitment numbers."

## NEWS

## PROFITS UP AT PFI FIRM AS COUNCILS CUT TO MAKE PAYMENTS

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Exclusive

Swimming lessons, a school sports co-ordinator and emergency budgets for special educational needs (SEN) have been axed by councils in order to afford the spiralling cost of private finance initiative (PFI) contracts, at the same time as profits are soaring at the private firms the deals have been made with.

A *Schools Week* investigation has found local authorities are raiding school budgets to plug funding black holes under rising PFI repayments.

Councils receive government grants to repay the firms who built new schools under the Building Schools for the Future programme, but the amounts have stayed static while repayments rise every year.

Previously, councils found the cash to plug funding gaps, but now facing heavy cuts they are looking to recoup costs from other grants given to educate pupils.

Wirral Council had to make £2.3 million of savings last year to meet its PFI shortfall.

Council documents show cabinet councillors slashed £400,000 from their SEN top-up and contingency fund – money put aside to cater for unforeseen and exceptional SEN in schools.

A further £250,000 was slashed from its “support for SEN” budget.

Cutting a school sports co-ordinator role saved £25,000 and another £19,800 was recouped from slashed funding for the use of swimming baths.

The council is locked into a 30-year contract with Wirral Schools Services Limited for the provision of nine schools and a community centre.

Annual accounts show the firm posted a £1.1 million profit after tax last year, up from £740,000 the year before. Its ultimate parent company is Semperian PPP Investment Partners Holdings Limited, registered in Jersey.



Steven Peach, headteacher at Oldershaw Academy and a former chair of Wirral secondary heads' group, said cuts had been affecting the region's schools.

“We are all under significant and increasing pressures with our budgets. Schools will soon have to consider redundancies. But we feel this is a national issue outside our control.”

Wirral council did not respond to requests for comment.

Frank Field, Labour MP for the Birkhead area in Wirral, told *Schools Week*: “The council should make it clear to

the PFI contractors that it isn't paying them another penny.”

He said the contract should be renegotiated to reflect the council's “dramatic loss of funds”, adding: “The alternative is that some of Wirral's most disadvantaged children will suffer a worse education.”

Last year Stoke-on-Trent City Council applied to the Department for Education to pull £7.7 million from its dedicated schools grant reserves to help schools facing PFI difficulties.

Roisin Maguire, head at St Joseph's

College in Stoke, said: “That money is given to the county to educate its children, yet it is being used to pay private companies. The council is creaming off the top [of its surplus] – it means less money is going into schools.”

Other examples of councils having to slash budgets in recent years to plug affordability gaps include Harrow, which had to cut more than £400,000, £200,000 in Lambeth and £125,000 for just one school in Herefordshire.

A series of investigations by *Schools Week* has previously shown how toxic PFI deals are pushing schools into financial ruin.

Jon Richards, Unison's head of education, told *Schools Week*: “The government has left the problem for schools and councils to deal with – in places it's verging on unsustainable.”

In 2000, when the deals were originally signed, Unison alerted the government to the problem in a briefing paper, stating there was a “disturbing pattern emerging of a significant funding gap between what the public authority can afford and the actual, annual charges of PFI schemes”.

Mr Richards added: “Who fundamentally is going to pick up these liabilities in the end? Where does the buck stop?”

Many councils are now calling in legal experts to help renegotiate deals. Slough council has dipped into its general fund to plug a £500,000 gap for its three PFI schools. The council is in talks with its PFI firm to make savings, including taking over the procurement of utilities.

David Johnson, director of Castle Gate Legal & Commercial Ltd, which is used by local authorities to help them renegotiate PFI contracts, said there were some options that could be delivered quickly.

He added: “PFIs are notoriously inflexible and it's not straightforward to renegotiate contracts – a lot depends on the relationship between the local authority and the contractors.”

## IN brief

## Conflict of interest warning over Regional Commissioner advisors

Specialist contractors recruited by the government to help regional schools commissioners improve schools are facing questions over potential conflicts of interest.

The Department for Education (DfE) has awarded contracts totalling £12 million to 93 contractors to support the academies and free schools programme.

In total, regional schools commissioners (RSCs) can call on a pool of about 400 advisers across the 93 contractors.

However an education consultant, who did not want to be named, highlighted a potential conflict of interest. He said two of the firms are primarily involved in recruiting staff and selling software, not school improvement.

The consultant added: “Looking through the list of specialist contractors ... I admit to being surprised.”

“Understanding how those organisations came to be regarded as experts in this field [school improvement] would provide a very useful insight for policy makers.”

Just last week the education committee, as part of its RSC inquiry, welcomed the work of these contractors.

But, it said: “We recommend that the government review the amount of information currently in the public domain about their identity, appointment, work, monitoring and impact, with a view to improving transparency.”

Contractors must ensure their conduct is in line with the civil service code's principles of “honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity”.

Should a contractor break this clause – including by making “inappropriate sales approaches to schools” – the DfE says it will cancel the deal.

## Academy punished after asking for cash to balance budget

An academy has been given a financial notice to improve after asking for a cash advance from the government so it can balance its budget.

Oldershaw Academy Trust, in Wirral, was issued with the notice for submitting a recovery plan that required “recoverable advances” from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to achieve a balanced budget.

While accepting its request, the EFA issued the notice over the school's inability to balance its budget and its weak financial position.

The trust must now achieve future in-year surplus balances and repay the EFA cash by next March.

Steven Peach, Oldershaw Academy's headteacher, said the problem related to “cash flow issues” stemming from how its funding was delivered.

He said the school used to receive a lump sum payment, but after becoming an academy now receives funding in 12 monthly amounts.

“Where we would usually pay annual services in full, we are now having to pay things on a monthly basis,” he said.

The trust must supply a report to the EFA every month. If conditions are not met, the EFA said it will “consider the contractual options available”.

Micon Metcalfe, a business manager at south London's Dunraven School, said this is the first notice she had seen issued explicitly for failing to balance a budget.

*Schools Week* previously revealed the government has handed out £12.6 million in deficit funding since 2011/12 – with just £331,000 expected to be paid back.

## Failed school IT firm bosses are behind new company

Two directors of a computer finance firm that went into liquidation owing schools thousands of pounds have set up a new company, it emerged this week.

Instar Digital Ltd, based in Stafford, ran IT schemes for schools, including student 1:1, salary sacrifice and staff purchase schemes.

It was put into voluntary liquidation last May with creditors owed £670,000. A total of 20 schools and colleges who had signed up for the schemes were owed £171,452.

The two directors behind the failed company – Ronald Bird and Michael Grindle – have set up another firm called Educom Ltd.

According to company records, it was set up last April. The pair were made directors in September.

*Schools Week* called a separate business to ask to speak with Mr Bird or Mr Grindle about the new company.

When asked about the new company, Mr Grindle said it would be a car warranty business. He said he would call back this week with more details, but no call has been received.

Instar Digital is still in the process of being wound up, according to Companies House.

The firm's liquidator did not respond to a request for comment. He had previously told *Schools Week* the company had been put into liquidation because of a slow take-up and high level of bad debt.



## NEWS

## BBC delays roll out of micro:bit computers

Teachers will have to wait until after half term to get hold of the BBC's new micro:bit computers, the broadcaster has said.

The BBC originally planned to provide the small devices, which help children learn to code, to teachers before Christmas so they could familiarise themselves with the devices before a countrywide roll-out to all year 7 pupils by Easter.

The corporation told *Schools Week* teachers would now receive their devices just after the February half term break, but delivery of the 1 million devices for pupils was still on schedule.

The micro:bit is a handheld, fully-programmable computer. The devices are 70 times smaller and 18 times faster than the original BBC Micro computers used by schools in the early 1980s.

The devices have 25 red LED lights that flash messages, along with two programmable buttons which can control games or skip music tracks. They can also detect motion and have built-in compasses.

Anticipation has been building steadily since the plan was announced last March, with Nicky Morgan a vocal supporter.

Last week, the education secretary (pictured on the front page) sported a micro:bit on her wrist, and praised the project at the Bett education technology show. She said she had received a tutorial on how to use it, together with David Cameron and pupils from east London.

"They are a fantastic way to spark an initial interest in technology in our young people," she said.

## Morgan under fire over huge number of academy visits

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Nicky Morgan visited more than double the number of academies as council-maintained schools during her first 14 months in office, it has been revealed.

Figures released under the Freedom of Information Act and analysed by Matthew Wheeler, a school business management expert, offer an insight into the visiting habits of the education secretary.

Since her appointment in July 2014 and last September, Ms Morgan visited 40 academies, of which 20 were converters, 13 sponsored, six free schools and one a studio school. One free school, Corby Technical School, was visited twice during the period.

During the same timeframe, the education secretary visited just 14 community-maintained schools, two foundation schools and only a handful of independent and voluntary-aided schools.

Among the schools visited by Ms Morgan was Durand Academy in London, which has faced controversy in the past year with questions over its finances and alleged conflicts of interest.

Ms Morgan also visited several schools run by the prominent academy chain Ark, including London's King Solomon Academy, which topped the charts last week in *Schools Week's* tables highlighting schools where poorer pupils are performing well.

A Department for Education (DfE) spokesperson said Ms Morgan had visited



### 40 ACADEMIES:

20 converters

13 sponsored

6 free schools

1 studio school

### 22 MAINTAINED SCHOOLS:

14 community

2 foundation

6 voluntary-aided

### 2 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

schools and colleges "across the length and breadth of the country to meet children, teachers and school leaders".

