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Queen Elizabeth II at the State Opening of Parliament, in the House of Lords, at the Palace of Westminster in London

FUTURE OF BASELINE TESTS IN DOUBT

SOPHIE SCOTT & BILLY CAMDEN

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Exclusive

A multi-million pound policy piloted in thousands of primary schools this year could be scrapped over concerns regarding its comparability.

A study, commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), is understood to have found that tests from the three chosen providers for baseline assessments of reception children cannot easily be compared – putting the policy's future in doubt.

Under the controversial baseline assessment scheme, primary schools must, from September, use the tests if they want to be assessed on pupil progress at key stage 2 (KS2), as opposed to pupil attainment.

Three approved baseline assessment providers – Early Excellence, Durham University's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) – began rolling out their assessments at the start of this academic year.

The Standards and Testing Agency ordered a study late last year to check the "robustness" of the assessments by each provider.

If the assessments are not adequately comparable, the progress of pupils in each school cannot be compared against each other on a national scale, putting paid to planned performance measures expected to be used to highlight underperforming schools.

Government officials would not confirm the content of the study but stated its results would be published "in due course".

A mooted alternative to baseline test is the introduction of "school readiness" checks – an option said to be preferred by No 10. Such checks assess children's ability to hold pencils or read basic words and have been widely debated in the US.

Schools Week understands the DfE, as well as Downing Street, is keen to explore how early years providers can make sure children are "school ready" when starting reception.

The prime minister's office was approached for

official comment but did not respond.

In an email sent to providers and seen by *Schools Week*, the department said the extension of the baseline assessments was dependent on the outcome of the report and a decision by ministers.

It added: "Our expectation was that a final decision would be taken towards the end of January. However... we are still awaiting our ministers' decision."

Schools Week understands the study, which was carried out by the Scottish Qualifications Authority, will be released within the next month.

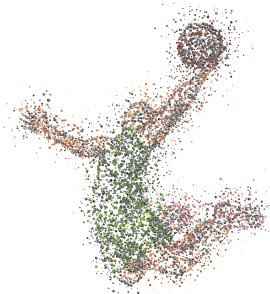
The email warns providers that any costs incurred in preparation for the 2016/17 academic year are "undertaken at [their] own risk" and the department "will not accept any liability for any costs [the providers] may incur as a result of this work" should their contracts not be extended.

Early Excellence said it would not speculate before the report's publication. NFER would also not be drawn on its position if the report finds the tests are incomparable.

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NEWS

Changing date of primary submissions causing 'havoc'

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Late changes to the date for submitting teacher assessments of primary pupils' writing is playing havoc with moderation planning, local authorities say.

Council officers, who arrange moderation visits to schools, told *Schools Week* they were still unclear on the process for this year.

Schools minister Nick Gibb confirmed the U-turn over the date of submission of teacher assessment data for year 6 writing last Friday. The date was originally set for the end of May, but after talks with the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) about the timeframe, the schools minister pushed back the deadline by four weeks.

The Department for Education (DfE) confirmed it would help any local authority struggling with moderation due to the change in date.

Schools Week understands this date – June 30 – was emailed to local authorities by the Standards and Testing Agency.

However, as *Schools Week* was going to press, the requirements set out by the government still said the deadline was May 27 in its online documentation.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to moderate the assessments. They must look at work from at least 15 per cent of a chosen school's cohort (at least five pupils).

One senior local authority officer told *Schools Week*: "While the extension [for submission] is welcome given the issues, it plays havoc with planning for moderation which is statutory.



"Plus we have contacted the STA for confirmation of the move of date as at moment it has not been confirmed by them."

Ben Fuller, a moderator and lead assessment adviser at Herts for Learning, said it was not clear if moderation was now expected to happen before the assessment data was submitted, as in previous years, or after submission as per the current guidance.

He said: "If we're still expected to moderate after the data submission, there would not be time to fit it in before the end of term."

The DfE told *Schools Week* "there would not be enough time to moderate between the submission date and the end of term", so this year the moderation would move back to a model the sector was "familiar" with.

Government guidance online still tells authorities they must notify schools of an

external moderation visit only after the assessment submission date.

Mr Fuller raised further questions about the assessment and moderation process. He said if moderation was expected to take place before the data had been submitted, it was unclear what the "moderators would be moderating".

Mr Fuller also questioned the impact on key stage 1. The date for year 3 teacher assessments in reading, writing and maths has been also been put back to the end of June, and the teacher-marked exams in these subjects are planned for May.

But with the extension of the deadline, Mr Fuller said it was unclear if there was flexibility over whether these tests could go into June. The DfE told *Schools Weeks* there will be no change in timing for the KS1 tests.

KEEP US UPDATED ON REFORMS, TEACHERS URGE GIBB

SOPHIE SCOTT
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Exclusive

Nick Gibb has promised not to publish late teacher assessment materials in the future but has said he is unapologetic about primary assessment reforms, as teachers call on the government to make sure they are fully informed of any further changes before September.

The move follows a last-minute U-turn from the schools minister on the deadline for submitting data on teacher-assessed exams taken by year 6 primary pupils. The government is also set to send a letter to schools commissioners and Ofsted next month asking that they take into account the assessment changes.

Mr Gibb returned the submission date to the end of June after concerns were raised by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) after the schools minister brought forward the date to the end of May.

Materials for year 6 writing papers – which are assessed by teachers – were not published until this month, and have been widely criticised by the profession. Teachers and unions said the content was not made clear in the national curriculum or this year's interim teacher

assessment frameworks.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, NAHT general secretary Russell Hobby said the decision by Mr Gibb was a "pretty minor concession" and called on the minister to re-evaluate further assessment changes.

He said: "The government has undermined the profession in its response by criticising them for misunderstanding rather than acknowledging they have played a part in the misunderstanding. This has been a defensive exercise and has put the blame on the wrong people.

"The government should take stock of the pace of reform ahead of the next academic year, as I think the system is overstretched and overstressed and cannot cope with the change."

Clare Jones, headteacher at Bignold Primary School in Norwich, said she was happier now the date had been pushed back, but added: "The key elements are not going to change what we do with the children but it's about being fair and not introducing these changes in an ad hoc way throughout the year.

"The government should be making sure these things are done and communicated early on, before September.

"We can then plan properly for our year, and redesign any timetables based on that information. It is all about timing and letting us know in time, rather than half way through the year."

Last week, discussions took place between the unions as to whether this year's SATs should be suspended. As *Schools Week* went to press, no further action had taken place.

Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "The chaotic implementation this year has done the government no favours. This shouldn't happen again."

Schools now have until June 30 to submit data for teacher assessments in key stages 1 and 2.

Mr Gibb told *Schools Week*: "The changes we have made to primary assessment are vital to ensuring that young people master the basics of reading, writing and mathematics and we are unapologetic for raising the bar in terms of our expectations of schools and young people.

"Although schools were given over a year's notice of the content and structure of the new KS1 and KS2 tests, we recognise that some teacher assessment materials came out later than usual. This will not happen in future years."



Mary Bousted



Russell Hobby

NEWS

PISA RANKINGS SHAKEUP COULD SCUPPER GOVERNMENT PLAN

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

A potential shake-up of the PISA rankings caused by a shift to computerised tests could undermine the government's assertion that its exam reform success should be judged on the UK's position in the tables.

The influential Programme for International Student Assessment tests show a global snapshot of how 15-year-olds are performing in maths, science and reading every three years.

Nicky Morgan (pictured) said last year she would use the rankings to judge the success of her department's extensive exam reforms. The Conservative manifesto also states PISA tables will be used to show educational progress.

But a study by Dr John Jerrim of the Institute of Education suggests this year's results face a major shakeup as the majority of countries took tests on a computer instead of paper.

His analysis of 32 countries that took both computer and paper tests as part of a trial run in 2012 found "substantial differences" in results. A third of countries differed by more than 10 test points – which Dr Jerrim said had previously been described as a

substantial amount.

The country most affected was Shanghai, which dropped by 50 points – the equivalent to more than an entire year of schooling.

Shanghai has long been held up as a beacon of excellence by the schools minister, Nick Gibb.

Its PISA success led the government to encourage Shanghai maths teaching and fund a teacher exchange programme with the region.

Other countries saw results rise as a consequence of the computer tests. Scores for the United States rose by 17 points and Brazil by 25 points.

Dr Jerrim said that the notable differences highlighted issues that would be important when it came to interpreting future results.

He told *Schools Week*: "Whether they will be comparable is the million dollar question. But it's too early to say."

The UK was not involved in the 2012 study and Dr Jerrim said it would be too much of a leap to draw conclusions from other countries about how it would fare in computer tests.

But he said it did pose questions – particularly as the government is set to use the rankings from 2018 to judge if its reforms to GCSEs

and A-levels have had the desired effect.

He said explanations could include the different cognitive processes needed to perform tasks on computers rather than paper, or that pupils can no longer use test-taking strategies such as leaving the most challenging questions to tackle at the end.

Dr Jerrim added that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – the body that administers the tests – could use a statistical adjustment to smooth out what he called the "mode effect".

Peter Adams, senior project manager at PISA, told *Schools Week* the organisation was analysing its own data and researching options for statistical adjustments. He said it was not yet at a stage to comment further.

But he did stress that the 2012 survey was not designed to "address the questions asked by Dr Jerrim nor does it support his conclusions".

He said it was done purely to inform the development of vital computer-based assessment for future PISA tests.

A Department for Education spokesperson said the UK did not take part in the optional computer-based maths assessment in 2012, adding: "While this analysis raises interesting questions, it does not and cannot provide any insights into the PISA 2015 findings for England or the rest of the UK."



College of Teaching ditches crowdfunder after just 10% raised

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A fundraising drive for the College of Teaching has been abandoned after it failed to reach even 10 per cent of its target.

The team behind the membership organisation admitted it needs to give teachers more information about its plans after a drive to raise £250,000 through crowdfunding tool Hubbub raised just over £20,000.

The college will now have to rely on volunteers to develop its membership model, rather than paying schools to release teachers as originally planned.

The deadline for pledges passed yesterday, and bosses have confirmed the existing pledges will not be taken from donors' accounts.

The college's chair, Claire Dockar (pictured), told *Schools Week* teachers had demanded more information about what the college would offer them, and said the team would continue to raise funds from "other sources, including charitable foundations" while focusing on developing its membership offer.

Schools Week previously reported that the crowdfunding campaign, launched in October, included a £10,000 pledge made by the

Primary Science Teaching Trust.

Trustees have expressed their disappointment, but Ms Dockar said the campaign had succeeded in one area – raising awareness.

She said: "Over 20,000 teachers have been reached through the campaign and while there is continued interest and appetite for the college, teachers have told us they want more detailed information about what the college will offer members before they commit funds.

"We have listened to that feedback and are concentrating on launching the membership offer in the autumn."

Under proposals unveiled by the Claim Your College coalition, which includes the existing College of Teachers, Prince's Teaching Institute, Teacher Development Trust, and SSAT, joining the new organisation will be voluntary, and the independent organisation behind it will run on a charitable basis.

Costs for membership are estimated at £70 per annum, and a consultation on who will be eligible for different types of membership has just come to an end.

Membership routes for teaching assistants and exam officers are mooted as future possibilities, but the proposal makes clear this would also only happen after consultation.



CONTINUED FROM FRONT

CEM director Rob Coe said: "It is a bit of a mess isn't it? The problem is that if they do find the tests to be incompatible and if they find the comparability hasn't worked out, where does that leave the policy? I'm not quite sure."

He said CEM was happy with its tests and given all providers had met DfE criteria there ought to be reasonable compatibility and comparability between providers, adding: "If that hasn't happened, I guess something has gone wrong somewhere."

Baseline assessments had a troubled start. Before its introduction, 80 signatories, including children's author Philip Pullman, urged the government to scrap the tests.

In July, a report published by the DfE and written by NFER said there was "some evidence" to suggest schools might game the assessments. Schools with lower results at the baseline could, in theory, show more progress by the end of KS2.

In November, problems arose when "anomalies" were discovered in Early Excellence's literacy scores.

This month, a survey of 1,000 teachers by the UCL Institute of Education found 60 per cent did not think the tests accurately reflected child attainment and the tests were dubbed "inaccurate, invalid and unreliable" by teacher unions.

Schools taking part in baseline tests have costs reimbursed by the DfE.

Early Excellence was chosen by more than 12,000 schools. Its tests cost an initial £85, plus £3.10 per pupil. Assuming each of those schools has just one reception class of 30 pupils, the DfE's paybill to Early Excellence will be more than £2.1 million.



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NEWS

CHAIN TO DROP
STRUGGLING SCHOOLS
AFTER OVER-EXPANDINGJOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

An academy chain will pull out of three schools after failing to drive "rapid enough" improvement, allowing trusts more local to the schools to take over.

