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SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

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Summer break: pupils at Bulford St Leonard's in Salisbury relax before planting their "seeds from space". See full story, page 20

Your scheme has been delayed – again

- Deadlines extended on three recruitment programmes
- 'Too little, too late' to ease teacher shortage, says union

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT

Exclusive

Three teaching recruitment schemes funded by the government have postponed their application deadlines at least twice, fuelling speculation that few contenders are stepping forward – and schools already strapped for staff

could be left short.

The National Teaching Service (NTS), Future Teaching Scholars and Return to Teaching were all launched by the government this academic year to address the growing teacher recruitment "problem".

All three were due to start in September, but have extended their recruitment windows. *Schools Week*

understands that the number of recruits for some programmes is still in single figures.

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the initiatives were "far too little, far too late" and pointed to comments made by Andreas Schliecher, education adviser at the OECD, who told Nicky Morgan the NTS was "not ambitious enough" to work.

She added: "Government ministers need to understand that the recruitment and retention problems will not begin to be solved by small, piecemeal initiatives... While ministers put their faith in small-scale, untested

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NEWS

RSC resigns to become a head (again)

BILLY CAMDEN & ALIX ROBERTSON
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Exclusive

A regional schools commissioner has quit to become the new headteacher of an academy that was rated Ofsted inadequate last month.

Schools Week can exclusively reveal that Pank Patel (pictured), regional schools commissioner for the West Midlands, will join the George Salter academy, in West Bromwich, in September.

The academy, run by the Ormiston Academies Trust, was rated as inadequate last month over safeguarding concerns. Inspectors said staff were unaware of procedures to ensure pupils were safe from the risk of extremism and radicalisation.

Just two years earlier the school was rated good.

A spokesperson for the school said Patel was an "outstanding" headteacher. "Additionally, as someone who is from this area, we are proud and privileged to be welcoming Mr Patel to our school and we look forward to working with him."

The hunt is now on to find a replacement for Patel, with a recruitment advert offering a salary of up to £140,000.

Patel was previously head of Wood Green academy in Wednesbury, near Birmingham, before becoming the first commissioner for the West Midlands in September 2014.

He said it had been an "honour" to serve in the role, but he "missed being a head" and looked forward to "getting back

into a local school".

Commenting on Patel's departure, Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, said: "I have always taken the view that the RSC should come from the system whenever possible and then return to it, leading schools and trusts using their invaluable experience of working across a region to raise standards for more children."

He praised Patel's decision to become a principal of an academy in the area, saying he was a "passionate advocate" for academies and free schools.

Patel's time as a commissioner, during which he monitored the performance of academies in the region, has not always been smooth.

In April 2015 he caused controversy by granting permission for neighbouring academies in Redditch, Worcestershire, to convert into two-tier schools, despite concerns that it would "decimate" the town's education system and threaten other local schools.

Patel held one-to-one talks with 17 Redditch school leaders but pulled out of a meeting with parents 24 hours before it was due to take place.

He was also silent after financial impropriety was uncovered at Perry Beeches, a multi-academy trust with several schools on his patch.

Negotiations with other sponsors to take over schools in the trust have been fraught and sources questioned whether Patel showed adequate leadership.



The mounting workload on regional commissioners may be one reason why more civil servants are being appointed to work alongside them.

Schools Week revealed in February that administrative budgets for their offices had already inflated by about £800,000 in one year.

Now deputy directors are being recruited to lead a team within each of the eight RSC offices to support their work as the government expands the academies programme.

Maria Dawes, head of school effectiveness at Babcock Education, will take up one of the deputy positions in the middle of June.

A Department for Education spokesperson said "strong leaders" were being recruited from across the sector to help support RSCs implement new measures to tackle failing and coasting schools.

Applications for the new RSC for the West Midlands close on June 3, according to the civil service jobs website.

UTCs were our idea first, says Labour in education debate

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The jury may be out on the success of the university technical college programme, but despite its ongoing financial and recruitment problems, politicians rushed to take credit for the controversial project in this week's debate about the new education bill.

During the Queen's Speech debate on Wednesday, in which planned new schools legislation was debated by Labour for the first time, Angela Eagle, the shadow first secretary of state, challenged Stewart Jackson, Conservative MP for Peterborough, when he asked why it had taken the election of a Conservative government to get a university technical college (UTC) open in his constituency.