She said: "Decisions on visits are made based on a variety of factors including initiatives the schools are promoting, recent events and requests.

"As these figures show, the secretary of state – and other ministers – are keen to see all types of school and will continue to tour the country during the course of this parliament."

But Janet Downs, from the Local Schools Network, which promotes maintained schools under local oversight, said she was not surprised the education secretary had visited so many more academies than other types of school.

She said: "I have always thought that since 2010 the DfE has had a bias towards academies. Their website promotes academies and free schools with glossy photographs, while community schools barely get a page.

"I'm not surprised that she's mostly visiting academies and only a handful of community schools. If she did visit a good community school, she would probably advise it to become an academy to take advantage of the so-called freedoms."

The list excludes all visits undertaken by Ms Morgan in her local constituency and those during the run-up to the general election last year – these are considered "political" and do not relate to the position of education secretary.

## SEVEN NEW NAMES ON TOP 500 LIST – BUT WHERE ARE TEACHERS?

SOPHIE SCOTT

@SOPH\_E\_SCOTT

Seven new education faces have been added to a list of the 500 most influential people in the country – but not a single current teacher is included.

Included for the first time this year in the education section of the Debrett's 500 list, published by the *Times*, is the education secretary, Nicky Morgan, the Department for Education's mental health champion, Natasha Devon, Professor Louise Stoll from the Institute of Education and the education expert Sir Ken Robinson.

In addition, former "superhead" Sir George Berwick and former Ofsted chair Baroness Sally Morgan of Huyton, now chair of the Future Leaders Trust, also made the list.

The new Oxford University vice chancellor Professor Louise Richardson represents the world of higher education.

The annual list recognises people of

influence and achievement in British society, and includes people from various different sectors such as fashion, journalism, politics and art. Twenty people from the education sector are featured each year.

Ms Devon told *Schools Week* that she felt incredibly honoured to be included on the list.

She added that she was pleased to find herself in distinguished company, saying that Sir Ken Robinson was a "personal hero".

"It also made me feel grateful for all the people who have influenced me, in particular my favourite teachers Victoria Sheppard, Liam Biggins and Sandra Buchanan, who made me believe I could achieve anything I set my mind to."

Union leaders Christine Blower and Russell Hobby make the list again, as does Kevan Collins, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation and Lucy Heller, the CEO of academy chain Ark.

Last year, the teacher and blogger Ross McGill was included in the list, but did not make it to a second year.

Mr McGill, who blogs as Te@cher Toolkit, said: "I have no idea how the process works or how any criteria selects and recognises individuals, however, it is fantastic to see people working in the education sector identified for their hard work and influence on the sector.

"With teachers much more active online in blogs and on social media, challenging myths and fads, shaping national dialogue and policy, it's a real shame not to see any teachers cited for their work with colleagues."

Other people bumped from the list include Sir Anthony Seldon, the former master at Wellington College, who is now vice chancellor of the University of Buckingham, and the national schools commissioner Frank Green, who will leave his role at the end of the month.

## THE MOST INFLUENTIAL EDUCATIONALISTS

Professor Sonia Blandford, founder and CEO,

Achievement for All 3As

Christine Blower, general secretary, NUT

Dame Sally Coates, DBE, director, United Learning's southern academies

Dr Kevan Collins, chief executive, Education Endowment Foundation

Dr Mary Curnock Cook, OBE, chief executive, UCAS

Professor Les Ebdon, CBE, director, Office for Fair Access

Lord Harris of Peckham, sponsor and chair, Harris Federation

Lucy Heller, CEO, Ark Schools

Russell Hobby, general secretary, NAHT

Sir Peter Lampl, OBE, chair, Sutton Trust

Lord Nash, junior minister for schools, and director,

Future Academies

Brett Wigdortz, OBE, founder and CEO, Teach First

Sir Michael Wilshaw, chief inspector, Ofsted

Sir George Berwick, CBE, CEO, Challenge Partners

Natasha Devon, MBE, mental health champion and founder, Self Esteem Team

Nicky Morgan, MP, education secretary

Baroness Morgan of Huyton, chair, Future Leaders Trust

Professor Louise Richardson, vice-chancellor, University of Oxford

Sir Ken Robinson, education expert and professor emeritus of education, University of Warwick

Professor Louise Stoll, education consultant and professor of professional learning, Institute of Education



Natasha Devon



Sir Ken Robinson



Nicky Morgan



Lucy Heller



Russell Hobby

## NEWS

# The schools where low ability is no disadvantage

Continuing *Schools Week's* focus on disadvantaged pupils, we were asked by readers to highlight schools where low ability pupils are not being left behind. Here are the 10 best that we've found

**SOPHIE SCOTT**  
@SOPH\_E\_SCOTT

## Investigates

A handful of schools are beating the odds and making sure pupils arriving with low ability are leaving year 11 on a par with their peers.

Last Thursday, the Department for Education (DfE) released the performance tables for secondary schools based on last summer's GCSE results. Overall 57.1 per cent of pupils achieved the five A\*-C GCSE grades, including English and maths.

Using the data, *Schools Week* brought back its award-winning league tables, focused on the best-performing schools in the country for pupils receiving free school meals (FSM).

This week, we wanted to go even further, with several readers requesting that we looked at schools with large numbers of low ability pupils.

Doing so turned up a few surprises.

*Schools Week* set stringent rules for schools to be included in the tables and of the 3,264 state-funded secondaries, just 10 made the grade.

These schools have high proportions of pupils starting year 10 categorised as "low ability" and high proportions of pupils on free meals, yet the school is still meeting the government-set floor standard and has above national average proportions of low ability pupils getting five A\*-Cs including English and maths.

Eight of the ten schools are academies, split equally between sponsored academies and converters.

Three schools – Whitefield, Aylward and Christ the King – even supported one in five (20 per cent) of their low ability pupils to meet the national benchmark of 5 GCSE passes, including English and maths. Nationally, only 6.7 per cent of low ability pupils achieve this.

The schools featured in our table serve

very disadvantaged areas, with half their cohort, on average, being eligible for free school meals.

Most schools have a low ability intake of about 17 per cent. All the schools in our table had more than double this in last year's cohort.

In these contexts, just two schools got more than half of their pupils to pass five A\*-C GCSEs, including English and maths.

James Westhead, executive director of Teach First, which has graduates in half of the schools featured, said significant challenges remained for the schools, adding: "Only one in three pupils from low income backgrounds are achieving the key results they need. For pupils gaining top grades, a young person from a low income background is six times less likely to achieve an A\* at GCSE than their peers."

He went on: "At the heart of this success is great teachers and school leaders. The results show the urgency of the need to attract more talented individuals to become inspirational teachers."

This year was the final time the five A\*-C measure will be used to judge schools.

As of next year, Progress 8 will be used, which rates pupils' relative performance across eight GCSEs and is billed as a fairer measure.

Schools had the opportunity to opt in a year early for Progress 8, but just 10 per cent took it up.

Association of School and College Leaders' director of policy Leora Cruddas said the union supported the change to Progress 8 in the next league tables.

She added: "The introduction of Progress 8 in next year's performance tables is a better and fairer way of judging schools because it shows what has been achieved for all pupils whatever their starting point at the age of 11."

## 'WE DON'T WANT ANY RHINOS'

No RHINOs is the motto at Whitefield School. Headteacher Liz Rymer isn't banning the animal from the school grounds, but is making sure there are no children who are "really here in name only" or RHINOs as she calls them.

That is part of the success of the Barnet school, where one in five low ability pupils achieved five A\*-C GCSEs including English and maths.

The school, where 88 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, used to be one of capital's failing schools.

Ms Rymer was originally brought in as a consultant under the London Challenge, eventually taking over as headteacher last January.

She said a number of measures were used to raise standards, but was proud of RHINO: "I make a big effort to make sure students get

spoken to in the corridors, encourage people to talk to children. Form classes have two adults – two teachers or a teacher and a teaching assistant – which means one can perhaps take the register and the other talk to the students.

"As a form tutor myself for many years, I know you have so much to do you sometimes forget to speak to the students, so this makes sure that doesn't happen."

The school has form time in the morning and at the end of the day, where positives from the day are praised, and behaviour issues dealt with.

Ms Rymer said she was looking forward to the introduction of Progress 8 as a performance measure.

More than 70 languages are spoken across the school. "It's an absolute microcosm of London. It's really quite exciting."