The CfBT Schools Trust (CST) will relinquish control of Danum Academy, in Doncaster, Ely College, in Cambridgeshire, and Sir John Gleed School, in Lincolnshire – two of which are in special measures and another inadequate.

The trust said the move was a consequence of it growing too quickly in its early days. The three schools are in areas where CST has no other local presence.

Chris Tweedale, CST's chief executive, said: "While progress has been made we have to be realistic about what we can, and can't, offer in order to keep that momentum going in these three schools. In light of this, we believe transferring these schools represents their best chance for success."

Pupils, parents and staff have been told about the changes this week. The trusts will change sponsorship in September.

Two of the schools should be well known to *Schools Week* readers.

Sir John Gleed featured in a front page story last June that highlighted 133 academies were rated inadequate by Ofsted.

It had been rated as inadequate since April 2013 and remained in the category despite five section 8 inspections and another full Ofsted inspection.

The school's most recent section 8 found "leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation".

But CST will now step away, leaving the school to form a partnership with nearby Ofsted-rated good Bourne Academy.

Schools Week also reported how Ely College had cut work experience and changed pupils' GCSEs mid-course to be "progress 8 compliant". The headteacher of the school – one of those in special measures – later apologised.

Ely College does not yet have a sponsor lined up, but one is "expected soon".

Danum Academy, in special measures since November 2013, will be taken over by Yorkshire-based Outwood Grange Academies Trust – one of the five chains handed £5 million by the government to drive up standards in northern schools.

Steve Munby, chief executive of CST's principal sponsor, the Education Development Trust, said 12 of its 16 academies are now outstanding or good – transforming the life chances for those pupils.

But he added: "However, in [CST's] early days the schools trust grew too quickly and took on too many schools all at once – many in areas where CST had no other local presence.

"In these three schools the progress has not been rapid enough and it is in the interests of the children and young people that another trust – more local to the area – should take over responsibility for them."

Mr Tweedale had previously told *Schools Week* the rapid expansion was down to the government's "quantity, quantity, quantity" policy on academy sponsorship.

Regional schools
commissioner
budgets 'going
through the roof'FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Fears that regional schools commissioners' (RSCs) budgets could spiral out of control have been raised after the government revealed staff and administration costs rose to more than £650,000 per region this year.

Schools minister Lord Nash confirmed that each of the eight commissioners now gets £520,000 a year to spend on salaries and expenses for between eight and 10 employees.

A further £40,000 is also available to each commissioner for events and communications and £100,000 to compensate employers of the leaders who sit on their headteacher boards.

The revelation comes as the senior civil servants prepare to take on extra work, with the government's education and adoption bill giving them responsibility for improving schools considered to be coasting (see page 5).

The government has repeatedly re-emphasised its faith in the academies programme overseen by the commissioners, but a sharp rise in the money set aside for their second year has prompted concerns about future costs.

Between July 2014 and last March, RSCs spent between £160,000 and £260,000 on



Lord Nash

staffing, representing a maximum spend of £346,000 over the year. At that time, the RSCs each had administration budgets of £15,000, equivalent to £20,000 a year.

The rise means the overall budget for all eight RSCs excluding office costs is more than £5.2 million, a considerable increase on the previous budget of £4.5 million, which also included office building costs.

Lord Nash revealed the figures in response to a written question from Liberal Democrat Lords education spokesperson and former headteacher Lord Storey, who told *Schools Week* he was concerned about the rising cost of the scheme.

He said: "I think everybody foresaw this. If you set up a system of unaccountable civil servants, whose jobs and responsibilities then grow out of all proportion, then obviously costs are going to go through the roof."

Lord Storey also warned that the new powers



Lord Storey



Christine Blower

and responsibilities set out for RSCs in the education bill would create even more work and higher costs.

He added: "These RSCs are also involved in the further education area reviews. It is a very strong and powerful role, and that's not necessarily a bad thing, but there need to be checks."

National Union of Teachers general secretary Christine Blower said teachers would find it "obscene" that the government was choosing to pour cash into an "unelected, unaccountable layer of bureaucracy" while schools faced an "unprecedented squeeze" on their budgets.

She said: "The prime focus of headteacher boards and regional schools commissioners is to further the academies programme. Once again Nicky Morgan is prioritising this over all else."

The Department for Education declined to comment.

DfE directors' schools not following rules

JOHN DICKENS
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Exclusive

Schools with Department for Education (DfE) directors on their governing bodies are not following the government's requirement to publish their register of interests online, *Schools Week* has found.

The DfE issued statutory guidance in September stating that governors of local authority-maintained schools should publish a list of relevant interests on their school's website – including their links to businesses and relationships with school staff.

Academy trust members and trustees were already expected to do so, but that was extended to local governors of academies as well in September.

However *Schools Week* has found two schools where the department's own directors are governors do not seem to be following the rules.

The department's director of strategy Tom Shinner is a governor at the flagship Greenwich Free School, in London, which he helped found.

He was policy adviser to former education secretary Michael Gove before taking the £105,000 DfE role in 2014.

Jonathan Simons, GFS chair of governors and head of education at right-leaning thinktank Policy Exchange, said: "We

have had various items of governance information up on our site since we started as a school but we're conscious that it doesn't have all the latest required information at present including the register of interests so we're working to update it now."

Shona Dunn, the DfE's director general for education standards, is listed in the department's register as a governor of Alderbrook Primary School, in Wandsworth, London.

The school's website does not appear to have a published register of interests. Its own list of governors doesn't even include Ms Dunn.

The school did not respond to a request for comment.

The DfE's statutory guidance released in September said governing bodies "will be under a duty" to publish interests on their website.

The document added: "Any governor failing to reveal information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body should consider suspending the governor."

The findings emerged after *Schools Week* published the register of interests for the DfE's board members on our website.

The department does not publish this information and it can only be viewed by appointment.

The disclosures appear to reflect a wider non-compliance in the sector. Figures released last year by the National Governors Association (NGA) found nearly half of academies do not follow these rules.

The NGA said there may be a need to raise more awareness and plans to collect more information on the practice this year.

Shena Lewington, a governance consultant who runs the Clerk to Governors information website, said: "The register is very often missing – but nothing happens to schools if they don't do that."

She said for many schools this isn't a top priority, but added: "Governors should maintain their website not just for compliance, which they have to do better, but also as a market place and source of information to parents."

The DfE said it would investigate any complaints about the non-compliance of maintained schools. The Education Funding Agency oversees the compliance of academies.

A spokesperson said: "Should any governor, regardless of who they are, become aware that their school is not meeting its statutory and legal duties, they must seek to correct this at the earliest opportunity."

NEWS

THE EDUCATION BILL 2016: WHAT ITS 14 CLAUSES MEAN FOR SCHOOLS

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Exclusive

Failing schools will face immediate intervention once the government's education and adoption bill becomes law in April, and *Schools Week* can exclusively reveal that sponsors are already in negotiations with government officials to take over 200 schools.

Once the bill is completed, council-maintained schools rated inadequate by Ofsted will immediately face "academisation" – forced conversion into an academy. Existing academies rated inadequate will be rebrokered and given to another trust, or otherwise be closely monitored.

The new laws also give power to force leadership changes on coasting schools, but these will not come into play until further legislation has passed. This is due later in the year.

Schools Week understands that regional schools commissioners are already lining up sponsors for around 125 inadequate council-maintained schools, each of which will immediately be issued with academy orders once the Queen signs the legislation in April.

Sponsors are also being sought for a further 75 academies rated inadequate. An additional 50 inadequate academies have already changed sponsors or are in the process of doing so.

The bill completed its passage through parliament on Tuesday after MPs voted to accept amendments made in the House of Lords.



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE NEW LAWS

Clause 1: Schools will be eligible for intervention if found to be "coasting". The definition of coasting will come later, in a second piece of legislation, and will be subject to a vote by MPs and peers. The label will only apply after a regional schools commissioner (RSC) informs a school it is coasting.

Clause 2: RSCs will have powers to issue schools with a performance, standards or safety warning notice (local authorities already have these). The clause also gets rid of the 15-day period in which schools can currently respond to such a notice and appeal to Ofsted. In future, the issuer of the notice will decide how long the school gets to respond and improve.

Clause 3: Council-maintained schools issued with warning notices over teachers' pay and conditions will no longer be subject to a 15-day compliance period. The new deadline will be set by the council, but governors will no longer be able to make representations on this matter.

Clause 4: This forces governors of council-maintained schools which are eligible for

intervention to co-operate with the RSC, another school or any school improvement agencies.

Clause 5: Education secretaries will now have the power to direct the size and make-up of interim executive boards in schools identified as eligible for intervention. The government will also get to decide the terms of board members' appointments and the termination of appointments.

Clause 6: Councils must inform the RSC before ordering governors in a maintained school to complete improvement initiatives. They will also need to tell the government before they suspend a delegated budget or appoint more governors. In the opposite direction, councils must also be informed by the government when RSCs are going to intervene. Councils will need permission to intervene in schools where the government has already intervened.

Clause 7: Education secretaries must order the academy conversion for schools rated inadequate by Ofsted. They will also get powers to make academy orders for schools failing to comply with a warning notice or

those designated as coasting, but this will not be a mandatory duty.

Clause 8: There will no longer be a requirement to hold a consultation when the education secretary forces a school to become an academy.

Clause 9: This adds a consultation requirement if the government is forcibly academising a school which already has a foundation behind it, such as a church school (basically, it's a get-out-of-no-consultation card for religious schools).

Clause 10: Councils and governors will be required to co-operate in the forced academisation of schools designated under clause 8.

Clause 11: The education secretary will be allowed to specify the steps governors are required to take and impose deadlines to enable a forced academy takeover.

Clause 12: The education secretary can revoke an academy order if another potential approach to improvement is identified or closure deemed the best solution.

Clause 13: Introduced by the House of Lords, there is now a mandatory duty on academy trusts and chains due to take over a council-maintained school to communicate their improvement plans to parents.

Clause 14: Another government-proposed addition made in the Lords brings academies under the coasting and failing schools definition. Under this clause, academy funding agreements must include a provision allowing the education secretary to terminate agreements for those academies considered to be coasting.

ATTEMPT TO PUSH PARENTS' RIGHTS IN EDUCATION BILL FAILS

A last-ditch attempt to beef up parents' rights in the education bill failed this week, as the legislation received the final sign-off from parliament.

Amendments tabled by Labour would have required parental consultation when changing a school into an academy and removed the right of academy chains to make representations to the government over termination notices.

The amendments were defeated by Conservative MPs on Tuesday, despite receiving support from the Liberal Democrats and Green party.

The shadow schools minister Nic Dakin and Liberal Democrat education spokesperson John Pugh criticised the bill for giving "seven new powers to the secretary of state, but not one new power to parents".

But schools minister Nick Gibb said the government was unapologetic about the changes.

He said the consultation requirements were



Nic Dakin

removed so the "process cannot be misused to delay decisive action".

Adding that while it was right parents demanded quick, effective action when concerns arose, the government was clear that becoming a sponsored academy would "always be the solution for a maintained school that is judged inadequate by Ofsted", as this was a commitment in his party's general election manifesto.

He said that regional schools commissioners (RSCs) would now be able to intervene in failing and coasting academies, not just council-maintained schools. This power was introduced by the House of Lords.

Mr Gibb said RSCs were already "industrious and energetic" in tackling underperformance in academies, but were unable to intervene in some academies with older funding agreements.

Clause eight of the new bill gives powers to the government to intervene in all schools – even if they were previously protected by their funding contracts with the government.

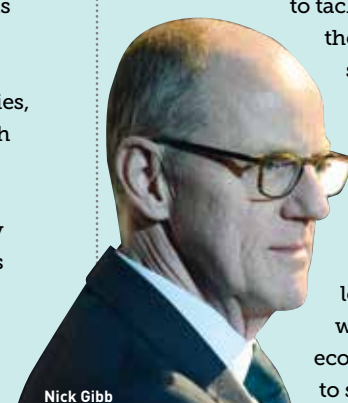
Schools Week has previously reported on academy trusts, such as Basildon Academies, which received

repeated warning notices but was one of a group of schools branded "untouchable" by the junior schools minister Lord Nash due to their funding agreements.

In the future, any academy judged to be failing by Ofsted or considered to be coasting by the government will have its funding agreement read as having "broadly the same provisions as apply to failing and coasting schools" as set out in the government's latest model funding agreement, Mr Gibb said.

But Mr Dakin warned MPs that the bill did nothing to tackle the "real challenges" facing the education system, such as school places, teacher supply and assessment.

He said: "Instead, the education secretary brings forward another bill obsessed with structures, seizing more powers for herself while marginalising parents and local communities – the very people who understand their areas, their local economy and what their children need to succeed."