## TOP 10 SCHOOLS FOR HIGH OUTCOMES FOR LOW ABILITY PUPILS

SCHOOL NAME	LOCAL AUTHORITY	TYPE OF SCHOOL	SPONSOR	NO OF KS4 PUPILS	% 5A*-CEM	LOW ABILITY % 5A*-CEM	% LOW ABILITY	% FSM
Oasis Academy John Williams	Bristol	Academy Sponsor Led	Oasis	95	52%	14%	39%	65%
Ark Kings Academy	Birmingham	Academy Sponsor Led	Ark	62	52%	11%	37%	73%
Moor End Academy	Kirklees	Academy Converter	N/A	139	47%	10%	38%	47%
Whitefield School	Barnet	Academy Converter	N/A	136	45%	19%	41%	47%
St Matthias School	Wolverhampton	Community School	N/A	101	45%	16%	36%	54%
Wigston College	Leicestershire	Academy Converter	N/A	297	45%	10%	36%	21%
Bedford Academy	Bedford	Academy Sponsor Led	Harpur Trust	194	42%	10%	38%	45%
Aylward Academy	Enfield	Academy Sponsor Led	AET	234	41%	19%	44%	62%
Christ The King Catholic High School	Lancashire	Voluntary Aided School	N/A	68	41%	19%	37%	47%
Thomas Bennett Community College	West Sussex	Academy Converter	N/A	191	40%	14%	39%	43%

Source: DfE

## HOW DID WE WORK IT OUT?

**BASED ON RESULTS FROM ALL MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS. EXCLUDES SPECIAL, INDEPENDENT AND SELECTIVE SCHOOLS.**

### SCHOOLS HAD TO HAVE:

- 30 PUPILS OR MORE AT THE END OF KS4
- AT LEAST 20 PER CENT OF PUPILS CLASSED AS DISADVANTAGED
- AT LEAST 35 PER CENT OF PUPILS CLASSED AS "LOW ABILITY" AT THE START OF KS4
- AT LEAST 10 PER CENT OF LOW ABILITY PUPILS ACHIEVING THE BENCHMARK OF FIVE A\*-C GCSEs, INCLUDING ENGLISH AND MATHS
- BE ABOVE THE "FLOOR STANDARD" OF 40 PER CENT OF ALL PUPILS ACHIEVING THIS BENCHMARK

## INCREASING ATTENDANCE IS KEY

Increasing access to the school's sixth form, improving safeguarding, and boosting attendance have all impacted the performance of pupils at Aylward Academy in Enfield.

Like Whitefield, the school has very high proportion of English as an additional language pupils (70 per cent), and is now oversubscribed.

Headteacher Jon Gillard said: "As a leadership team we all work in the same room.

"We needed to work together so everybody knew everything about each student."

Christopher Lam, vice principal for teaching and learning, said impetus was put on pupils' literacy levels, adding: "We value the child that gets from a very low starting point to a high starting point even if that means they have not reached where they should be nationally. If you focus on progress, attainment looks after itself."

Jan Balon, vice principal for curriculum assessment and employability, said the school sixth form now has Level 2 provision: "This says 'we want you to stay with us' and there are pathways.

"Before we were an academy, we had an

exclusive sixth form for five A\*-C only, and that essentially demotivated the rest of the pupils."

A big difference in outcomes came from getting pupils into school: it now has a 94 per cent attendance rate.

Yeliz Sabri, vice principal for student support, said: "The pupils come from complex, difficult, disadvantaged backgrounds. We have 17 safeguarding-trained staff, including our SENco and department heads.

"The attendance team are very proactive and use home visits to engage with parents and to get to the real issue – is it hardship? Or do we need to apply for an Oyster card for that pupil?"





## NEWS

# From PhD to placement in schools

As the lack of teachers shows no sign of ending, increasing numbers of bespoke salaried routes are opening up. *Schools Week* examines the researchers in schools initiative and the benefit it can bring to schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

Academics are being paid up to £32,000 a year to train as teachers under a new scheme aimed at boosting subject specialism in the classroom.

Last summer, 80 people with PhDs were selected from more than 600 applicants to join the researchers in schools (RIS) programme, almost four times the 21 who took part in 2014. And the charity's bosses say they expect interest and participation in the scheme to continue to grow.

*Schools Week* visited a training day held by the programme and caught up with participants to see how it really worked.

Rachel Lawrence, head of department at Lampton School, said the the participants' experience teaching undergraduates made them good at lesson planning. They are also usually highly tenacious and disciplined people, she said.

"It brought very high quality subject specialists in schools," she added. "This opened up possibilities for them to lead and inspire other teachers and students that they teach. A further pull was that teachers with full timetables often do not have time to create new research; however the RIS programme gives teachers time to engage in research."

Under the programme, PhD students are found School Direct training places and are then allocated to placement schools for two years while they work towards qualified teacher status (QTS) and the requirements of their newly-qualified teacher (NQT) year. As part of the scheme, they get a free day each week to continue with their research.

In the first year, which is delivered by a teaching school, participants achieve QTS through training, lesson observation and classroom teaching. They also take part in bespoke training delivered by the RIS team. They are also awarded honorary research associate status at a university.

## 2015 Cohort



80 participants recruited from 600+ applications



82% of applicants not considering training through any other route



60 maths and physics participants recruited from 250+ applications



38% of maths and physics participants are women



10 SCITT providers delivering the programme across seven regions of England



50 non-selective state schools employing participants as teachers



King's College London providing Honorary Research Associate status to 50 participants



15 world-leading businesses continuing to support the programme by supporting maths and physics participants and providing learning opportunities



900 pupils taking part in 'attainment booster' and 'university access' programmes led by participants



University of Southampton providing Visiting Research Fellow status to 30 participants

In the second year, participants meet the requirements of their NQT year through a "reduced teaching timetable", with one day a week without lessons, which continues to provide time for research activities. As part of this, there is an expectation that participants begin to seek out opportunities to have an impact "beyond their own school".

The scheme has a heavy emphasis on maths and physics, with the majority of participants coming from those backgrounds. The incentive for experts in those fields is obvious – a government uplift raises the first year salary from the basic level of £16,298 to £29,000, while in the second year, physics and maths PhDs can earn £32,244, compared to the rate for other subjects, which is £24,002.

Those from a maths and physics background are also auto-enrolled in the government's maths and physics chairs programme, which can see their earning

potential rise to £40,000.

These higher salaries exceed what many classroom practitioners will earn even after several years of experience. Outside of London the maximum pay scale for an ordinary classroom teacher is just over £32,000. In London that only stretches to just shy of £38,000.

But the founders of the programme defend the salaries as an important way of attracting people into the sector who may have been tempted to go elsewhere.

RIS is run by The Brilliant Club, which was set up by former Teach First participants Jonathan Sobczyk and Simon Coyle, now chief executive and chief operating officer respectively.

Mr Coyle said he accepted a salaried route was only one way of recruiting great teachers, but it enabled RIS to attract high-quality academics who may be considering lucrative careers in industry or full-time

roles in academia.

He added: "Although there will always be competition from other sectors for high-calibre PhD graduates, being able to offer a competitive salary allows us to convince applicants that training to become an excellent classroom teacher is a secure option."

According to Coyle, schools don't just benefit from the teaching experience of RIS participants, but from their high-level subject knowledge as well.

"Trainees have run after-school clubs, supported with subject-specific CPD [continued professional development] and helped pupils get involved with real-life research," he said.

The programme's focus on recruiting trainees in maths and physics is also helping schools fill gaps in subject shortage areas, he said, with plans to continue expanding the programme in future.

## DR GARETH WILLIAMS

Dr Gareth Williams is a maths teacher at Robert Napier School, Kent, who joined RIS after working as a postdoctoral research assistant at Queen Mary University, where he completed his astronomy PhD in 2009.

He joined the scheme because it allowed him to combine teacher training with continued research.

"It has been hard work learning the skills required as a teacher and doing research, but this hard work is more than repaid when I see how

inspired the students can be. I have used a number of images from my work at the imaging science subsystem instrument on the Cassini spacecraft, including one in which we serendipitously discovered a new moon that has been dubbed Peggy, to develop the students' understanding of the relevance of mathematics to interesting areas of science, such as astronomy."



## DR SARAH JHUMKA

Dr Sarah Jhumka, a physics teacher at Chiswick School in west London, said other routes did not necessarily call for high-level subject specialisation, and that the RIS scheme had ensured her PhD was not redundant.

"From my experience at school, the interaction I had with my physics teacher was crucial in developing my own passion for the subject, and my desire to read physics at university. I wanted to inspire other young

people to develop their knowledge and interest in physics.

"I am now teaching science at key stages 3 and 4, and physics at key stage 5. I am also a sixth form tutor. My responsibilities at school have already drawn on my experience at university. Using my experience from being involved in the admission process in my faculty I have been able to advise students applying to university or work and summer placements."





# The Telegraph

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Last week we had a poke at Nicky Morgan for being in slow-motion. Slo-Mo, we nicknamed her, and said she needed to get her skates on with some reforms.

But, like the headteacher who says at 2.30pm on Friday that "things are remarkably quiet today" inevitably finds herself confronted with a fight five minutes later, our words also appear to have unleashed unintended consequences.

On Sunday, we were hit with two pieces of news. One, schools would be forced to let apprenticeship providers and colleges into their hallowed halls so university "alternatives" can be promoted. And two, new rules mean only local parents will be able to make complaints about the (sometimes really quite dodgy) practices employed by some faith schools to skew their intake in a wealthier or smarter direction.

Both changes are quite something to think about. In the case of the 'university alternative' access, the plus side is that pupils really will have access to a breadth of options, and it limits a schools' ability to puff up its own post-16 offer while hiding alternatives from view. (This doesn't happen everywhere, or even commonly, but it is naïve to think it doesn't happen at all).

But how will headteachers pick which ones get time with their pupils? And how much time? There are six colleges within a couple of miles of where I live, and the area has more small businesses than any other part of the UK. The local schools are going to be deluged.

I am also reminded of a memory from my first year of teaching when Transport for London were running an enormous campaign to recruit bus drivers.

Posters were emblazoned on every stop, vehicle and available sign. "No qualifications required," the adverts proclaimed, "plus £18,000 starting salary and paid holiday".

I spent the entire year battling with year 11s who previously wanted to go to college but now thought exams pointless as they could get a bus licence as soon as they turned 18.

Helpfully, my dad – an actual bus driver – came in to give them a reality check. But the point was stained in my mind that if pupils are told there is an easier path, they may be tempted to take it.

Which is not to say apprenticeships are easy or wrong for pupils. I have written before that I think it is often a tough and very good approach for pupils to take.