Nick Gibb

NEWS

SCHOOLS WARNED
ON EMERGENCY
BOMB THREAT PLANSJOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools have been urged to update their emergency procedures after a spate of bomb scares, with new reports claiming a bomb threat can be bought on the "dark web" for less than £5.

At least 18 schools have been targeted by bomb threats – including 14 in the West Midlands – in the past few weeks. Many schools evacuated pupils, but police said the threats were either not credible or being treated as malicious communications.

An investigation by the International Business Times last week found threats against schools were being sold on the dark web, a section of the internet where sites are invisible to normal browsers.

A reporter was offered a price of less than £5 per school if more than 10 were ordered at once. The seller – who said buildings in the US and Canada could also be targeted – had made 50 sales transactions in a single day in February, the investigation found.

Now schools have been urged to update their emergency procedures.

Kaley Foran, a researcher specialising in school administration for school support service The Key, said having clear procedures in place could help to ensure all staff understand their role and respond confidently should the situation arise.

She said school policies can either explain how to handle specific situations, such as phone threats or suspicious packages, or form part of a broader emergency procedures.

Using the example of a threatening phone call, Ms Foran said schools could instruct staff to record the call, or take detailed notes, and ask questions about where any possible bomb is located, what time it is due to go off and what it looks like.

Oldbury Academy, in the West Midlands, said its emergency procedures are "constantly being reviewed" after evacuating pupils four times over bomb threats since the start of January.

The school received its latest threat before school had started on February 8, but police confirmed it as not credible by 8.22am and it remained open.

Ms Foran said it was up to schools to decide if pupils should be evacuated after a receiving a hoax, but added most should and did. Oldbury, in its letter to parents, said pupils can only return to school once the police have confirmed if the threat was credible.

The Department for Education says there are "clear emergency arrangements in place that have been agreed with police and the local authority" should an evacuation be required.

Wilshaw warns
education in
north west 'going
into reverse'FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted's chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw has criticised education in the north west, saying that pupil achievements in Liverpool and Manchester are "going into reverse" and calling on local politicians to "shoulder responsibility" and make education a "central target of their strategy for growth".

The chief inspector, who steps down next January, made the remarks in a speech at the Institute for Public Policy Research in London. Council leaders were quick to respond, telling *Schools Week* they are not complacent about attainment and are already making plans for school improvement.

Sir Michael said in his speech that the proportion of Manchester's pupils gaining five GCSEs grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, declined from 51 per cent two years ago to 47 per cent this year. In Liverpool the percentage fell from 50 per cent to 48 per cent over the same period.

Results nationally fell from 59.2 per cent in 2013 to just 53.8 per cent last year.

Sir Michael said unless schools in the northern cities improved, it could kill government plans for rejuvenation of the "northern powerhouse".

Liverpool's assistant mayor for education, Nick Small, told *Schools Week* he agreed getting people skilled for future jobs was a key



requirement to ensure the area developed, but warned of the impact of a centralised schools policy.

He said: "The recent Liverpool Challenge conference shows that when we all work together – business, our universities, schools and colleges and mayor – we can achieve more together."

Schools Week understands that leaders of the city's education partnerships have already met to plan future initiatives, including a pupil guarantee and a greater focus on outcomes.

Rosa Battle, Manchester City Council's lead member for schools, also told *Schools Week* her authority had been working "non-stop" with schools in recent years to improve outcomes.

She said: "Our results last year obviously saw a dip, but far from ignoring this we've taken a long hard look at the issues involved and have put a series of measures in place to overcome these, because we're simply not prepared to sit back and watch our pupils fail."

A recent analysis by researchers at Education Datalab showed that when taking into account pupil characteristics, the north west was the third most successful region in

the country for "value added" – a form of pupil progress measure. It fared substantially better than parts of the country such as the east Midlands and east of England.

On Tuesday the Cabinet Office published a job advertisement for the position of Ofsted's chief inspector.

The role has a potential £180,000 salary and comes with a fixed-term five year contract, and between 25 and 30 days of holiday a year. It requires regular travel within England, and some overseas visits.

In a letter to applicants, Nicky Morgan said the government wanted to appoint someone who would "make sure Ofsted can respond to changes and opportunities", referring specifically to what she described as the "more autonomous school system" created under the academies programme.

The job description also outlines the "challenges" facing schools in England, including child sexual exploitation, extremism in schools and "increasing efficiency".

A number of replacements have been suggested for the position, including several from the US after the *Sunday Times* reported Ms Morgan was looking for a replacement there.

U-TURN ON SOUTH BUCKS FREE SCHOOL

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

In an unusual volte-face the government is once again overruling a planning inspectorate's decision regarding a free school near Slough, which has already previously been taken to the high court.

Greg Clark, the secretary of state for communities and local government, last week granted Khalsa Secondary Academy permission to remain permanently at its site in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire.

It is the latest twist in a planning battle that marks a landmark ruling for the government's unique planning rules built to support the free school programme.

In 2013, Stoke Poges Parish Council and South Bucks District Council both refused the Sikh school's planning application after a fierce campaign by locals, which led to allegations of racism from the school.

The planning inspectorate upheld the councils' decisions, only for it to be overturned by the then secretary of state Eric Pickles.

However, last September – a few days before his decision was due to be challenged in the high court – Mr Pickles changed his mind on his decision, admitting it was "ill and misinformed".

Now the new secretary of state, Greg

Clark, has again reviewed the decisions and said the school should again be granted permanent approval.

He said the noise levels caused by the school when at full capacity would be a "moderate rather than serious annoyance".

A letter to campaigners from the department, sent last week, stated: "The secretary of state therefore considers that ... the internal noise levels would not give rise to significant adverse impacts to health and quality of life."

The report said Mr Pickles had "misinterpreted and misunderstood certain objective evidence and his inspector's findings as regards predicted noise levels for 840 pupils".

Campaigners told *Schools Week* that another high court challenge is now being considered.

Saera Carter, the vice chair of Stoke Poges Parish Council, said: "We are obviously disappointed the government have chosen to ignore the system in place but we are not surprised. We are in contact with our barrister and await his advice."

The school's temporary planning application to remain on the Stoke Poges site ran out in July 2014, but no enforcement action has been taken while the legal battle rumbles on.

Nick Kandola, the chair of governors

at Slough Sikh Education Trust, said everyone at the school was delighted after the lengthy delay. "This decision and the previous determination by the secretary of state provides confidence to the parents and the school community that the school clearly meets the requirements for prior approval."

He added: "We would like to thank all of the parents and the school community for the support they have provided."

Mr Clark also overruled a planning inspectorate's decision to refuse permission for a 700-pupil free school, Route 39 Academy, on a site in Devon on the same day.

Torridge District Council had previously turned down the plans. Mr Clark's decision ends a two-and-a-half year legal battle.

Scores of free schools are occupying temporary sites. *Schools Week* reported in July that more than 50 free schools had postponed opening with many affected by buildings issues.

Christine Bayliss, a former civil servant who helped set up free schools, said she would have been surprised if the government didn't stick to its guns.

"[The government] would be wary of setting a precedent and bowing to nimbyism, bearing in mind the cast iron guarantee of 500 more free schools."

Recruitment agency slammed for Teach First only job ad

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

A teacher recruitment agency has posted a “potentially discriminatory” job advert asking for Teach First only applicants.

The ad, which was posted on the *Guardian* Jobs website by Edustaff on February 2, shows vacancies in maths, science and English at a school in Manchester for a “Teach First qualified middle leader”.

This means others who have trained in university-led initial teacher training or on school-based routes such as School Direct will not be eligible to apply.

Teach First recruits graduates with upper level degrees and places people into schools in deprived areas for two years while they become a qualified teacher.

The job advert reads: “Are you a Teach First qualified teacher looking for the next step? Ready to take additional responsibility?”

“These schools have highlighted that they have suitable roles for those hungry to take the next step on the career ladder and really make use of their management aspirations.”

At the bottom of the advertisement the recruiter adds: “Please note: please only apply if you have completed the Teach First programme and looking for progression.”

Edustaff told *Schools Week* the agency advertises vacancies “according to the parameters” given by their clients and it does not have “any kind of relationship” with Teach First.

A spokesperson said: “All applicants to

this role are considered equally according to their professional merits and attributes.

“We don’t sit in judgment on our clients’ preferences in their talent acquisition strategies.”

Teach First said it has been made aware of job adverts but has not worked with the recruitment agency to post the adverts or fill the positions advertised.

A spokesperson added: “We will be looking into the adverts further.”

Michael Merrick, a teacher in Cumbria who spotted the advert, said it was appalling to only ask for Teach First recruits.

He said: “For outstanding teachers and leaders who have come through other training routes to be ruled out of employment opportunities on solely that basis seems both unjust and, in light of the recruitment challenge more generally, an odd narrowing of the field.”

“Adverts like this can give the impression that there is a two-tier system within teaching, with the outstanding candidates who did not come through Teach First training routes being judged as less capable or desirable than those who did. This is both unjust and untrue.”

Mr Merrick added that there is an implication in some advertising that Teach First has a monopoly on the most talented.

“It would appear this view is filtering



down to employment, rendering those who came through other routes as second-class teachers in the jobs market,” he said.

Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the advert was a “curious” way of recruiting teachers, which limited the potential applicant pool at a time of high teacher shortages.

“The weakening of leadership support, through the virtual demise of the National College for Teaching and Leadership, may lead to others making similar recruitment decisions, which is a short-term, divisive and potentially discriminatory approach which we would urge schools to avoid,” said Dr Bousted.

“Teach First is a strong programme but surely it would be fairer for their graduates to compete equally with others from other training routes for positions, and schools can then pick those with the best combination of experience, skills and training to do the job, from whatever route they come.”

RSCs urged to step in on poor provision for special needs

Regional schools commissioners are being called on to take responsibility for rooting out schools providing poor special educational needs provision.

A new report published today by education thinktank LKMco details 10 reasons why pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are not “achieving their potential”.

It includes high exclusion rates for SEND pupils, a mixed quality of SEND provision among schools and special schools struggling to recruit teachers.

The report – which brings together previously published literature and interviews with SEND experts – states pupils from low-income families are more than twice as likely to be identified as having SEND.

One of the report’s key recommendation is for policymakers and schools to give SEND the same level of priority as socio-economic disadvantage. Another calls for the remit of regional schools commissioners to be expanded to all schools and should review schools’ SEND information reports before linking struggling schools to those with good provision.

Bart Shaw, lead author and an associate at LKMco, has called for action to “push children with SEND’s needs up the agenda”.

He said: “We have set out clear, concrete steps that policy makers and practitioners could take to make a meaningful difference to these young people’s lives. Urgent action now needs to be taken to implement our recommendations.”

Headteachers don’t see funny side of prank Ofsted caller

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

A prankster has called more than 150 schools across the country impersonating an Ofsted inspector and telling staff they have lost their jobs. Heads who have fallen prey to the actions say it is distressing and time-wasting, but the man behind the calls says it is part of his comedy act.

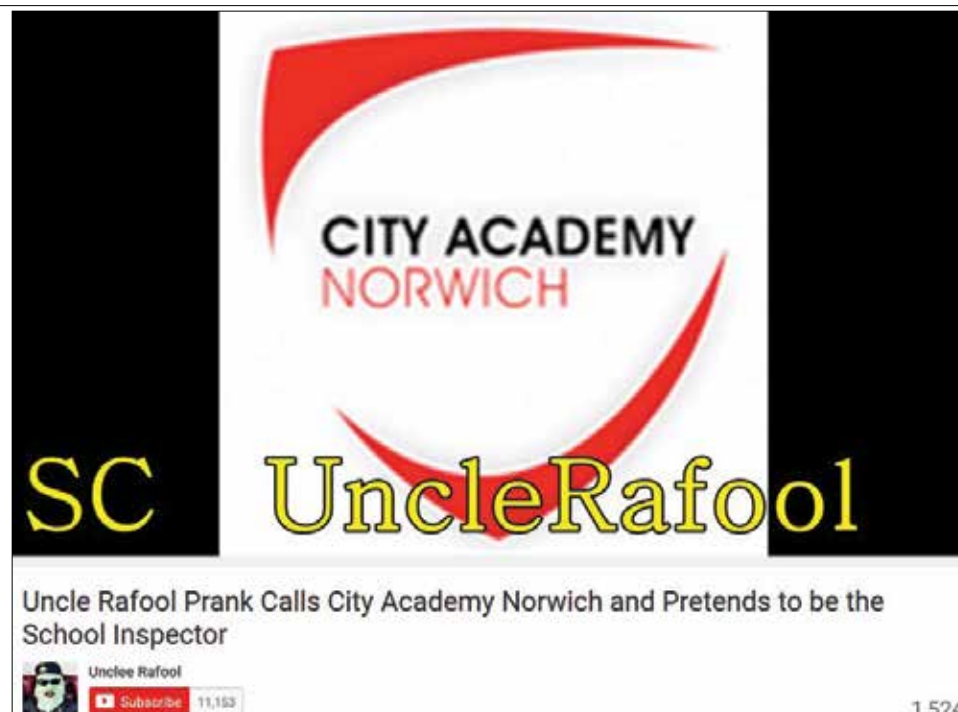
“Uncle Rafool”, a 21-year-old, claiming to be from Port Harcourt in Nigeria in his online biography, performs the fake phone calls on request from pupils who want to see their teachers embarrassed. He then shares recordings on YouTube.

He calls schools, pretending to be from Ofsted and tells staff members they have not complied with “upcoming inspection requests” before telling them they are fired, must pack their belongings and leave the school.

City Academy Norwich fell victim to the “joke” and a video recording of a phone call to principal Mary Sparrow was uploaded to YouTube last year.

Uncle Rafool starts by asking what time “we” should come for the inspection, leading to him telling the headteacher that he is from the inspectorate.

Ms Sparrow tells the caller she cannot let him come onto the school site unless she is sure he is from the inspectorate.



After some to-ing and fro-ing, Uncle Rafool asks for the name and role of Ms Sparrow and tells her to leave the office. Ms Sparrow says she will take legal advice and hangs up.

Ms Sparrow told *Schools Week*: “The fact one individual has prank-called so many schools really isn’t a laughing matter. A headteacher’s time is hugely pressured and valuable.”

“Perhaps Uncle Rafool should be billed for

all of the senior school leaders’ time he has wasted. I expect he wouldn’t find the calls quite so funny then.”

Uncle Rafool, who has nearly 11,000 subscribers on YouTube and describes himself as an entertainer behind a mask, told *Schools Week* most people find the pranks funny.

“As a comedian you can’t please everyone,” he said. “No one’s safety is at risk when I’m talking to them and I don’t cross

the line to make anyone fear for their safety. It is very obvious it is done for a laugh and if people don’t find it funny then that is understandable but I am just a comedian trying to entertain my supporters.”

He added that some schools who have seen the funny side of it later follow him on Twitter and even invite him to the school to perform special assemblies for pupils.

“There are quite a few schools that embrace what I do but also a lot of other grumpy ones that like to see everything as trouble,” Uncle Rafool said.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, offered advice to school leaders affected by similar calls: “I know Ofsted can overreach sometimes but they do not have the power to sack a member of staff. If a school is worried about the conduct of anyone claiming to represent Ofsted they should contact the regional director immediately.”

An Ofsted spokesperson provided guidance on inspections: “Inspectors will normally call a school the day before a routine inspection is due to take place. They will state where they are calling from, ask to speak to the head of the school and will confirm the details of the inspection by email after the conversation. All schools are given contact details for the inspector if they need to get in touch.”



EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss_mcinemey | laura.mcinemey@schoolsweek.co.uk

The schools sector is up in arms about primary assessments – both baseline and the standardised tests. I deliberately use the word “sector”. Teachers, school leaders, parents, unions, assessment providers: everyone is furious.

One way to deal with late information and daft processes is a boycott. Get teachers to refuse to carry out the tests. Unions have threatened this in past weeks.

But boycotts allow the government to paint the profession as obstructive and, in doing so, make parents worry about the impact on their child.

A provocative alternative was instead whispered to me this week. It's a little out there but it would shake things up.

Here it is: instead of boycotting, why don't the unions come up with a brand new assessment, designed and agreed by its members?

Teachers would then use this new (better) test to assess pupils – but there's an important proviso. Teachers would promise to pass the data to secondary schools to support transition, and to parents so they know how their child is doing, and to the schools' overlord (a local council or academy chain) so it can judge performance BUT – and here's the critical bit – they also promise not to pass it to the Department for Education, the media (gulp), or Ofsted.

Why would teachers do this? Largely because they don't want to annoy parents and aren't worried about sharing information that is actually used to help improve pupils' learning. What stresses teachers out is the use of very difficult and very uncertain testing processes that will nevertheless be used for “accountability” – or, as the sector affectionately thinks of it, “figuring out who needs to be sacked”.

While there may be strong statistical reasons for the government holding off on its decision about what score will constitute an “expected” standard, it does seem convenient that when the decision is made, the score could be the exact level where the number of schools that fall below it happens to be the precise number the government can afford to force into becoming academies.

That sounds cynical, I know. It is cynical. But it's a cynicism you'll hear on the lips of so many education people because their faith in “accountability” has been completely eroded by the past five years of reform.

So, what would such tests proposed by the unions look like? And how could they be created?

People may shudder, but it's simply a fact that online testing has come on in leaps and bounds.

The work currently being carried

out by Chris Wheadon at the website No More Marking shows that tests of just about any skills can be created and accurately measured by comparing one answer to another.

For such a test to work, every year 6 teacher would have to commit to uploading their pupils' work and helping with judging, but it would be very quick and easy, and would give each teacher a reasonably good indicator of the pupils' standing in comparison to the general population.

Next, to avoid “teaching to the test” – the bane of every year 6 teacher's life – teachers would be given little or no notice of what the tests involve.

I know this sounds crazy. But remember: these tests are not being used for “accountability”. They would be a genuine measure of pupil capabilities. The data would be used to genuinely help secondary schools prepare, and parents understand their children, and academy trusts to worry about whether they are giving most resources to the schools where

children are struggling most.

Think how fantastic that would be! Think how revolutionary!

The toughest part of the plan is getting the assessments written – especially in time for this year's planned assessment period in May.

It's not easy to write good tests, but I suspect a two-day hackathon by assessment experts would probably get something reasonably useful, at least for an initial go at this new world.

This is an outrageous plan. I understand that. It involves snubbing the government, creating a new alternative, and setting unusual expectations for data sharing. It also reduces transparency – something that makes me, personally, quite nervous.

Outrageous ideas are sometimes important to consider though. If I was a union weighing up my options in the face of panicked members, I could certainly see the attraction. Is anyone willing to step up and make it happen?



COMMENT

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Schools hit by storm Desmond and Eva will not get automatic exemption, says JCG

 Colin Richards, Cumbria

Presumably the only flood-hit schools getting automatic exemptions from examination boards are those in the Noah's Ark Academy Trust?

Factory-farmed teachers will fail our children

 Janet Downs, Lincolnshire

Teaching is an intellectual activity and requires high-quality teacher education. But in England ministers think it's a "craft" that can be picked up on the job. This reduces teaching to having a repertoire of tricks which may work (or not) in a school which is "growing its own" but may fail when the teacher trained in the 'academy trust way' moves elsewhere.

 Mike Ollerton, Cumbria

I think this is a brilliant piece of writing which raises fundamentally important issues regarding teacher education for initial and continuing professional development. The apprenticeship model is, at worst about putting bodies in front of children. At best it might work to some degree depending upon the crucial skills mentors have. However trainee teachers need to learn about how to teach in different school environments not just the one or two they have placements in.

 Andrew Smith, address supplied

While I sit in an entirely different domain within teaching – this is still an excellent read – great stuff ...

Most of my teaching I learned in my first 19 years and I am still learning – ok, so the majority of experience was in the class room in the first two years, however it is this space that forms us and helps us develop our children, whose minds become the future of this nation.

Theresa May pushes troubled children free schools plan

 Jane Eades, London

If all schools become academies this will have to be the inevitable solution to dealing with all the children thrown out of them in order to support the pretence that academies are successful. At the moment there are still schools under the local authority umbrella to pick up the pieces.

DfE refuses to publish register of interests online

 Maria Humphrey-Gaskin, London

If they had nothing to hide, they should have allowed copying of the register of interests, by photocopying, not transferring onto notepad.

The Collapse of Parenting – how we hurt our kids when we treat them as grown-ups

 James Wilding, Berkshire

Almost certainly, any book on bringing up children focusses on the misplaced premise that 'it', our lives, are defined by the children. We/our lives are not.

Parenting involves including children in the narrative of our mutual lives, and that does include extended family members as well as employees/others.

And children do get used to the principle that they are not little emperors. And they have done so for generations.

Anger over exclamation changes to primary writing assessments


 Emma Neale, address supplied

Our children are over assessed to the point of causing mental health issues. Teachers are stressed with the excessive workloads and targets they have to hit!!!! Am I stupid in thinking that how and what are usually contextualised as questions? Therefore requiring a question mark!

Factory-farmed teachers will fail our children

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Paul Hopkins, Hull

 The worry for me is that a government which claims over and over again to believe in evidence and in evidence based practice choose ideology over evidence when it comes to teacher education – both locally and internationally. Most of those world systems that the government claims it wants to emulate train their teachers via the academic route of the university but we have a current government in the UK who seem determined to removed universities from the pre-service route as much as possible. The balance between discipline (subject) and pedagogical (teaching) knowledge is subtle and different for those teaching EYFS, primary, secondary and further education and the removal of this vital area of pre-service education is a calamity – and not just a moral and pedagogic one but as the National Audit Office shows a financial one as well.

We need a serious rethink about teacher education encouraging a more nuanced approach from subject development (undergraduate studies) into pedagogic development (undergraduate [let's not forgot the degree QTS routes] or postgraduate) and then continued support and development in the first years of teaching with supported reflection and study time (full masters level for all teachers). Schools of course have a vital part to play in this – as they have within the system for a long-time but most school teachers do not have the time or the expertise to deliver academic pre-service training and so we end up with a coaching rather than a mentoring model of practice.

I am convinced that this would pay for itself with increased retention – and at 4x the cost for a Teach First as a PGCE you would not need much increase.

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



Contact the team

To provide feedback and suggest stories please email

news@schoolsweek.co.uk and tweet using @schoolsweek

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

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

Correction

The Department for Education called *Schools Week* after our last edition (Feb 12) to state that Tom Shinner's role at Greenwich Free School was included in the register of interests and that our reporter had copied down the report incorrectly ("DfE refuses to publish register of interests online").

The department said it could not send through a copy of the interests to show this, but told us the list read: "Miscellaneous and unremunerated interests: Greenwich Free School – governor (member and director)".

We have amended our online register of interests to reflect this.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

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

news@schoolsweek.co.uk
020 3051 4287

PROFILE

“THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO WOULD MAKE EXCELLENT TEACHERS”

ANN MCGAURAN
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Fiona Ritson, English teacher

English teacher Fiona Ritson is the sort of person you can rely on in an emergency. The batteries on my recorder have run out. She finds replacements in her beautiful, quiet (admittedly it's half term) well-ordered classroom and hands them over. Crisis averted.

Maybe this is why students at King Edward VII Academy (KES) in King's Lynn, Norfolk, cherish her. She makes a point of keeping supplies for life's little disasters such as snagged tights. The sort of disaster that make a teenager's day that bit less good.

Five years ago, Ritson was “quite a well paid” data manager in a different school. Worried about the impact of falling birth rates on enrolments and the ability to maintain her salary level, she left for a job outside school.

Money was a concern as she divorced in 2000 and has three children now aged 13, 20 and 21, as well as a mortgage. But after a week in her new job she went home in tears. “I hated everything about it. I missed the kids, I missed the teachers, I missed the parents.”

She turned to two valued friends for advice: Nigel Willingham, now headteacher of Terrington St Clement High School in King's Lynn and his wife, a teacher. “I went round to see them and said ‘I don't know what to do. I've left a job I absolutely adored. I'm not qualified. I'm 42 and left school in 1984, college in 1986 having done a Level 3 style course. All the jobs on offer now need a degree to get the money I want.’

“I got so upset. And he said: ‘You should have been a teacher.’”

When Ritson worked with Willingham, he would often encourage her to go into teaching but she had always ignored his suggestion.

“He said it again and I said: ‘Are you serious?’. He said: ‘Fiona you have such a good way with students. They react well to you. They like you. You're good with parents, and you hold your ground. You would suit teaching.’”

Willingham told her she needed to get back into a school, do a degree “and then we'll work from there”.

A week later, a job came up at Downham Market Academy in Norfolk for a cover supervisor. “They took me on with the understanding that I wanted to go into teaching. I stayed there a year and a half. I had already

enrolled in my full-time three-year Open University degree course and I was a year and a half down the line.”

She completed an English degree in the evening and at weekends, taking a Saturday job in a hotel to make ends meet, as her pay shrank to £12,000 as a cover supervisor. “It was really difficult. I've no idea how I did it when I look back!”

Ritson's youngest child, Taylor was about seven when she started and her older two, Zak and Paloma, helped with their younger sibling. “They were fabulous and they made up for the lack of support from a husband.”