But caution will be needed to

ensure they are not sold as an easy option by people anxious to sign pupils up to their wares, just the same as schools must not promote their own sixth forms simply to keep the cash that comes with bums on seats.

With that reform announced, a second one related to apprenticeship then raised its head. New plans will mean all public bodies with more than 250 employees must have 2.3 per cent of their headcount employed as apprentices each year. Maintained schools where teachers are employed by the local authority, will be added to the council's headcount – and could be asked to employ some of the apprentices. Academy trusts employing more than 250 will also be included.

So how does the schools sector cope? One way would be to increase the number of admin staff on apprenticeships, or to create more teaching assistant apprenticeships (which already exist). But one group of school leaders are hoping they can get approval for teacher apprentices that go all the way to qualified teacher status (QTS).

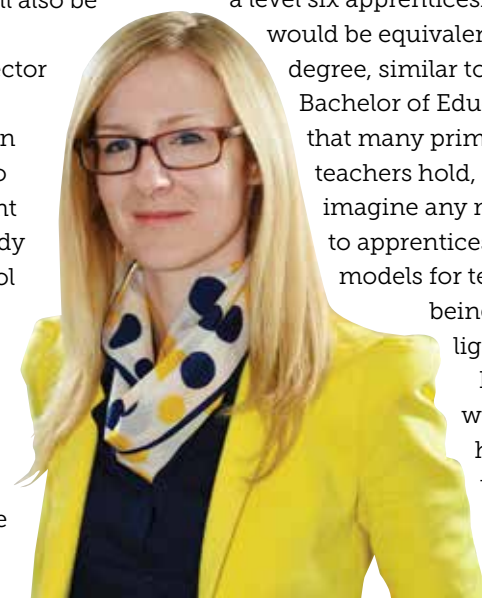
And why not? It would solve several problems for the government. It has pledged

to have more teachers trained in classrooms, but numbers so far are low. It has pledged to have three million more apprentices across Britain by 2020 – but where will they come from? It has pledged to take the teacher recruitment "problem" seriously – but how do you get more people in the doors? Mandating schools to take on a set number of apprentices, and then offering a teaching qualification route within this would solve all these problems.


There is just one downside: the profession is unlikely to be happy about it. In the minds of many teachers "apprenticeships" are a weak sibling to "universities". And while a level six apprenticeship

would be equivalent to a degree, similar to the Bachelor of Education that many primary teachers hold, I can't imagine any move to apprenticeship models for teachers being taken

lightly. I guess we shall have to wait and see.







# **WHEN A TEACHER CALLS, I'M READY**

Neil Ogden,  
Subject Specialist,  
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## PROFILE

# “I’VE ALWAYS HAD A LIBERAL PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE”



FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

**Lord Storey CBE, Liberal Democrat Lords principal education spokesperson**

**M**ike Storey is no stranger to power, or education. The Liberal Democrat peer has run two schools, led Liverpool City Council and now heads up his party’s efforts on education in the House of Lords.

But after meeting for a coffee, I find myself wondering if he ever knew he wanted such influence before it landed on his desk.

A charismatic politician, still well-known in Merseyside, where he was a teacher and councillor for decades, the 66-year-old seems to have begun many elements of his long and distinguished career by accident.

After studying primary and secondary education at the University of Liverpool, Lord Storey initially struggled to get a job. He puts this down to his involvement in student politics: “I’ve always had a liberal philosophy on life.”

His first employment was at a small church primary school, a job he heard about through a friend of the headteacher and for which he was the only interviewee. “It would never happen these days,” he chuckles. Mr Storey went on to take on his first headship, at St Gabriels Primary School, in 1985, and was head of Plantation Primary School from 1990 to 2012. Lord Storey’s first political victory was quite a surprise.

Living with five other teachers above a dairy in the early 1970s, he recalls being “terribly impressed” with the local Liberal politician, who invited him to canvass for him and attend meetings. Soon, he was selected as a “paper candidate”.

“I asked the head if I could stand, and said ‘I’m not going to win’. But of course I did win, and stayed on the council for 36 years.”

In the Lords, Lord Storey has partnered with Labour to win significant concessions from the government on the education and adoption bill. His first experience of political wrangling came in his native Liverpool.

As the Liberal Democrats became more popular in the city throughout the 1990s, Lord Storey rose through the

ranks, serving as chair of the city’s board of education and becoming council leader in 1998 when the party gained overall control.

In 1999, as the Labour government considered privatising failing local education authorities (LEAs), Liverpool was handed a damning Ofsted report. Lord Storey recalls a frank meeting with the then minister without portfolio Charles Clarke, who would later become education secretary.

“He had his civil servants and I had mine, and he asked them to leave the room and said to me: ‘I can blame a Lib Dem authority, you can blame a Labour government, why don’t we agree we’ll do some master-planning of what needs to be done and if you don’t achieve it, we’ll take action.’

“We achieved everything, and we became the most improved LEA in the country.”

Lord Storey is proud of other achievements with education in Liverpool. His administration increased per-pupil spending from below the national average to above it, and used private finance initiatives (PFIs) to deliver a substantial building programme.

“PFI is very controversial and very expensive,” he admits, “but looking back on it, it was the only option in town.”

In 2005, Lord Storey was forced to resign as the council’s leader following an investigation into claims that he conspired with the authority’s media boss against the chief executive Sir David Henshaw.

Although Lord Storey apologised for an “error of judgment” at the time, he still dismisses the claims of a conspiracy as “nonsense” when I ask about them, and

claims they relate to a personal email sent by him to head of media Matt Finnegan in which he referred to members of Sir David’s team as an “evil cabal”.

“I referred myself to the standards board,” he says. “I confirmed I’d said it, and gave them the context it was said in. And what was frightening was they had been monitoring my council mobile phone, and showed the dates I had been in contact with the editor of the local paper.

“We did a deal. I was to stand down for a year and it would go no further. The plan was to come back, but do you know what? Once you stand down, you don’t want to go back.”

Lord Storey stood down with the praise and backing of the then Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy, and then went on to the ceremonial role of Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

He remained popular and influential in the party, and was on Nick Clegg’s call list when the newly-installed deputy prime minister started looking to boost the number of Liberal Democrat peers in the upper house in 2010.

“I was still teaching, and the director of children’s services decided to visit my school. We got out the best china cups and we were sitting there, and my secretary rushed in and said Downing Street was on the phone.

“Nick Clegg comes on and says he wants me to be a working peer, and says they’ve got to do various security

# LORD STOREY



## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

### What's your favourite thing about Liverpool?

The Scouse sense of humour and the warmth and generosity of spirit of Liverpudlians.

### What are your favourite holiday destinations, at home and abroad?

The Lake District and Marco Island, Florida.

### What was the first record you ever bought?

If I can remember, it was probably The Beatles – She Loves You.

### What do you feel have been your greatest professional and personal accomplishments?

Professionally, it was becoming leader of Liverpool City Council and turning round the city from being a basket case to European Capital of Culture and a vibrant and successful city. Personally, it was becoming a dad.



With wife Carole and daughter Rachel at Birmingham University



Lord Storey on holiday

## Curriculum vitae

**Born: May 1949**

### Education

<b>1956</b>	Vaughan Road Infants School, Wallasey
<b>1957</b>	Westbourne Primary, Wallasey
<b>1960</b>	Wellington Road Secondary School, Bebington
<b>1968</b>	S. Katharine's College – Cert. Ed
<b>1976</b>	Liverpool University B Ed Hons

### Career

<b>1972 – 1977</b>	Teacher, Prescot Church of England Primary School
<b>1972 – 2011</b>	Member, Liverpool City Council
<b>1977 – 1982</b>	Teacher, New Hutte Primary School
<b>1982 – 1985</b>	Deputy headteacher, Halsnead Primary School
<b>1985 – 1990</b>	Headteacher, St Gabriels Primary School
<b>1990 – 2012</b>	Headteacher, Plantation Primary School
<b>1998 – 2005</b>	Leader, Liverpool City Council
<b>2009 – 2010</b>	Lord Mayor, Liverpool
<b>2010 – present</b>	Member, House of Lords
<b>2015 – present</b>	Liberal Democrat Lords' principal spokesperson for education

checks. He asks if I've done anything wrong and I say: 'You know about the conspiracy charges,' and he says: 'Yeah, yeah, don't worry about that.'

Accepting the peerage does not seem to have been a difficult decision for Lord Storey, who was only a few years away from retirement from teaching and did not want to continue in local government.

But once the "rosy glow" of induction into the "best club in the world" faded, he was left wondering what he was doing in the heart of the political establishment, hundreds of miles from home.

"I felt very lonely," he says. "I got the 10am train down on the Monday and went back to Liverpool on a Thursday. I just absolutely hated it.

"I was counting the days until I could go home. But gradually you realise how the place works, and I became co-chair of our education group. I was on the select committee at the time. So you do various things.

"You realise how you can, by placing questions, change things. It's not instant, it's blood sweat and tears, but you can do it."

It's clear from the numbers that the 111 Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords now wield more power than the eight MPs (or seven-and-a-half, quips Lord Storey mischievously

before declining to explain) in the House of Commons.

Lib Dem peers have already demonstrated their willingness to work with Labour to stop legislation they object to in the chamber where, unlike in the Commons, the government does not hold a majority.

Although he remains highly critical of elements of the academies programme – he believes chains should be fully inspected and have to be more transparent with data – Lord Storey supports full academisation, at least for secondary schools, which conflicts with the official view of his party.