One thing she did give up during this hectic time was cooking. “Dinner did become 50 shades of beige. It was a real case of whatever came out of a packet. It was chicken nuggets, chips and maybe baked beans because I just couldn't give up the time to make a dinner.”

Ritson says being a single parent working full-time and doing her degree as a full time course “was a massive commitment – but it reflected how serious I was”.

A year and a half into the cover supervisor's job, an opportunity came up at Iceni Academy in Methwold, Norfolk. “That was for an instructor in English, 20 hours a week. It really was a case of hitting the road running.”

She wanted to stay on but the role at the school was a maternity cover. “They did try to keep me but I wanted to teach English and I wanted my own classes.

“A job then came up here at King Edward VII and I was interviewed by Wendy Holland, the head of department – who is amazing – and they gave me a chance.” She started

in September 2014.

Ritson felt she was a perfect candidate for the assessment only (AO) teacher training route. She also took her two professional skills tests in literacy and maths.

“After having not done any maths, other than basic adding up in my head when you're going round Tesco since 1984, I passed those! That was a big wave of relief.”

In taking up a post at King Edward VII Academy, life came full circle. She had attended the school when her parents – Maria, who died in September and Frank, who is 76 – brought her and her brother to King's Lynn and opened a guest house after “moving around a lot”.

Her mother was Spanish and came to England in the 1950s. “When we came to Kings Lynn that was the longest I'd ever stayed anywhere.”

Ritson became a student in the first year the school, founded in the 16th century and now an academy sponsored by the CWA Academy Trust, changed from being an all-boys grammar to a mixed sex comprehensive. The only teacher she can remember is her English teacher, Mr Griffiths. “He was deputy headteacher here. He still comes in.”

She believes one way to address the crisis in teacher recruitment and retention would be making teaching more accessible for people who show potential. “It's not an easy career, but there are people out there like me who

FIONA RITSON

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

Which people on Twitter and elsewhere have inspired you to be a better teacher?

Sadly, Nigel Willingham and his wife Lorna aren't on Twitter. But he's headteacher at St Clement's High School and she works at Mildenhall College Academy. On Twitter there's James Theobald at Wildern School in Hampshire @JamesTheo, Chris Curtis at Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy @Xris32, Freya Odell at The Wellington Academy @fod3, Caroline Spalding at Tupton Hall School @HeadofEnglish, Dawn Cox at Manningtree High School, Essex @MissDCox, Laura Rowlands @TillyTeacher

What did you have for breakfast this morning?

Never have breakfast.

Which of your personal qualities help you most as a teacher?

My knowledge and passion.

What one piece of advice has been most useful to you as a teacher?

You'll never be up-to-date/on top, so don't focus on the wrong aspects of the job!

Your ideal next holiday?

Would love to travel across Italy top to bottom for the entire summer six week break!



Fiona and her children, Zac, Taylor and Paloma



Fiona and her form at Icen Academy



Fiona and her father Frank



Fiona and two of her form from Icen Academy



From left: Dawn Cox, Mike Cladingbowl, and Fiona at Ofsted



Fiona, aged 17, at college

N

would make excellent teachers. I don't just mean people in their 40s but also people in their 20s."

She thinks both the cost and time involved in getting a degree are prohibitive to many.

"Probably an awful lot of people out there like me who also fit in to school life very well and they need the opportunities – but who at 40 or 45 can afford to take on a £25,000 to £30,000 debt?"

Ritson praises her academy, which is funding her AO route through teacher training. While she says you shouldn't ever regret the things you have done, she does wonder how her life could have turned out.

"I wish I could have a sort of Sliding Doors moment and see my life had I done this in my 20s. Would I be a deputy head or a lead practitioner? Or would I still just be the kind of person I want to be: a solidly good classroom teacher? I just wonder."

She gives me a lift to the station and we bump into one of the younger pupils from the school. He gives her a big, broad smile. They chat away to each other. However things have worked out, she is clearly happy and well liked.

Curriculum vitae

Education

- 1979 - 1984** King Edward VII School, Norfolk
- 1984 - 1986** College of West Anglia, Wisbech, RSA Level Three in Administrative Skills
- 2011 - 2014** Open University BA (Hons) English language and literature

Career

- 2000 - 2006** Administrator, Thomas Clarkson Academy, Cambridgeshire
- 2007 - 2011** Data manager, Hamond's High School, Norfolk
- 2011 - 2012** Cover supervisor, Downham Market Academy, Norfolk
- 2012 - 2013** Instructor in English, Icen Academy, Norfolk
- 2014 - present** English teacher, King Edward VII Academy, King's Lynn

OPINION

ROSS
MCGILLDeputy headteacher
Blogger @teachertoolkit

Does anyone know how many teachers we need?

There is a crisis in recruitment, not helped by low pay, the tangled and defragmented employment process and the Department of Education massaging the figures. And there's no sign that this shortage will improve

Teacher vacancies have rocketed, with more and more teachers employed without a degree in their subject and more and more leaving the classroom altogether, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

Meanwhile it's all too easy for education ministers to believe there is no recruitment crisis when government officials say it is extremely hard to predict the right number of teachers needed each year.

But let me tell you what it's like recruiting and retaining teachers on the ground; even in a capital city full of millions of people.

At least two or three times a week, I negotiate with supply agencies, bartering daily rates and buy-out fees to employ support and teaching staff. Over the past 18 months, we tracked data from more than 25 agencies to gain an overview of buy-out fees, contracts and clauses to ensure best value.

It transpires that supply agencies are mass-purchasing groups of newly qualified teachers and taking them straight out of the interview circuit to keep them on their books (for a profit). They are also interviewing teachers from overseas en masse to farm teachers out to schools in areas most in need.

This is useful if you head up a multi-academy trust in need of many teachers, or you lead a supply agency, but for standalone schools the teachers who used to be on the market are quickly dissipating and our recruitment hopes are dashed from the outset.

What does this research show about the situation? A report published earlier this month by the NAO says there are "growing teacher shortages in many areas, with the government having missed recruitment targets for four years".

With increasing pressure on budgets, heightened workloads and changes to legislation, headteachers are becoming increasingly creative with the use of support and temporary staff to replace teachers. I have observed these colleagues being used to complete work normally carried out by qualified teachers: covering for absent colleagues so that teaching staff can be protected from cover lessons; or worse, working in unfilled vacancies!

Vacancies across England have increased from 350 (0.1 per cent of the workforce) in

2011 to 3,210 (0.9 per cent) in 2014. Perhaps this is because pay for teachers in the UK is still much less than the UK average of £27,000, at just over £24,000; and ranked 13 out of the 30 OECD countries.

So has the DfE got its head in the sand? Does anyone know what it is doing?

Each year the government collects data about the number of unfilled teaching positions via the school workforce census, a statutory data collection, taking place in November: a time when vacancy rates are comparatively low.

Cutbacks and changes to teacher training make sourcing new teachers increasingly complicated

If the DfE asked for this data in April or June, the picture would be very different! It would probably show that in reality almost every school has unfilled vacancies.

In the present climate, job security makes teachers reluctant to move to another school, plus flimsy or vulnerable professional development budgets do not allow those already in the classroom to train-up for new roles elsewhere. Staff immobility is exacerbated by a new and decentralised pay policy, making it more of a challenge for teachers to move schools and expect the same pay, because headteachers no longer need to match salaries.

One teacher recently wrote: "If there is a recruitment crisis, you'd think teachers could use that to leverage better pay and hours!" So far, it seems that has not happened.

I'm absolutely convinced that recruitment issues will remain for the foreseeable future. The recruitment process is already tangled and defragmented at the core, with cutbacks and changes to initial teacher training policy making sourcing new teachers increasingly complicated.

In the meantime there is a need for us to challenge the time of year workforce data is collected so that it is actually helpful. Remember: when you next hear the government talking about recruitment and retention, or teacher training and vacancies, there is a context needed behind each statistic.

KIRAN
GILL

Former teacher, education blogger and current convenor of Policy First

Tough talking won't help struggling students

Insisting disadvantage can be fixed with a traditional academic curriculum and a strong dose of discipline is not engaging with the issue. That method did nothing for my sister, and it will do nothing for others like her

Last term there was a predictable exam hullabaloo when school GCSE data was published. It happens every year. This time the Department of Education also issued some tough talk about how it felt high results were being achieved: converter academies "lead the way in academic standards"; schools bucking the trend of underachieving poorer pupils were "refusing to accept second best".

King Solomon's Academy (KSA) was a high flyer yet again, achieving a whopping 95 per cent A*-C including English and maths, with a cohort where three quarters are eligible for free school meals. KSA is well-known by practitioners and policymakers. It is beloved for its "no excuses" behaviour management style, including giving points for students sitting a certain way and "tracking" (watching) whoever is speaking. There are expectations of silence. Fingers are clicked to show agreement. Demerits are given for calling out. These strict rules and its aspiration to send every pupil to university are pointed to as causal factors in their exam success.

My sister didn't get five A*-C GCSEs, including English and maths. Adopted at two, she was a smiley, beautiful toddler but by the time she was 16, she didn't feel like smiling. She felt like a failure.

Like many who've experienced trauma in infancy, her body floods with cortisol when situations become stressful. Exams triggered her fight or flight hormones. The capacity to think and access her long-term memory shut down. By year 10 she was in lower sets, never the priority. "They just cared about the ones who weren't going to fail their GCSEs," she said. When the school couldn't fill an English post, her class got the supply teachers.

When my sister was taken from her birth mother, she was placed in care for a year, before being separated from the foster carer she then called mum and meeting a new mother all over again. These early relationships are where we learn what emotions are, how to interpret them and how to control them. When those relationships are damaged or damaging, learning can be too. As a teen, my sister struggled to trust and – like many children with attachment disorder – could be threatened by others' behaviour, even when it wasn't intended. Public criticisms or minor reprimands could prompt extreme reactions. At other times she

just withdrew and switched off. If the teachers didn't care, why should she?

My sister's school failed to understand the emotional and psychological side of learning

Working in KSA, what struck me was the student-teacher relationships. Students were in classes of 20, and spent up to four hours a day with one form tutor, who also taught them a core subject. By year 11, many of the pupils had been taught by the same teachers in English, maths, languages and music every day for the past five years. Yet these aspects of the school model are overlooked. Why doesn't Nick Gibb mention the importance of low teacher-pupil ratios and continuity of care?

Bethnal Green Academy is second in *Schools Week's* league table of excellent exam outcomes with disadvantaged pupils. Despite similar outcomes, it has a very different style. Students take ownership of their learning and behaviour in a much more relaxed atmosphere. Academia is prized alongside subjects with opportunities for self-expression and success, even for those, like my sister, who struggle with exams. When I was there, student voice and active citizenships were key school priorities to empower pupils beyond school life. What these two different schools had in common was the ability for pupils to be recognised as individuals, and a commitment to combine high expectations with compassion and care.

"No excuses" is too easy an answer for too complex a problem, championed by those who want to believe disadvantage can be fixed with an academic curriculum and a strong dose of discipline. In the end, it was an apprenticeship that helped my sister realise her potential. She loves her job and knows she is a success. Her failure at school wasn't because of too many excuses. It was a failure of the school to understand the emotional and psychological side of learning, the long-term effects of early disadvantage, and the value of relationships, praise and experience of success in helping pupils overcome them.

Enough with the tough talk. The real key to pupil success is compassionate action.

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EXPERTS: TIPS FROM THE TOP

RUSSELL HOBBY

General secretary, NAHT



TOBY SALT

Chief executive,
Ormiston Academies Trust

Continuing their half-termly series exclusively for *Schools Week*, Russell Hobby and Professor Toby Salt share their tips on academy trusts: this week, how to survive in your new role as an executive head of a multi-academy trust – how big to grow and how to keep your staff on side

The seven deadly sins of executive headship

Taking on the role requires a new set of skills. It's easy to lose the personal touch you had before, but to move on you need to abandon what you previously held on to in order to grow and develop. Toby and Russell look at the perks and pitfalls of the role and how to traverse the learning curve.

The executive headteacher role has been around for a while now but still lacks definition. The biggest risk is assuming it is a natural extension of stand-alone headship, only bigger. It isn't. Operating on the basis that what made you a great headteacher will make you a great executive headteacher is a fundamental mistake. It needs a different approach.

There are many inspiring and talented people performing the role and they have had to travel a steep learning curve. Let's look at some of the things they've learned to avoid. As so often in leadership, what is a virtue in one context can become a vice in another.