"I am in favour of all schools becoming academies," he says. "There may be a different argument to be made for primaries because they need to be a bigger part of the community.

"In education, it's not structures that matter, it's about opportunities and it's about the quality of teaching. I think parents and teachers are fed up of changes. They want a bit of stability."

Y

Euston

## OPINION



## ALLY PAGET

Head of public services and welfare, Demos

# Let's ask pupils about the school they want

**Disengaged pupils can be reconnected to their learning by teachers will to take innovative approaches already seen in the health sector. But do schools have the time, funds and courage to try out these ideas?**

A year on from the launch of the coalition government's "workload challenge", the burden on teachers is still under scrutiny.

Sir Michael Wilshaw warned just last week of the real danger of teacher exhaustion. He made his remark in a speech about the "one-size-fits-all" comprehensive challenge of catering to children of all ages and abilities, but the burden extends far beyond that.

Successive changes to curriculums, exams and inspections have all taken their toll, but above and beyond that, schools are expected to deal with a host of broader social changes – such as complying with the government's counter-terrorism strategy, accommodating new migrants, or combating the effects of food poverty.

Among the many dangers of a strained system is the limited scope for experimenting with new ways of doing things. But that scope is desperately needed, particularly in the face of some alarming statistics about levels of student disengagement. This is why, over the past two academic years, Demos has been working with four secondary schools to pilot a new approach to re-engaging students at risk of disengagement from education.

Central to the pilot was the idea of "co-production" – tried and tested in health and social care settings, but less so in the classroom. Co-production involves giving the user of a service – in this case, students – a more prominent role in its design and delivery.

Outside of education, the outcomes have been positive. Patients with long-term conditions have shown an improved ability to manage their condition, and reported a more positive experience of care, while health and care professionals reported gains in their knowledge and skills as a result of working in close partnership with those they treat.

There are indications, too, that co-production approaches save money over the longer term; the thinktank Nesta has put a figure of £4.4 billion savings a year across England on the flagship People-Powered Health programme.

Bringing this co-production theory to schools, Demos sought to give students at risk or on the brink of exclusion a new opportunity to connect with their peers and the broader school environment. Since September 2013,

a total of 64 students have had the chance to work closely with school staff to identify things about school they wanted to change, and make those changes happen. In practice, that has meant different things in different schools – making classes more active, raising money to transform a school garden, and establishing a lunchtime sports club.

## Our pilot has some real individual success stories

When dealing with students prone to behavioural issues or truancy, and when asking already pressured teachers to take on new additional activities, it is unsurprising the pilot yielded mixed results. If our pilot had a school report, it would perhaps read "shows promise, but applies itself inconsistently". Nonetheless, there have been some real individual success stories among our two cohorts, and it is these stories that give hope that co-production could, in the right circumstances, offer students a transformative new pathway.

Some of these stories are small but personally significant: coming to school in shoes rather than trainers; completing homework for the first time; no longer getting sent out of maths lessons. Some are bigger and more tangible: being trusted to go on a school trip abroad; avoiding an exclusion; working towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The feedback from schools that took part in the pilot show a genuine belief in the co-production model and its capacity for change. School leaders saw a real value in involving often-disenfranchised students in decision-making, students got a boost from being listened to, and staff told us they enjoyed the chance to get to know a group of students who would not usually be a priority for intervention.

Yet over and over again, schools told us they could not devote the time and space they believed the pilot deserved. The need for creativity should be front and centre of our expectations of schools, and our expectations of teachers. Government must do what it can to provide that room. It must provide funding that gives schools discretion to trial new approaches, and an inspection regime that rewards innovation.



## STUART KIME

Director, evidencebased.education

# How teachers learn to stop worrying and love research

**Teachers who use research to inform their teaching can often be evangelical about its benefits, but not all staff will be so easily persuaded. These tips might just help get them on side.**

If you are having a conversation with a teacher who is really reluctant to engage with research, keep in mind they probably have good reason for this. A lot of education research is of poor quality, and we have seen well-intentioned research-based initiatives become time-consuming and ineffective.

Thankfully, things are getting better: the quality of the research is improving, more teachers and school leaders are making use of it, and support is available for those wanting to know more. But do not expect a Damascene conversion by break time. Using research evidence to inform decision-making in schools is the work of years, not weeks.

In the meantime, here are my five top tips for helping change the thinking of a research-reluctant teacher.

### 1. Let them talk

Often, research is seen as an obscure extra, making demands on severely-constrained teacher time. If you have never looked at research before, it can seem like an unwieldy and irrelevant beast. Sometimes, it is hard to see research offers a sustainable way to stop the cycle of "great new (unproven) ideas", and it can actually save time by helping teachers avoid blind alleys. These views are hard to change, so listen carefully to what research-reluctant teachers have to say and understand why they not keen to engage. Then...

### 2. Provide time and space to reach new conclusions

When our beliefs are challenged and we try to hold a new, contradictory idea in our minds, a rather intriguing thing called cognitive dissonance takes hold, and it can be really unsettling. Ray Land at Durham University has done a great deal of work on the idea of "troublesome knowledge": the idea that research could hold new information that improves teaching and learning can be massively troubling. For a teacher resistant to research, becoming more aware of research is really unsettling. So tread carefully and give them space.

### 3. Be clear that it's not a panacea

One common source of resistance is the belief that research evidence will become a form of dictat, with journal articles written by academics who have never set foot in a

classroom prescribing exactly the actions a teacher should take. This is a fallacy. The best research evidence can only tell us that something worked (or not) on average, somewhere, sometime, somehow, and under certain conditions. But even with all these caveats, why would you not want to know what the research says before you plunge headlong into a new initiative? It is messy and makes us think hard, but that is not a bad thing.

## Focus on research that offer important insights to teachers'

### 4. Be substantive

Researchers speak a language seemingly understandable only to other researchers, and much of their discussions are of esoteric abstractions. That is enough to put anyone off, let alone a busy teacher. So, focus on research that might truly offer important insights to a teacher's work: marking and feedback, class size, setting and streaming, for instance. Teachers want to do the best job possible for their students, so guide them to the evidence that actually means something to them, and steer clear of abstraction.

### 5. Show them the impact

I cannot understate the value of our Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit as a potentially game-changing resource to decrease resistance to using research evidence.

By combining three key metrics (impact on learning expressed as months of progress, cost, and strength of the evidence), the toolkit presents a very balanced and accessible guide to the best available evidence. Simply reading the page on meta-cognition and self-regulation, for instance, can be a great way in.

For those who really want to know the impact on important student outcomes of the interventions they implement (year 5 reading scores, for instance), use the EEF's DIY Evaluation Guide. I have a vested interest in it (I helped write it), but we're really excited about the possibilities it has for schools to know their impact and make decisions using their own research evidence.



**Being a headteacher is a tough job: but it is also a brilliant one. Let's talk up the positives and encourage the best senior leaders to take on the challenge.**

It is true that being a headteacher is not an easy task, and that's not surprising: you have hundreds of young people in your care, manage scores of adults and millions of pounds, and are accountable to a community, a local authority or trust, an inspectorate and a government department.

As Sir Michael Wilshaw writes in The Future Leaders Trust's new report, headteaching is a role with tremendous social importance. Many reports over the past few years have signalled that schools are finding it harder to recruit – for example, in a 2015 survey by the National Governors Association, 43 per cent of respondents reported it was difficult to find good candidates when recruiting senior staff.

Schools without good, committed leadership face decline, and children's educations suffer as a result. We need a co-ordinated effort to solve this problem, but are lacking the information we need to do so. In an age of "big data", where every child's achievement and progress is monitored centrally, we would benefit from similar rigour applied to headteacher recruitment because the two are inextricably linked.

Until we get the data we need, how can we tackle the problem? The Future Leaders Trust is calling for a change in the negative perception of headship that has developed as a first step.

In 2009, the National College of School



# HEATH MONK

CEO, The Future Leaders Trust

## Turning senior leaders into great heads takes positivity

Leadership reported that 86 per cent of heads would recommend the job to a colleague. But last year, 86.8 per cent of headteachers responding to a survey said the job was less attractive than it had been five years before.

Potential headteachers are bombarded by negative messages about headship. News outlets cite lack of work/life balance, loneliness, the soullessness of modern education and fears of career suicide. These headlines threaten to undermine the role's credibility and do not do justice to its many positives.

In my organisation's recent report, four headteachers shared their experiences. Rimah Aasim, the headteacher of Worth Valley Primary School in Bradford, does not regret taking the step up to headship at an early age: "Working in challenging schools in disadvantaged areas is tough but all children deserve an education no matter where they come from, and it is our duty to provide it."

**Headship is rewarding, but not everyone can do it**

Matt Butler, executive principal of Oasis Academies North Bristol, writes: "It is the most rewarding job I can think of. Part of that is because overcoming the challenges is rewarding – but mainly because the fulfilment of getting it right is phenomenal."

Headship is rewarding, but not everyone can do it. It requires specific skills; competencies that allow headteachers to overcome the role's challenges. We have identified a cluster of these competencies

that work together and reinforce each other, allowing heads to navigate the complexities of headship.

We have identified 11 competencies that enable school leaders to cope with their exposed position in times of crisis as well as success. Among them are developing others, self-awareness, and resilience and emotional maturity – which Matt Butler identifies as "in my view the most fundamental trait of successful heads".

These competencies aren't innate; they can be developed. What turns a talented senior leader into a great headteacher are opportunities for practice and feedback in real situations, plus access to technical expertise and sharing experience. That is why professional networks, driven by shared values, are so vital.

Senior leaders need help and a tap on the shoulder encouraging them to step up. The best place to get that is from a headteacher who believes in them. That is why we are calling on headteachers across the country to identify and encourage members of their team with the talent, passion and determination to become heads – to give them a heads up that headship could be for them.

**The Future Leaders Trust's report 'Heads Up: Meeting the challenges of headteacher recruitment' is available at: [www.future-leaders.org.uk/headsup](http://www.future-leaders.org.uk/headsup) The Future Leaders programme for aspiring headteachers is currently accepting applications: [www.future-leaders.org.uk/apply](http://www.future-leaders.org.uk/apply)**



# JANET MURRAY

Journalist and PR coach

## No need to hate the haters

**Education leaders in the limelight often attract criticism and negative attention. How do they stand it? And what techniques can you use if facing the same problem? Former teacher turned PR specialist Janet Murray reveals all.**

If you are in the public eye – and most education organisations and leaders are – there is something you are going to experience at some point: haters. There will be people out there who love what you do. But there will be others who do not and some of them will tell you exactly what they think. On Twitter. On Facebook. Or – if you are really lucky – they might even send you a lengthy email explaining, point-by-point, exactly why you stink.

Thankfully these kind of people are generally in the minority, but their criticism

can knock you off balance – and give you temporary amnesia over the dozens of people who have said nice things about what you do.

In 15 years as a journalist and editor for national titles like the *Guardian*, I've had my fair share of haters: from the person who posted online that he had used an article of mine in a writing class (as an example of how not to write) to the guy who tweeted to ask "how someone so ugly [me] could have such a beautiful daughter".

While some comments still sting, I have developed a pretty thick skin over the years, along with a whole host of strategies to help me cope. So here are my best tips for dealing with haters on social media, the press or in life.

Nothing people do or say is because of you. It is down to their own life experiences, opinions and how they see the world, which

is why taking things personally is pointless.

That is not to say you should not ask yourself if there is any truth in what people are saying. While their approach might seem spiteful or mean-spirited, there is always something to learn from the experience.

Perhaps you did make a mistake or maybe there is something you can improve about your practice. Acknowledging this – and showing you're doing something about it – can often be enough to disarm your haters.

Unless it is personally insulting, I reply to every comment someone writes on my articles, even if I disagree with them.

The way I see it, if someone has taken the time to write, I owe them the courtesy of a reply – an approach that seems to command grudging respect from even the snarkiest of haters.

I am not saying this is the right strategy for everyone – I know some people who fare better by not reading comments at all or engaging with disparagers – but it is certainly worth considering. After all, if you are stonewalling critics, what does that say about your brand?

While most haters will quickly tire of you before moving onto someone else, you may come across the odd persistent offender.

In most cases, it is better to take it offline if you can; if someone is writing negative things about you or your organisation, giving them a number to call where they can speak to a real person and discuss their concerns, can often be enough to diffuse the situation (and show others you're willing to address the problem). But if this does not work, do

not be afraid to block people from your social media networks.

**Everything passes and people will soon get bored and move onto the next thing'**

When you are in the middle of a "hater storm" you may feel like crawling into bed and lying there with the covers over your head until it is all over. That is perfectly natural. Remind yourself that everything passes and that people will soon get bored and move onto the next thing (or person).

Seeking out the support of family and friends who can help you things in perspective – and help you see the funny side of things – can help too.

I couldn't help but giggle at the teacher who tried to poach my job as a writer or the poster who commented on my "ghastly" pine furniture when I was photographed in my home for a newspaper.

As Taylor Swift reminds us: "haters gonna hate" – so you may as well have a laugh about it.

**Janet Murray, host of the 'Soulful PR' podcast, blogs at [www.janetmurray.co.uk](http://www.janetmurray.co.uk)**

## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

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



Our blog reviewer of the week is Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate director of knowledge development for Teach First

**What made Charles Darwin an effective thinker? Follow the Golden Rule**  
By @farnamstreet

Charles Darwin's working methods have fascinated me since visiting Down House, where he spent much of his life. This post explains many aspects of his life that I had missed, such as the reason for his spending eight years studying barnacles, after identifying the main ideas in *The Origin of Species*, but before publishing the book. It also discusses his "Golden Rule": "That whenever a published fact, a new observation or thought came across me, which was opposed to my general results, to make a memorandum of it without fail and at once; for I had found by experience that such facts and thoughts were far more apt to escape from memory than favourable ones."

**12 Principles of Effective Teaching**  
By @headguruteacher

Tom Sherrington is honest with us: "Teachers are always being offered lists of principles, axioms, tenets, precepts – the magic beans of teaching", thereby covering himself in order to offer his own set of 12 Principles for Effective Teaching. What differentiates his offering is their balanced incorporation of key ideas from both research and his own practice, and their pithy formulations: "Mark Lean" is a particular favourite. He concludes by inviting us to "Get Some Balance", both in the approaches we employ

and in accepting that "there's also only so much impact you can have; only so much you can do".

**Being a headteacher interviewee**  
By @stuartlock

The first in this series featured in *Blogs of the Week* a fortnight ago. The second post is just as worthwhile, this time on the interview process. Stuart discusses the range of tasks he has come across in a number of headship interviews, and his approach to each one. His honest discussion of the tasks he has encountered, and his response to each, will undoubtedly remain an invaluable resource for aspirant headteachers for a long time to come.

**Nine ways for leaders to be better at communication**  
By @informed\_edu

In this thoughtful piece, David Weston discusses nine ways leaders can be better at communicating. "Be careful with suggestions, label their 'power' and examples. Invite the other person to summarise too, e.g. 'I don't know how clear I'm being – please could you play back what I've just said to help me ensure I'm not being confusing?'" Wise advice for anyone.

**To motivate employees, do three things well**  
By @emmaseppala

Emma Seppala discusses three important principles: the importance of kindness, inspiration and "self-care", linking to studies that explore the effect each has on employees, and concluding "It's easy to lose sight of what really drives employee well-being. The best leaders are able to take a step back and maintain a human touch in the workplace by inspiring employees, being kind to them, and encouraging them to take care of themselves."

**Um, do I teach you? (Or why working with children is hilarious)**  
By @MrHistoire

Toby French reminds us quite how bizarre teaching can be in this short scene for two actors: Toby himself and a confused year 7 who insists Miss Cape wishes him to deliver his book to Toby. Lines spoken aloud "But she said to give it to you," are interspersed with Toby's inner monologue: "I'm feeling pretty sorry for him now. He hasn't a clue why I won't take his book, and I don't know why I'd want it, let alone have a clue who he is." An enjoyable digression for readers, if less so for Toby and the year 7 concerned.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Rise of the Robots**

**Author:** Martin Ford

**Publisher:** Oneworld

**ISBN-10:** 1780747497

**ISBN-13:** 978-1780747491

**Reviewer:** Matt Hood, assistant head and education charity director



In this book, Silicon Valley entrepreneur Martin Ford opens a new flank in the battle between the traditionalists (directed learning, focus on knowledge) and progressives (independent learning, focus on transferable skills). Don't waste your time with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills he says, robots can do those too.

This book is fascinating, terrifying and questionable in equal measure. It walks you through advancements in robotics technology over recent decades and the progress we should see in the next few. Moore's law (the observation that the sophistication of technology doubles every two years) in action.

The results, Ford claims, are not good. The gist is robots (for which read technology – but robots sound scarier) will replace almost all workers in established industries and will be designed into new industries from the start. All but a small handful of people (who will probably live in a glorious city surrounded by guard robots or terminators) will feel the full force of a triple whammy of "soaring inequality, technological unemployment and climate change". Pretty grim.

Despite the gloomy tone, the economics teacher in me loved the accessible introduction setting out the separation between productivity and wages (although it is not quite that simple) and little facts dotted throughout – did you know the number of hours worked in the US in 1998 was 194 billion? Some 15 years and a 42 per cent increase in output later (worth a cool \$3.5 trillion) the total number of hours worked was ... 194 billion.

The nerd in me loved hearing about robots that can now do everything, from picking the ripest fruit to winning quiz shows. We hear about the team at Industrial Perception Inc., who have designed a robot that has moved ahead of "industrial robots [with their] unrivalled combination of speed, precision and brute strength" who are

"for the most part, blind actors in a tightly choreographed performance."

These new machines for the first time are "at the nexus of visual perception, spatial computation and dexterity" (they can actually see things!) and will soon replace the last remaining humans who fill the gaps in the production line. Gaps such as stacking lots of different sized delicate boxes – where the combination of depth perception, problem solving and a light touch are essential. Ford believes everything from chefs to paralegals to computer programmers are likely to find themselves out of work and there is not much they can do about it. More education will not save them this time.

It is at this point where it all seems to go a bit south. Accepting this apocalyptic certainty, Ford goes on to set out his preferred solution: a guaranteed basic income with built in incentives to encourage education. This feels a little premature.

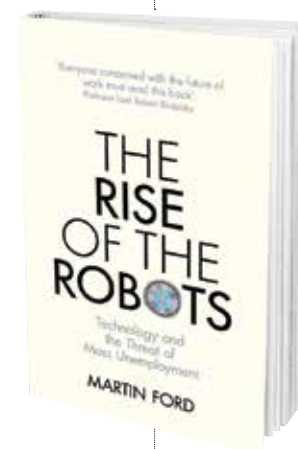
Robots, as much as they transform economies are still subject to the rules of economics. There are a few of these rules that need to be considered when it comes to Ford's analysis. First, as technology replaces some jobs, the demand for others tends to increase – it is the net difference that is important.