1. If confidence becomes control – Toby

You usually become an executive headteacher because you're successful. This gives a certain confidence in your judgment and expertise. Rightly so: you know what works and you're firmly in control of your own school. You may even be expert in turnaround situations requiring an especially strong lead. As an executive headteacher you are now managing other headteachers. It can demand a different style to make the most of the capacity you have: coaching, facilitating and influencing. The dreaded phrase "In my school we do it this way" sets alarm bells ringing when other headteachers hear it. There may be times when a direct style is still necessary but others when it becomes a drag on the capacity you need or your ability to persuade talented people to take part. You will need to calibrate the approach to the situation.

2. If collaboration becomes conversation – Russell

Unhelpfully for clear prescription, however, the reverse is also true. You may be used to seeing fellow headteachers as your peers not direct reports. There is a camaraderie and shared experience that can be painful to break. But this is no longer the case

inside your trust. There does need to be accountability; the debate has to end at some point with a decision and there will be conflicts that require resolution. Rethinking yourself as a "leader of leaders" and holding people accountable for results and values while delegating freedom on methods will be a constant balancing act.

3. If mission becomes ambition – Toby

You recognise your responsibilities extend beyond a single school. There is no credit or glory on improving one school while harming others. That's what has got you involved in system leadership in the first place and there can be an urgency to spreading the word. It is painful to observe underperformance and do nothing. This leads to growth of the trust, but remember the moral imperative that triggers the outreach. There are few greater dangers for a trust than growth for growth's sake. There must be a reason why someone would be better off with you and a boundary to who you'll work with. Just adding the numbers can too easily become empire building.

Robert Hill has done some great work and the Department for Education and new national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, have useful tools and insights. What they all say is regionalise, never grow beyond the capacity – particularly the leadership capacity – that you have. You will be tempted, you may even be offered funding, praise and national recognition, but you need to resist temptation and grow at the pace that is sustainable. I don't think there is an optimum size of multi-academy trusts (MAT), rather there is a need for any MAT to have the right capacity at the right time to turn each school around that needs it. Get the capacity to demand ratio right and ensure you have the best people and best systems in place to deliver and you will succeed. Don't get greedy and rush, which could lead to painful indigestion.

4. If momentum becomes inertia – Russell

It is often sheer strength of will that gets a trust going and the group can come to depend on the energy and vision of the founder. This works up to a point in size but after that you need structure, policy and shared culture. It is similar to the transition private companies go through when they convert from entrepreneurial, founder-led businesses to formal organisations. Indeed your trust may

go through several phases of growth where it needs to reinvent the way it works. These shifts can be surprisingly wrenching as it is easy to miss the flexibility and informality of the early days. Yet holding on to it too long can create serious strains. You are building a wider and sustainable organisation, not just a collection of schools bound by their connection to a single person.

5. If reward becomes entitlement – Toby

Bigger jobs should be paid more. High performance under conditions of risk deserves its fair reward. With the greater responsibility and impact comes greater scrutiny – even national papers are interested in what you earn. Good governance, good procedure and transparency are your armour here. It is not how much you are paid but how the decisions are made that matters. Operating as if you were still under the radar is not an option. You are a senior public servant and that brings its own challenges.

Operating as if you were still under the radar is not an option. You are a senior public servant and that brings its own challenges

6. If focus becomes isolation – Russell

It is tempting to see the trust as the vehicle for all activity. It has a common ethos and shared ways of working. It has capacity to do many things. You look after your initial teacher training, run a teaching school alliance, conduct your own continued professional development, develop your own programmes of study and run your own conferences. But if lots of trusts come to do this we risk a balkanised education system, where knowledge and best practice are difficult to spread. A trust should not be an island in itself. Schools should participate

in overlapping and interconnected networks with other trusts and standalone schools.

7. If distance becomes severity – Toby

Many successful headteachers use a blend of strong challenge and strong support. They are demanding and caring. It is the support that makes the challenge bearable, inspiring rather than undermining. The trouble is that support erodes easily with distance while challenge does not. You can issue instructions, set standards and levy accountability without really knowing someone. You can do it by email. Our government does it via press releases.

Making people feel valued, coaching them to solve problems, spotting someone in crisis or tempering the tough messages with explanation and insight requires a personal touch. Creating a trust, especially a large one, adds distance between an executive headteacher and their staff; pretty soon people can hear your challenge loud and clear but the care and support get drowned out. You need to overcompensate – build leaders at every level of the system who can offer that direct support to their teams that you used to provide yourself. You are there to absorb the stress and pressures and the multiple strands of accountability (let's not start on that topic) and tough conversations are always best face to face and after a break.

Leadership is a journey and you don't stop learning. One of the great things about executive headship is that it adds another layer of growth: new horizons to stretch our most talented leaders. But together with learning new skills and habits, we sometimes have to unlearn old ones. This is much harder because they are part of our identity, part of the secret of success.

What a risk to abandon the things that have served us so well. It is a risk worth taking; it is a risk that needs taking. You have done it before. When you stepped up from classroom teacher to head of department, the things that made you a great teacher did not necessarily help in your new role. It was no longer about how good you were but about how good you helped other people become. The good news is that there is always growth and development as a leader still to come for the reflective, self-critical and passionate practitioner.

The Telegraph

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

Sucking the life out of learning

By @jennielou75

What a week to be a primary teacher! After the writing exemplifications documents sent shockwaves through primary schools, the response I heard from a group of teachers in Darlington was echoed across the country. The sense was one of panic as teachers knew that more children would be labelled as failing. Jenny gives a passionate account of chaos on the year 2 frontline: "No one knows what the heck we are doing. We wait for the next missive to arrive from the Department for Education (DfE) ... I attended a moderation/standardisation session run by my local authority which made it clear that they don't have much of a clue either. One told us that we should use the interim assessments at the end of the year, the other said stick them in books and highlight them as they achieve them. Everyone is confused and reacting with panic to every change."

Just plain wrong

By @MichaelT1979

For those who have read the blog above and concluded that teachers are overreacting and should feel grateful because the DfE has given them an additional few weeks to submit data, please keep reading. As Michael states: "For the DfE to claim some magnanimity in moving the KS1 submission date back by two weeks when the materials are already over three weeks late after their already late deadline ... once again shows their complete disregard for the profession." Surely the profession will not accept these meager conciliatory offerings from the government. He goes on to explain what he believes the DfE has got right and what it has got wrong. The conclusion is saddening as he acknowledges

the inevitable pointless workload increase in for teachers: "Currently, as a teacher of year 6 pupils, I can see no other way of preparing myself for the high-stakes moderation process, than to collect an evidence trail of ticks to assure the moderator (and myself). And as a deputy headteacher, I can see no other way of preparing my school for the high-stakes league tables and floor standards, than to corrupt good teaching to try to tick those boxes."

10 ways SLT can reduce teacher workload

By @DebraKidd

Debra gives us a timely reminder that there are concrete things that the senior leadership teams (SLT) can do to reduce teacher workload, despite all the pressures from the DfE and Ofsted: "Even just in the past three years, the marking frenzy sparked by those immortal words 'progress over time' has made the experience of anyone who hasn't had to deal with a full timetable more or less obsolete." Of course I would argue that you need a collective group to both point these things out and put pressure on SLTs to deliver them! "Drop the ridiculous expectations about marking and evidence in books that have arisen from the fear that Ofsted will complain about a lack of work. Ofsted have been clear that they don't expect every piece of work to be marked, certainly not triple marked. Learning happens in brains, not in books and if the children are not given time to process, discuss and articulate their learning, it is rarely retained. Encourage your staff to allow children to evidence their learning in all kinds of ways and let them take responsibility for evidencing it when the inspectors call – by talking to them."

Robin Alexander on Ofsted's new boss

By @reclaimschools

Ofsted's impact upon frontline teachers remains as strong as it ever was. There have been really positive moves from the inspectorate in the past year. But could this all be about to change? Robin Alexander reminds us Ofsted is impartial and reports to parliament, not a political party. It "must do so without fear or favour, judging the performance of all schools ... by the standards they achieve and the way they are run". He concludes that we need an independent chief inspector: "The talent worthy of celebration and reward ... resides solely in the office of the head ... Such independent-minded and genuinely talented people may conclude from inspection or research evidence that flagship policy x, on which minister y's reputation depends, isn't all it is cracked up to be... isn't it exactly what a genuine democracy needs in order that well-founded policies gain a hearing, ill-founded policies are abandoned before they do lasting damage?" If the next few weeks are as interesting as the past few, it's going to be a bumpy ride until Easter.

BOOK REVIEW

Why We Snap

Author R Douglas Fields

Publisher Dutton

ISBN-10 052595483X

ISBN-13 978-0525954835

Reviewer Jackie Ward, deputy headteacher at a primary pupil referral unit



As someone whose "rage circuit" is constantly fired by the circumstances of how and why some of our most vulnerable – and yes, angry – young children are excluded, I was intrigued by the premise of this book, which promises to reveal the nine triggers of "why we snap".

The writer is a respected American neuroscience expert and his authorial style combines a heady brew of scientific knowledge, personal experiences, analogy and case studies which draw the layperson into a deep exploration of the brain's mysteries.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one, *Enraged*, gives examples of "ordinary" people snapping and committing horrific acts due to a sudden loss of control. Fields personalises this with his own account of overcoming a pickpocket with a violence he could barely control.

He attributes his outburst to "the lifesaving circuits of rage engraved in our brain by evolution" which now "clash with the transformational changes in the modern environment". Going on to say that "coded into our DNA through aeons of battle for the survival of the fittest, the circuits of aggression reside latent in the hypothalamus of everyone".

We are then introduced to the nine triggers for these provocations of rage, to which he gives the mnemonic LIFEMORTS, literally the stuff of life and death.

The chilling conclusion to this part is the observation of a psychologist in a murder trial in which the defendant had snapped: "I think anyone is capable of it."

Part two looks at the flipside of snapping in anger, showing how the same parts of the brain also trigger heroic behaviour when lives are saved. On the plane where the "underwear bomber" tried to set off his lethal cargo, why did one person grapple with him while others fled?

Fields discusses that "situation analysis in the cerebral cortex" may have engaged a

"defence reflex". Perhaps our hero knew that if he didn't act, the passengers would all die and so he went towards the threat. Something in his background propelled him forwards; this imperative hardwired into his neural circuits.

The final part was, for me, completely riveting. Its theme of the differences between sexes and the intertwining of sex and violence for both males and females are backed up with up-to-the-minute examples of modern-day attacks on women by hordes of men. Think Egypt and Cologne, Germany. Think of the horrors of gang rape on a bus in India.

Sex (the "mate" trigger) is one of the most powerful rage switches. In girls, rage is often channelled into self-harm.

A young woman explains: "It's literally like a bomb is going to go off in your head ... something will happen ... it reaches a pitch where serious self-harm has become inevitable. I have contempt and rage for myself ... I carry on until I am literally sated, soothed. The peace I feel is brilliant."

The trigger for her behaviour is often "insult". While a male would be more likely to fight, the female directs the violence towards herself.

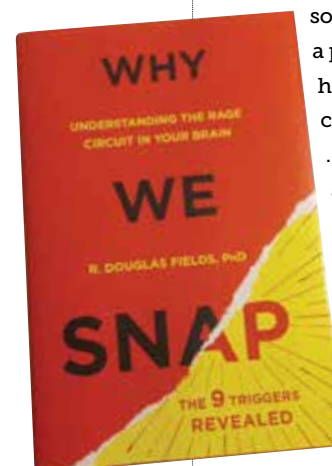
Having witnessed the consequences of "life and limb" or "fight and flight" for both girls and boys, I feel the "brain explain" theory makes sense in terms of the nine triggers Fields outlines and there is work to be done in tempering "snap" responses. Surely education can eventually play its part.

Fields also analyses the "tribe" trigger, at the base of war and prejudice throughout the ages. Fields says "racial prejudice is wired into the human brain ... it is our emotional response toward another group of people based on preconceptions".

His covers subjects far and wide. Rodney King and the Los Angeles riots. The Boston marathon bombers, and the echoes in the followers of Isis in our own country, with concerns about radicalisation the focus of much current training in our schools.

Underpinning this is the fascinating exploration of our brains: its amygdala, the prefrontal cortex and rage circuits. If we can understand the nine triggers that hardwire our brain, and which we often dismiss as psychological dysfunction as opposed to a normal and necessary physiological mechanism, then there may be hope of mitigating the effects of snapping.

For me and for children in pupil referral units, this can only be a good thing.



What are you working on?

We [Dr Jones, Chris Wheadon from No More Marking, Sara Humphries of Ofqual and Matthew Inglis, also from Loughborough University] have just published "Fifty years of A-level mathematics: Have standards changed?"

Our research looked at exam papers over the last 50 years to see if standards had got worse. We used 66 exam papers from the 1960s, 1990s and 2012 as a sample.

It was different to most studies that look at similar changes in that it went back so far. Usually studies compare exams over the last five or ten years.

What is interesting about it?

This study used comparative judgment more robustly than has been done previously.

One way of doing this was that we made sure all the tests were in the same format so it was not obvious what year they were from, as an exam from the 1960s looks very old in comparison to today's papers. This involved typesetting the exam questions, and rewriting all the answers by hand. All marks and comments were removed from each of the papers so that this did not influence those making the comparative judgment.

Most studies use experienced examiners, who are the experts, but who bring

RESEARCH CORNER**Q&A****DR IAN JONES**

LECTURER, MATHEMATICS EDUCATION CENTRE, LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY



knowledge and expectations of qualifications and surrounding debates that might affect their objectivity. We used PhD maths researchers instead, from different countries, who are unfamiliar with A-levels and the debates around standards.

Previous research has mostly been conducted by exam boards and tends to be interested in grade boundaries, and they therefore choose candidate close to boundaries. We used candidates from the middle of grades so we could be sure that, say, a grade A candidate really was representative.

What do you hope its impact will be?

This study is more likely to be useful for

policymakers, rather than school leaders. So I would hope that it would inform the debates that go on about A-level maths.

The main impact is the method itself – we have refined a technique for comparing standards, across time or say across exam boards, which can be applied to any subject. Ofqual used this approach to compare maths and science GCSEs from different exam boards in 2015.

What do the findings show?

The fact there has been no decline in standards since the 1990s is the big surprise. Perhaps people can now worry less that standards continue to decline – there is no evidence they have changed since the 1990s

– and focus more confidently on making sure A-levels are fit for the purposes they need to serve nowadays.

Is there any other research that you would recommend?

This study is one of a programme of research into how comparative judgement can improve the assessment of maths. Here we applied it to standards, but we have also used it for the direct assessment of students.

Maths exams tend to be dominated by short, piecemeal questions that can be marked reliably. But we need to assess mathematical performance too – we want the maths equivalent of a creative writing assessment (imagine languages were only assessed using grammar and spelling tests, which would be the analogous situation).

Comparative judgment enables mathematical performance to be examined: students can write extended pieces of creative mathematical work and, unlike traditional practices based on mark schemes, comparative judgment lets us assess them reliably.

You can read more of Dr Jones's publications at: <http://homepages.lboro.ac.uk/~maij/>



A week in Westminster

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

THURSDAY:

Mostly spent the day being disingenuous. You?

FRIDAY:

Engaging with young people? It's all about YouTube, Vine and iPads, you know.

At least this is what appears to have recently occurred to Ofqual, the exams regulator, which has turned to social media to engage with the "yoof".

Launching a survey of pupils about its planned marking appears shake up, the watchdog created a bizarre Vine [short video clip] of numbered ping pong balls being dropped onto an iPad Air 2, which will be the prize for one lucky survey participant.

The Vine is accompanied by a YouTube vid of people talking to each other.

Week in Westminster applauds Ofqual's efforts to garner young people's views, and we hope we'll be forgiven for the fact that the first thing coming to mind when seeing the campaign was the scene in 30 Rock in which an ageing Steve Buscemi, armed with hoodie, cap and skateboard,

walks into a school and asks: "How do you do, fellow kids?"

MONDAY:

Ofqual isn't the only education establishment harnessing the power of social media.

In a move that can only have been designed to make children put their mobile phones away, Nicky Morgan made a speech to camera to dispel "myths" about the new primary assessment frameworks, which she claims the naughty disingenuous journalists and pesky disingenuous teaching unions are spreading.

There are many situations in which



I know that you agree with me, that it is vital that children leave primary school ready to succeed in their secondary studies.

Week in Westminster has seen Morgan look at ease, comfortable with the company she's keeping. This speech was not one of them. Perhaps that was because the teleprompter had clearly been positioned just above the camera, making it look as if she was peering off into the distance, rather than looking at the lens. Or perhaps she is being held hostage.

TUESDAY:

The search for Sir Michael Wilshaw's successor at Ofsted began today. Back in the day we could have expected a flood of criticism, given the generous £180k salary available to the right candidates.

But instead of the cries of excess, many of our followers have taken to Twitter to suggest the offering might be a little light on the moolah.

With executive heads now able to earn substantially more than £180,000 a year, it's hard to imagine why they would move into a job where you are persistently criticised by former colleagues while earning less money.

Week in Westminster has not considered applying for the job. Yet.

WEDNESDAY:

Huzzah. A Labour MP has found the solution to poverty: teaching.

No, Birkenhead MP Frank Field is not suggesting that the poor should become teachers (although if they're whizzes at maths or physics that could actually prove quite lucrative).

Mr Field has instead suggested that children should be taught to avoid poverty.

That's right. Avoid poverty.

Writing for the Telegraph, Field said schools needed to be given an "agreed social highway code", which should cover "how not to become poor parents".

He said such a code should be clear that if parents do not want their children to be poor the solution "may, in fact, lie in your own hands".

He continued: "You need to find a partner who can and will work. No one underestimates the difficulty of finding such a partner, particularly if you are a young woman."

We present this without comment or disingenuousness, but with appropriate amounts of eye-rolling.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEK FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

School Bulletin



Stephen Fry launches 'pinboard for learning'



An image from the Pindex website for teachers to collect and share educational material
Inset: Stephen Fry

Stephen Fry has launched an online platform that lets teachers collect and share educational material.

Visitors to Pindex can access original material on topics ranging from the Large Hadron Collider and the Hyperloop to atoms and energy.

Described by Mr Fry as "a new pinboard for learning", the platform allows teachers to post material for their classes on public boards, making them available to other educators around the world.

"At a time when it is easy to lose faith in an

online world that seems to centre around trolling, bullying, hating, trivialising and belittling, it is worth remembering the incredible power of the internet to inform and educate, lucidly and entertainingly," Mr Fry said.

The site, which uses videos, images and infographics, plans to cover more US and UK school topics, starting with science, as well as general interest topics such as the colonisation of Mars.

You can visit the site at www.pindex.com

£1,000 to combat cancer raised by Bristol girl

Lola Humphries outside John Cabot Academy

A caring 12-year-old pupil from Bristol has raised more than £1,000 for Cancer UK.

Lola Humphries, who attends John Cabot Academy, organised the event in the village of Hanham, Bristol after years of seeing family and friends being affected by cancer.

The year 8 pupil generated the money by making cakes, holding a raffle, a tombola and setting up various stalls at the event.

Lola even marketed the event herself by putting up flyers in shops and leafleting

house to house. More than 30 people attended the two hour event at Tabernacle Hall.

Lola said: "I thought it would be a good thing to do, I'm very proud of the amount I raised for Cancer UK and I may even repeat this event again this year."

Emily Grainger, head of community at John Cabot Academy said: "Lola has shown true entrepreneurial spirit by organising and staging this event for such a worthy cause. We are very proud of her achievements."

Wannabe wizards see school transformed into Hogwarts

FEATURED

Hogwarts' Great Hall relocated to Sutton Community Academy for a spellbound Harry Potter book night.

Part of an Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATT FE) event, local primary school pupils from years 3 to 5 and their families gathered for the evening of "free family fun" and science lessons in the form of various Harry Potter-related activities.

The event included a range of workshops based around science, technology, engineering and maths subjects to "get pupils excited about learning", ATT said.

More than 374 wannabe wizards from Sutton-in-Ashfield traded their pens for magic wands and donned their best Harry, Ron and Hermione costumes.

Liz Barrett, deputy director of ATT FE, said the local families who joined in with their children "really made it a family affair."

"We were also really pleased with how the pupils and their families responded to the science and maths-based activities and it was great to see everyone having so much fun."

"The schools taking part really put an effort into their costumes, we were very impressed."

The event was opened with ATT FE's very own Professor Dumbledore – director of ATT FE and communities,



Hogwarts' Great Hall relocated to Sutton Community Academy



A Sutton Community Academy pupil dresses up as Harry Potter to celebrate the book day

Simon Martin – welcoming the pupils with dry ice floating out from a cauldron.

Voldemort then terrorised the school, and had a wand fight with Harry before introducing himself as the principal of Sutton Community Academy, Tim Croft. Everyone then enjoyed a Hogwarts style

lunch followed by a 20 minute owl display where owls flew over the pupils' heads.

Pupils and their families were also treated to a 10 minute "exciting science" show given by Rob Cruxon, head of science at Sutton Community Academy.

In an early evening session, parents and children tried their hand at potion making, wand making, spell writing, pneumatic pet creating, green screen broomstick flying, chocolate frog making and owl lessons.

Ms Barrett said: "We were incredibly pleased with the response we received to this event – it was a huge success."

"Thank you to all of the pupils and parents that took part and well done to all of the staff who helped to organise this magical event."

CAREERS CAMPAIGN AIMS TO PUT PUPILS ON PATH TO SUCCESS

A new campaign that puts industry professionals into schools to deliver careers advice has been launched.

Career Footsteps, created by the Edge Foundation, aims to show pupils that university isn't the only route to a good career. Volunteer professionals with vocational experience will visit a local school and share their experience of their chosen career.

An Edge spokesperson said students would "gain insights into options such as further education, apprenticeships and practical and technical qualifications".

Edge's chief executive Alice Barnard said: "There are many paths to success and it is important students are aware that they have many options beyond going to university."

"We need better careers advice for young people so they can make informed choices for their future. Career Footsteps is a small move towards the professional face-to-face service we would like to see available in all schools and which all our young people deserve."

Volunteers will give an hour of their time to talk with students about their jobs, careers and how they got there. It is free for schools to use.

Schools and volunteer professionals can visit www.edge.co.uk/projects/career-footsteps to sign up

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Professor **Becky Francis**, a leading education academic and parliamentary adviser, will lead the Institute of Education (IoE) from July.

She starts her new job as director of the leading research organisation, which is part of University College London, on July 1 after almost four years as professor of education and social justice and director of research at King's College London.

Prof Francis said she took the role at the IoE because it is "the biggest job in education research in the UK and being able to have a hand in strategically directing it feels like an amazing opportunity as well as responsibility".

This appointment also follows her stint as an adviser to the education select committee.

She is the permanent replacement for Chris Husbands, who became vice-chancellor at Sheffield Hallam University in January.

Prof Francis said one of the challenges would be to "strengthen the already multidisciplinary nature of the IoE's research through the resources available at UCL".

Another is to "maintain and strengthen even further the IoE's reputation as the place for educationalists, researchers, schools leaders, in supporting high quality education."

Before she joined King's, Prof Francis was also a director of the Pearson thinktank and served as director of education for the RSA.



Becky Francis



Gary Futcher



Sarah Clarke

Sarah Clark has been appointed principal of Sheffield's second University Technical College (UTC).

The new £10 million UTC Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park campus will open in September and will cater for 600 students, aged 14 to 19, specialising in human sciences and computing.

Ms Clark, who starts in post next week, said she will work collaboratively with UTC Sheffield City Centre campus – the region's first UTC that opened in 2013 – and "share best practice on delivering technical and academic qualifications, employer led projects and work experience opportunities".

As principal, Ms Clark said she will structure the curriculum around "exciting and innovative projects", with support from industry and graduate role models.

She added: "Students will have the

opportunity to participate in national competitions and events. Whether this includes competitive sport, research or community projects, these activities will not only support mastery of our specialisms but also widen each individual's skills set."

Ms Clark has held a variety of senior roles in education for 11 to 18-year-olds across Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Prior to joining UTC Sheffield, she was principal and vice principal at Landau Forte Academy Sixth Form, West Midlands.

She has a PhD in molecular genetics from the University of Leicester and a first class degree in microbiology from the University of Bristol.

Gary Futcher is the new headteacher of All Saints Academy Plymouth (ASAP) after more than eight years as deputy headteacher of nearby Notre Dame School Plymouth.

The appointment of Mr Futcher follows the retirement of Pete Grainger from ASAP in December.

Mr Futcher said his main goal is to push forward on expectations and aspirations by using the mantra "be the best you can be", because that will "offer pupils loads more opportunities later in life and I am about giving students the best education to give the most opportunities they've got so that they can choose where they end up.

"The second side of it is to really look at us as a Church of England school and putting faith into education and into action in the school."

Mr Futcher studied English and drama at Manchester University before launching a marketing career in theatre.

This is the first time he has led a school since he retrained and became a teacher 21 years ago.

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

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



HEADTEACHER

LEADERSHIP PAY SCALE – GROUP 3
ISR L15 – L21. FULL-TIME, PERMANENT POST
START DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016



DEER PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL IN WINGERWORTH NEAR CHESTERFIELD, DERBYSHIRE.

Due to the retirement of our present Headteacher, the Governors are seeking to appoint a highly motivated, committed, inspiring and suitably qualified teacher and leader to the Headship of this highly successful primary school.