Second, the comparative advantage between humans and robots will likely mean a role for both.

Originally conceived to explain why, even if one country is more efficient at producing everything than its neighbours, it still makes sense to trade because of the relative advantage the efficient country has in one area of production.

Third, just because something is cheaper, it does not mean demand for it goes up nor does something that's technically best always displace the things thought to be inferior. Folks pay double for artisan bread while Concorde could not find a foothold in the market. The rapid development of technology Ford describes will undoubtedly change the world at an increasing pace, but these rules mean humans face more of an adjustment, even if it is a major one, than apocalypse.

Worth a read but keep a pinch of salt and your optimism handy.



**NEXT WEEK**  
The truth about our schools  
By Melissa Benn and Janet Downs  
Reviewed by: Laura McInerney



# READERS' REPLY

REPLY OF THE WEEK  
RECEIVES A  
SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



EMAIL



TWEET



WEBSITE

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU  
@SCHOOLSWEK  
NEWS@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK  
WWW.SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK

**How do you pronounce 'cear'? Funny phonics leave blogger baffled**

**John Walker, address supplied**

As Ms Godsland points out, some examples from the Project X Code book simply don't appear in English. For example, although the spelling for the sound /m/ follows the spelling in words like 'comb', 'tomb' and 'aplomb', it doesn't follow the spelling. So, using it to coach children for the Phonics Screening Check in year 1 is just stupid when there are so many real words on which to practise.

Some words, such as the example "screy" in the book are possible. "Scree" is a real word and one can imagine someone inventing the spelling "screy" (where represents the sound /ee/) for some new thing or practice. But why would the authors invent these non-words solely for the purpose of practising them when there are real words, such as "key" and "donkey", to work on?

There is no need to fetishise non-

words: Roald Dahl, Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear provide much better practise and a hell of a lot more fun.

Some might suspect that this is an attempt to cash in on parental anxiety.

**1,234 or 1 234? Primary pupils must interpret commas in new maths tests**

**Paul Hopkins, Hull**

As ever the notion of joined up thinking is absent from the DfE – one assumes this is another example of the back of the envelope planning and implementation – add it to the list.

**Colin Richards, Cumbria**

Why not just 1234?

**Alex Weatherall, Yorkshire, in reply to Colin Richards**

Indeed. Though for bigger (and smaller) numbers with lots of digits, separation can help. We have an international standard designed to deal with this.

Why can't we teach our children that?

## Cancelled Building Schools for the Future linked to worse GCSE results

### REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Joe Nutt, address supplied**

I was amused by Freddie Whittaker's piece on BSF [Building Schools for the Future] because Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' research didn't surprise me at all. I worked on the very first BSF bid, in Bristol, and then subsequently on Manchester, Birmingham and many others. I worked with dozens of architects and all the major builders. A few individuals were excellent, but taken as a whole, the entire programme showed what happens when you bring skilled commercial teams into contact with public sector procurement teams.

It exemplifies one of the least understood problems facing any government funded educational reform. Again and again in my career I've seen the client-side, public sector team or individual move straight on to better jobs in the private sector, the moment the contract they have been driving has been awarded, leaving an entirely new team to try and deliver the "innovative" project they initiated purely to further their career. The educational landscape is plagued by this problem. BSF was littered with examples.

### Corrections

Last week we referred to Edapt as a teacher union. It is actually a teacher union "alternative". In last week's "turned" tables highlighting schools with high levels of value-added for vocational learners we featured Shirley High School in Croydon as the second highest in the category. In the text we stated that no schools appearing in the table also appeared in it last year. But Shirley High School did! They were the only school to appear both years in a row in this category.



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

At an event on character education Nicky Morgan announced an "online digital platform" is being developed to help teachers with character education. It will help teachers share resources and advice and research. We think it might be called "the internet" but we look forward to learning more.

She then went on to open a school that had already been open since September. Do we think people were too polite to point this out?

## FRIDAY:

Not much. We read the Ofsted audit committee meetings today. They weren't very exciting.

## MONDAY:

While children are sometimes sent home for wearing the wrong trousers, today the Department for Education castigated the wrong parents. A press release said parents will be given more say in admissions rules, as schools must consult once every four years instead of every seven. But a sneaky sub-heading said "secularist campaign groups" will no longer be allowed to make complaints about the admissions of faith schools.

Given that many people in such secularist groups are themselves parents, it seems a strange thing to say they are getting more say.

What the almighty Morgan giveth with one hand, she taketh with the other.

Parliamentary education questions was mostly snooze-worthy but Morgan did

look rattled when her opposite number asked why the achievement gap between poor and wealthy pupils was increasing, rather than decreasing, after her party had been in government for five years.

Morgan said that because of all the exam reforms the measures were now incomparable. So it's a good job her ministers haven't claimed recently that things are improving in schools on the basis of GCSE results or ever taken credit for changes from one year to the next.

## TUESDAY:

The schools minister Nick Gibb gave another speech in which he pointed out all the things he doesn't like ("inquiry learning", "child centred learning", "fun" – ok, not that last one, but almost) and said that they don't have any basis in evidence.

Posing a question that one can imagine the minister hopes will end up on car bumper stickers and beer mats, he said:

"Whether promoting the merits of project work or direct instruction, synthetic phonics or whole word, a knowledge-based curriculum or a thematic curriculum, educators must ask themselves: 'Do I wish this to be true, or do I know this to be true?'"

Given that this is the same bloke whose department is currently pushing commas in long numbers despite scientists specifically asking it not to, one has to wonder whether he takes his own medicine. 1000ml of humility for you Mr Gibb. Or is that 1,000ml?

## WEDNESDAY:

Quiet. Thankfully.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEKLIVE FOR TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



# School Bulletin



Gillian Anderson launches Read Aloud 2016 at William Tyndale Primary School



## X Files star becomes reading tsar

Gillian Anderson listened to reading demonstrations from pupils at the William Tyndale Primary School in Islington to launch this year's Read Aloud campaign.

The X-Files star was joined by the president and provost of UCL, Michael Arthur, and interim director of the Institute of Education Professor Andrew Brown.

Read Aloud is a reading recovery programme designed to raise awareness of children's literacy issues. It is being led by the International Literacy Centre.

The footballer Gareth Bale and journalist Janet Street-Porter are also

supporting the campaign.

The programme will run throughout February with a series of events, continuing into March when the chief executive of ITV, Adam Crozier will listen to children read at a television studio.

Ms Anderson said: "It's an honour to be able to support Reading Recovery Read Aloud, and to witness first-hand how children such as those at William Tyndale Primary School have benefited from the work done by the ILC.

"These children have not just learned to read, they now have the confidence to let their voices be heard."



Rendcomb College pupil Carmen Lee

## Schoolgirl to choir singer

A Gloucestershire pupil has been selected from more than 1,000 applicants to join the National Youth Girls' Choir with the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain.

Thirteen-year-old Carmen Lee from Rendcomb College begins rehearsals with the choir at a residential training course in April.

She will have the opportunity to perform at venues including the Royal Albert Hall as well as receiving world-class musical and leadership training.

Carmen began singing aged nine with Rendcomb and now performs with the school's Chamber Choir and whole-school choir as well as playing the violin in the school orchestra and string ensemble.

She is currently preparing for her grade eight singing exam later this year.

On receiving the news, Carmen said: "I couldn't believe it. I was totally blown away, ecstatic and absolutely thrilled to be recognised by such a prestigious organisation. To be selected out of thousands of applicants was completely unbelievable."

The rigorous audition process for the choir included a vocal assessment, a musicianship test, sight-singing and the performance of two songs in front of a panel.

## Quiz gives MPs and pupils food for thought

### FEATURED

MPs put their knowledge of healthy eating to the test against primary school pupils in a House of Commons quiz to promote healthy eating, hydration and physical activity among young people.

The MP competitors included Steve Pound, Carol Monaghan and Rupa Huq who joined teams from Berrymede Junior School, Horsenden Primary and Montpelier Primary, all in London.

The quiz was based on the Eat Like A Champ programme, a Change4Life partner scheme designed to promote healthy diet and exercise among primary school pupils aged nine and ten.

Chaired by former Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton, quiz participants faced six rounds of questions.

Each team of school pupils also asked to deliver a presentation on why healthy living is important. Montpelier Primary, with the assistance of Dr Huq, won on a tie-break round.

The quiz was part of the JanUary campaign, which is led by the National Obesity Forum to encourage healthy choices among the public and tackle a growing obesity crisis.

Professor David Haslam, chair of the forum, said: "Of course this a bit of fun, but it's making a very important point.

"Namely that we need to ensure our children are introduced to good nutrition and hydration habits at a young age.



Eat Like a Champ quiz at the House of Commons. Credit: David Parry

"We know from the National Child Measurement Programme that the number of overweight and obese young people remains high, and that this is a particular problem in deprived areas.

"Many children are sedentary and consume large quantities of poor quality foods high in salt, sugar and trans fats. This must be addressed if we're to avoid storing up problems for the future, and condemning children to poor health outcomes.

"Initiatives like Eat Like A Champ are absolutely vital in teaching good habits at a young age."

Adam Grant, managing director of Danone Dairy UK, which runs the programme, said: "We are extremely proud of Eat Like A Champ, which since 2010 has inspired 100,000 children across the country to adopt the healthy choices of champions they admire.

"Independent research has shown Eat Like A Champ has a positive impact, and we are delighted to be working with partners such as the National Obesity Forum and the Mayor of London's Healthy Schools initiative to encourage even more schools to take part."

## TRUST HELPS LANGUAGE LEARNING

Primary school teachers can now monitor pupils' progress in meeting the spoken language expectations of the national curriculum by using a new resource.

Communicating the Curriculum was launched last week by The Communication Trust and is written by specialist teachers and speech and language therapists.

The resource shows how the 12 statements that make up the Spoken Language Programme of Study can be broken down in relation to the typical stages of language development for each primary year group.

Octavia Holland, director of The Communication Trust, said: "The removal of the levels system and the requirements of the 2014 programme of study for spoken language have been challenging for some teachers. That's why we've developed Communicating the Curriculum.

"It is a practical resource, with the crucial information busy school staff need to really get to grips with monitoring progression in children's spoken language skills in the context of the national curriculum.

"This is essential to ensure pupils who might have additional speech, language and communication needs are identified early and also to support all pupils in developing these crucial skills."

You can access the resource at [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)



# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**L** Leigh Moore has left Oldbury Academy in the West Midlands, where she was senior deputy headteacher, to be the new principal at nearby Wodensborough Ormiston Academy.

Ms Moore began her teaching career nine years ago, teaching English after a period as an education business manager. She has been a senior leader in schools for the last seven years.

At Wodensborough, she will focus on three priorities; attendance and punctuality; behaviour and learning; and achievement and progress.

"When it comes to getting stuck in and helping the young people we've got a success centre and I'm currently working with the school to shake that up and bring in more support from external agencies."

She added: "For example we had West Bromwich Albion foundation come in and work with our young people, doing numeracy and literacy through sport."

Ms Moore completed a degree in classics and international politics at Keele University followed by a masters in classics.

**Louise Riley** has joined Academy Transformation Trust (ATT) as its improvement director for vulnerable children.



Leigh Moore



Louise Riley



Sunita Goddard-Patel

Ms Riley, who has 20 years of experience in education, says her passion is helping vulnerable children and will focus on how the curriculum and middle leadership can work together to help those young people in need.

"I'm also going to look at an alternative curriculum, to see what is bespoke and out there so every child is engaged," she said.

"I'm also going to be supporting special educational needs pupils. Not so much the ones that have got statements, but the ones who are in need of statements – those middle children who are often looked over."

In addition to her new role, Ms Riley is chair of governors of Watermill School, an all through special school in Stoke-on-Trent.

She is also an associate of Independent Thinking Ltd, where she delivers training and workshops on the importance of inclusion and relationships in education.

Ms Riley studied fine art at the University of Leeds followed by a PGCE in Manchester.

**Sunita Goddard-Patel** has also joined ATT, taking the position of governance manager.

In her previous role, Ms Goddard-Patel worked as a representation co-ordinator at the University of Birmingham Guild of Students and was responsible for democracy, policy and governance in the student movement.

As governance manager, she is responsible for policies, governor briefings, complaints and appeals as well as governor training. She said she was "looking to develop an annual plan and get our department working together."

"I'm then going to get my head around getting to know all of the governors and seeing what we need to do to improve governing bodies if that is necessary."

"I'll see what training we can do for them, giving them the skills they need to pull the schools up if that is required. I'll also be getting the policies up to date and making sure that everyone is working to the same rule book."

Ms Goddard-Patel studied publishing with English at Loughborough University.

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

Do you know an **inspirational** and **outstanding** FE lecturer, teacher, support worker or volunteer working in a Cornish college or school who you would like to nominate for the **Cornwall Teacher Awards 2016**?

If you would like to make a nomination for the **Cornwall Teacher Awards 2016**, simply visit the website to vote.

More information coming soon, keep checking our website: [www.cornwallteacherawards.org](http://www.cornwallteacherawards.org)





# 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](http://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.*

An 11-18 co-educational, all ability school on the Herts/Bucks. border. 'Outstanding'(Ofsted Oct. 2011). If you would like to join a friendly staff team, the following vacancy will commence 1st September 2016.

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- Exceptional student attitude, attainment and achievement
- First class CPD and career development opportunities

Full job description is on the school website. Application to be sent to Mrs. J. Price, (HR Admin) by **Wednesday 3rd February by 10am**. Please include a covering letter, completed teaching staff application form from the school website and include the names of two referees. Interviews week commencing **Monday 8th February 2016**.

Website: [www.stclementdanes.org.uk](http://www.stclementdanes.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@stclementdanes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stclementdanes.org.uk)

Address: **Chenies Road, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire, WD3 6EW**

Tel. **01923 284169 Fax. 01923 284828**



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR SCHOOL SPECIAL NEEDS DEPARTMENT?

We require a Learning Support Assistant to provide support for teaching and learning and associated activities. This may include providing general support for whole class learning activities, or supporting individuals or small groups of pupils. An element of support with personal care is also required.

Some experience preferred but not essential.

**School hours, term time only**

**25 hrs pw (term time + 1 week)**

**Grade 5 pt 9-11: £14,943-£15,942 pro rata, £8,600-£9,175**

**approx. actual, spread over 12 months**

**Closing date: Friday 5th February 2016**

**Start date: as soon as possible**

Full information for the position and an application form can be obtained by visiting [www.leysland.com](http://www.leysland.com) or by emailing [hr@leysland.com](mailto:hr@leysland.com).

*We are committed to safeguarding young people and therefore this post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.*



## JOBS



## NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

*"Creating Opportunities for Success"*

# Headteacher

## NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

Salary: from £91,134 (L35)

Newstead Wood is a long established, and very successful, girls' selective school (11-18) that also admits boys into the 6th Form. It is a hard working and caring school with a passion for learning and an outstanding record of achievement.

The school became an Academy Trust in July 2011 and was judged outstanding by Ofsted in 2014:

*"Students are enthusiastic and curious learners, resulting in an exceptionally positive learning atmosphere across the whole school"*

In 2015, 80% of A Level entries were A\*, A or B grades. 81% of all GCSE entries were A\* and A grades; 100% of students gained 5 A\* - C grades including English and Maths.

The Board is seeking to appoint a Headteacher, starting September 2016, committed to the fulfilment and realisation of individual potential and able to lead the school community through the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The Board expects that the successful candidate will be an inspiring leader with an established track record for team-building and successful collaboration within an environment of academic excellence, who will respond to the specific challenges of:

- Continuing to raise standards in a selective school so that we consistently ensure excellence for all
- Developing supportive and challenging teachers and securing high quality teaching throughout the school
- Ensuring that self-evaluation and long term planning are robust and support improvement throughout the school

- Developing our curriculum in changing times
- Continuing to attract the best staff in a competitive market
- Operating in a climate of budgetary restraint

You are someone with proven leadership ability who can work with a highly skilled SLT and dedicated governors to continue to raise our educational standards.

Newstead Wood School is committed to equal opportunities, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for the successful candidate.

### How to apply

The Board invites you to visit the school.

There will be individual school tours on Thursday 4th February 2016 and Wednesday 10th February between 10.00 - 11.30 am

**The closing date for applications is 4.00 pm Monday 22nd February 2016.**

**Interviews will be held on Thursday 10th and Friday 11th March 2016**

To request an application pack, further information about the school, or to book a school tour, please contact the Clerk to the Board, Koyeli Solanki on **07860 274890** or by email:

[ksolankigov@newsteadwood.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:ksolankigov@newsteadwood.bromley.sch.uk)

# HEAD OF HUMANITIES



## PERMANENT FULL TIME CONTRACT – April 2016 start (or September 2016 for the right candidate)

TLR 1A – £7,545.96

Birkdale High School is a popular and successful all-boys 11-16 comprehensive Academy with an excellent reputation, outstanding pastoral care and significantly above national average academic results.

The governors seek to appoint an enthusiastic and motivational Head of Humanities, who wants to develop an ambitious and successful department and will ensure the subject is exciting, relevant and enjoyable. You will be an inspirational practitioner with great curriculum knowledge and pedagogical practice.

You need to be a strong team player, enjoy innovation and curriculum development and relish the opportunity to enable all students to achieve their potential. This is a key strategic position within the academy and crucial to its move towards being outstanding.

Both Geography and History are popular subjects with an excellent track record in examinations.

If you would like to be part of an establishment that highly values its staff and provides opportunities for further development please contact us for an application pack.

## INTERVIEWS FOR SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL TAKE PLACE WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2016.

*Birkdale High School safeguards children and actively promotes their welfare. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts are subject to the acquisition of an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information through the Disclosure and Barring Service and further checks as required. All teaching positions will also be subject to a prohibition order check.*

Further details and an application form can be downloaded from [www.birkdalehigh.co.uk](http://www.birkdalehigh.co.uk) or obtained from Ms Karen Anslow at the school. Completed application forms should be emailed to [recruitment@birkdalehigh.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@birkdalehigh.co.uk) by Monday 8 February 2016 at noon.

## JOBS

 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](http://www.williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk)  
Closing date for applications Friday, 5 February 2016

Are you ready to take the next step in your career?

We are looking for Talented Professionals to join our team

Primary, Secondary & Special Opportunities

Come along to our Recruitment Event on **Saturday 6 February**  
10am - 1pm at the Nottingham Playhouse

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

Our schools currently have positions for NQTs, classroom teachers and leaders in both Primary and Secondary schools for a September 2016 start.

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Joining a Transform school is an important step in building a long and successful career in teaching. If you are serious about your professional journey you can be assured that we will help you achieve your full potential.

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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](http://www.transformteachingschool.co.uk) or just turn up on the day.



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## SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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