WE OFFER:

- A welcoming, friendly working environment
- A positive, caring and inclusive ethos
- Happy, enthusiastic children
- A dedicated, hard working team of staff
- An attractive outdoor learning environment
- A supportive, active and effective governing body
- Opportunities for continued professional development
- Supportive parents

Deer Park School has a very successful record in enabling the 338 children here to achieve their full potential. This is reflected in the high academic achievements at the end of each key stage. We offer a broad curriculum and currently hold the Derbyshire Music Quality Award and the Active Sports Mark. The school is situated in a very attractive rural setting in the village of Wingerworth just 2 miles south of Chesterfield and on the doorstep of the Peak District. To find out more about Deer Park Primary School please read our Applicant Information Brochure & Governors' Review 2015 which can be accessed via our website www.deerpark.derbyshire.sch.uk or via the Derbyshire County Council website jobs page: <https://jobs.derbyshire.gov.uk/jobdetails.asp?jobid=49265>

If you would like to lead our team please apply online at the above DCC link.

Closing date for applications is Sunday 28th February 2016
Shortlisting will take place on Tuesday 8th March 2016
Applicants will be notified accordingly by Thursday 10th March 2016
Interviews will be held on Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd March (2 day process)

If you would like to visit the school please contact the Chair of Governors, Mrs Linda Du-Roe, by email at lduroe@deerpark.derbyshire.sch.uk to arrange an appointment.

DEER PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL NEW ROAD, WINGERWORTH, CHESTERFIELD, S42 6TD. TEL: 01246 232696



Are you up for the challenge of opening a brand new school?

The International Academy of Greenwich (IAG) is a new school. We will open with only 125 Year 7 students in September 2016 and, when our new building is ready, a Sixth Form in September 2018. Students will study the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 alongside GCSEs at KS4. We will be holding a:

Recruitment Open Day for teachers on Saturday 5th March 2016, 10am

at Age Exchange, Bakehouse Theatre, 11 Blackheath Village (access from Bennett Park), SE3 9LA, London

This is a "once in a lifetime" opportunity for ambitious, talented, hard working staff to work alongside our Principal Designate, Ms Smita Bora, a successful and experienced headteacher. As the school expands, fast track leadership opportunities will arise for founding members of staff.

IAG's vision is to offer excellent education which will harness and build on the linguistic and cultural diversity in Greenwich and nearby Boroughs. We will offer: a truly broad and balanced curriculum; high academic standards; strong linguistic and communication skills; access to top universities in the UK and abroad; the passport to an international job market; Active Citizenship skills and respect for other cultures; and enhanced self-confidence.

We would be delighted if you could attend our Recruitment Open Day. **Please contact us if you are a teacher, or training to be a teacher, and you have:**

- Strong belief in IAG's vision and the IB Learner Profile
- An ambitious, "whatever it takes" and "no excuses" approach to the highest attainment and behaviour standards for all students compared with local,

national and international measures, regardless of their background

- Enthusiastic passion for your subject and excellent subject knowledge, with the skills and expertise to integrate this with promotion of literacy and numeracy through personalised and interdisciplinary approaches
- A sense of moral purpose as a child-centred professional
- A conscientious and evidence-based approach to your work, completing tasks efficiently and to a high standard, including research, planning and assessment of the curriculum
- A willingness to accept feedback from all stakeholders including students, parents, staff and other professionals, with a desire to be reflective and analytical of your own practice
- The capacity to develop leadership skills in yourself and others, with a view to running your own school some time in the future
- The ability to solve problems creatively; a great practitioner with originality and flair.

Book your place: www.iaog.org.uk/recruitment
Questions? recruitment@iaog.org.uk



Ealing Fields High School is a brand new mainstream state funded school that is opening in south Ealing in September 2016. It is a co-educational, non-denominational school for students aged 11-19. The first cohort of 120 Year 7 students will join us in September, and the school will then grow over the next years, to its planned capacity of 840 students.

We want to inspire and empower our students to flourish in all aspects of their learning, so that they are committed to being and doing their best. We will do this by ensuring our students leave us with the dispositions, experiences and knowledge to realise their career and life aspirations, enabling them to make a real impact in their community and live fulfilling, happy lives.

LEAD TEACHER OF HISTORY

Ealing, London

Apply by 07/03/2016

Job start September 2016, with the requirement for some preparatory work and induction beforehand

Salary: Ealing Fields Pay Scale and commensurate with experience

Location: Ealing, London

Contract type: Full Time

Contract term: Permanent

Your role as a teacher and leader:

Clearly, as we are a brand-new school, your role will evolve considerably over the next years as the school grows to scale. In the first year, you will be the only History Teacher; so will teach all four Year 7 classes. Additionally, you will be preparing the Year 8 curriculum for September 2017, and helping develop the longer-term plans for the Department, including helping us recruit colleagues, who will join you in September 2017.

In our first year, the expectation would be that you also lead on other humanities subjects (including Geography and 'Individuals in Society'). Then from September 2017, you would assume the role of 'Lead Teacher' for your subject specialism.

Whether you are appointed as Head of History, or the Lead Teacher of History, you're the expert in your subject - and this is your chance to prove it! This is a unique opportunity for you to help shape the curriculum in the way you see fit, and you will be able to build the department around your ambitions, and assist in recruiting colleagues you believe will be aligned to, and are capable of, achieving those ambitions.

The deadline for applications is Monday 7th March 2016, at 12 noon.

First round interviews for long-listed candidates will take place on Monday 21st March 2016.

Shortlisted candidates will then be visited in their current schools (wherever possible), for a 'Reteach'. The dates for this will be arranged on an individual basis.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact our Headteacher, Lee Faith: lee.faith@ealingfields.co.uk

LEAD TEACHER OF ENGLISH

Ealing, London

Apply by 07/03/2016

Job start September 2016, with the requirement for some preparatory work and induction beforehand

Salary: Ealing Fields Pay Scale and commensurate with experience

Location: Ealing, London

Contract type: Full Time

Contract term: Permanent

Your role as a teacher and leader:

Clearly, as we are a brand-new school, your role will evolve considerably over the next seven years as the school grows to scale. In the first year, you will be the only English Teacher; so will teach all four Year 7 classes. Additionally, you will be preparing the Year 8 curriculum for September 2017, and helping develop the longer-term plans for the Department, including helping me recruit colleagues, who will join you in September 2017.

Whether you are appointed as Head of English, or the Lead Teacher of English, you're the expert in your subject - and this is your chance to prove it! This is a unique opportunity for you to help shape the curriculum in the way you see fit, and you will be able to build the department around your ambitions, and assist in recruiting colleagues you believe will be aligned to, and are capable of, achieving those ambitions.

Application Process:

To make an application please download a copy of the Candidate Information Pack and an Application Form from: <http://ealingfields.co.uk/join-our-team/>

Completed application forms should be sent by email to: employment@challoners.com. Please do not send in any additional documentation with your application.

admin@ealingfields.co.uk

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Ealing Fields High School
Brave Hearts, Bold Minds




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We are now recruiting for Support, Teaching and Leadership Roles across the East Midlands.

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The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust specialises in transforming underperforming schools operating in areas of economic and social disadvantage. We aim to help children realise their potential whatever their background. The Trust is recognised nationally as a leader of educational best practice and has successfully grown to support 30 Academies across the East Midlands. Our employees are highly supported by an outstanding leadership team and are offered significant pathways for internal promotion and professional growth.

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HEADTEACHER

HEADTEACHER SALARY LEVEL: L31-37 (LONDON FRINGE)



The Governors of Presdales School are seeking to recruit a confident, inspirational leader who is ready to bring energy, enthusiasm and vision to our outstanding school. The current Headteacher, Mrs Janine Robinson, is retiring after 28 successful years in post.

Presdales is an Academy for girls from 11-16 with a co-educational Sixth Form. Rated outstanding in the last four Ofsted inspections, it is a high-achieving, non-selective community school. It is our desire to build on this excellent foundation and to see Presdales become world-class.

Accordingly, the headship position is full of opportunity and challenge.

As a current Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in a secondary school you will be able to demonstrate significant whole-school impact in your current role which has led to sustained improvement in your school. You will share our commitment to girls' education and will have the drive and imagination to take Presdales to the next level.

We warmly welcome informal visits by prospective candidates. Should you wish to arrange such a visit, you are invited to contact the Governors as indicated in the details below.

The application form and further information can be downloaded from the school's website or you may contact the Governors by email. The form and Statement of Application should be returned to the Chair of Governors by email or by post.

Email: governors@presdales.herts.sch.uk
 Presdales School Academy Trust
 Hoe Lane, Ware,
 Hertfordshire SG12 9NX
www.presdales.herts.sch.uk

INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY 16TH AND THURSDAY 17TH MARCH

*Presdales School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
 This position is subject to an enhanced criminal records check from the Disclosure & Barring Service which will require you to disclose all criminal convictions.*

CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 7TH MARCH AT NOON | SHORTLISTING: WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH

HEAD OF ENGLISH (AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)

FULL-TIME, TO COMMENCE SEPTEMBER 2016



Sherborne International is a full-boarding school with an unrivalled reputation for providing the very best start to British independent education for boys and girls aged 11-17 from non-English speaking, non-British educational backgrounds. It aims to equip each student to take his or her place successfully at a traditional British independent boarding school.

Classes are small – a maximum of 8 students – and the full British curriculum is provided. Students are prepared for any appropriate public examinations, for example GCSEs, IGCSEs, IELTS or Cambridge English language examinations. Every year the school records impressive examination results – well above the national average.

The School also offers a long-established, intensive residential summer school programme with a full English curriculum for boys and girls aged 7-17, covering all levels of English from beginner to advanced.

A recent ISI inspection rated the School "excellent" across all categories – "Their outstanding curriculum, tailored to suit their individual needs, and excellent teaching are fundamental to the students' success."
ISI Report, January 2016

Accredited by the British Council as an International Study Centre (re-accreditation October 2015)

Due to internal promotion the School now requires:

**HEAD OF ENGLISH
 (AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE)
 Full-time, to commence September 2016**

Applicants must be DELTA qualified and hold QTS.

For further details and an application pack please visit our website at www.sherborne-international.org/vacancies/ or contact:

**Mrs Samantha Belgeonne, Compliance & Administration Manager,
 SHERBORNE INTERNATIONAL
 Newell Grange, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4EZ
 Tel: 01935 814743
 E-mail: sbelgeonne@sherborne-international.org**

Sherborne International is committed to upholding the safety and welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants for this post must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including reference checks with previous employers and a criminal record check via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

CLOSING DATE: 5PM ON FRIDAY 4 MARCH 2016 | INTERVIEW DATE: FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2016



DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND PROGRESS – MATHEMATICS

SALARY: Leadership Scale 8-12 (negotiable for the right candidate)

We are seeking to appoint an exceptional individual who will take responsibility for raising standards and outcomes within the Mathematics department and who will make a valuable contribution to the leadership of the College through being an associate member of the senior leadership team. You will also drive College wide improvements in teaching and learning through working with the recently established Teaching and Learning Team.

The successful candidate will be an outstanding practitioner with high expectations that are demonstrated in everything they do. They will have excellent leadership qualities, creativity, energy and will work alongside the existing Mathematics team, to bring about rapid and sustainable improvements. The successful candidate will have a proven track record of securing highly positive outcomes for all and will be able to demonstrate the necessary leadership skills to play a pivotal role in raising standards and school improvement. Smith's Wood is at a very exciting stage in its development; the College has recently undergone a significant change in leadership and a Co-Principal arrangement has been adopted. Under the leadership of the Principals there is a significant amount of work to be done to move the College forward and you will be joining a team of colleagues who are wholly committed to working together to make these gains. Smith's Wood is a very popular 11-18 sports college, in challenging circumstances; we are an

incredibly popular choice for students and their parents. Having moved into our new, £26 million, building in September 2009, we also welcomed our first cohort of post-16 students. Pupils and staff at Smith's Wood benefit from educational facilities that are second to none; our sports facilities really are unrivalled! The Mathematics Department forms part of the Sciences Faculty and you will be working closely with 8 other teachers in the department.

As a senior leader you will be well supported through tailored professional development appropriate to career stage, skills, experience and personal goals. Smith's Wood is justly proud of the professional support it gives all staff and the future opportunities it offers them.

We are highly ambitious for our students; we continually strive to improve and want someone who can help us achieve that ambition. Our mission of 'learning together, succeeding together' is promoted through our 'aims and values' and practiced through 'The Smith's Wood Way'.

This is a great opportunity to be involved at a pivotal moment in our journey. If you have drive, resilience and ambition and want to be part of our future success we would love to hear from you.

CLOSING DATE: Friday 4th March, 12 noon
INTERVIEW DATE: The week beginning 7th March

www.smithswood.co.uk



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SCHOOLS WEEK

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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