Eagle replied: "It was the Labour government that started university technical colleges and I'm glad now that he's having one in his own area, but he's being rather churlish in talking about our record when we actually created the university technical college concept."

Introduced as part of the academies programme under Gordon Brown's government, the first UTC – Staffordshire's JCB Academy – opened in 2010. Those that have opened since have been beset by low pupil numbers and subsequent financial difficulties.

Last summer the Hackney UTC in east



Angela Eagle during the debate

London and Black Country UTC in Walsall closed. A further two, Central Bedfordshire UTC and UTC Lancashire, will follow suit this August.

The Education Funding Agency has also suspended some spending powers of UTCs in Buckinghamshire and Daventry over concerns about finances.

Although plans for the JCB Academy were signed off under Labour, the Conservatives have overseen the large-scale growth of the programme.

Under the stewardship of Lord Baker, a former Conservative education secretary, the Baker Dearing trust has supported the establishment of more than 40 UTCs.

The colleges often benefit from eight-figure capital investments and have the backing of businesses, further and higher education institutions.

More than 55 will open by next September,

with colleges and universities having been buoyed by a Conservative general election manifesto pledge to put a UTC "within reach" of every city.

But despite the vocal support of government and opposition MPs – Labour called for an expansion of the programme in 2014 – the project is yet to win over large parts of the education sector, much of which has struggled to work with a system that requires pupils to move schools at 14.

Schools have been accused of being hostile towards UTCs, refusing to promote them as options for pupils and even barring their principals from coming in to address teenagers.

Other concerns include their vulnerability to multi-academy trusts, which could theoretically set up UTCs for less able children who would otherwise be subject to requirements around the EBacc.

NEWS

Recruitment schemes delay closing dates

SOPHIE SCOTT
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CONTINUED
FROM FRONT



Lucy Powell

initiatives, the crisis gets steadily worse."

The NTS offers up to £10,000 for teachers or middle leaders with at least three years' experience to relocate to struggling schools. The aim is to place 100 teachers in schools in the north west of England from September, although it is thought fewer than ten recruits have been found.

Its application deadline has been extended twice this month – first to May 23, and now until May 31. The first recruits are not expected to start in schools until January.

Research released this week by the Education Development Trust (EDT) highlights reticence in the sector to relocate.

Fifty-two per cent of teachers would not relocate for a "challenging" role in a new region, compared with 67 per cent who would be positive about changing to such a role in their own school, and 64 per cent in a nearby school.

The survey also found that 68 per cent of teachers would not be prepared to move more than 50 miles for a job.

However, when asked specifically about joining a scheme such as the NTS, 72 per cent said they would be interested in moving.

Richard King, the report's author, said

teachers were not asked why there was this difference in viewpoints, but could infer from responses that teachers "recognised it [NTS] was challenging and rewarding" and came with a "moral purpose".

However King said there "wasn't a general awareness" of the NTS.

The Future Teaching Scholars programme gives "high-quality" A-level students a £15,000 grant if they take a maths or physics degree and then move into school-based teacher training.

Schools Week reported in January that the scheme had received just 50 registrations by the time it was due to close applications.

The deadline was then pushed back to March, and more recently to May.

It is believed the number has since risen but a source said: "My main concern about



the project is how it has been managed by the Department for Education; it has been slow at sorting out the contracts and confirming details."

But Matt Davis, EDT's regional director, said the two schemes were in "incredibly early days and these things take time to get a natural momentum. It would be wrong to shoot it down before it's even launched its first cohort".

The pilot Return to Teaching programme is still allowing schools in certain regions to apply for funds to support returning teachers of EBacc subjects. Schools already signed up are

also being given extra time to recruit.

Lucy Powell, shadow education secretary, said a "fixation" on academisation meant ministers had "taken their eye off the ball on the delivery of these important schemes".

She added: "Delaying these schemes until January will be disruptive for schools particularly in the context of falling budgets and wider recruitment problems. Ministers must take urgent action to ensure the credibility and deliverability of these schemes."

The Department for Education would not confirm application numbers for any of the three schemes.

ADVERTORIAL

A FESTIVAL TO INSPIRE, EMPOWER AND ENTERTAIN YOUR PUPILS

Organisers of *The Telegraph Festival of Education* in association with Microsoft, are this year offering a comprehensive programme for secondary schools pupils

This year the festival has expanded to include the Barclays LikeSkills Student Zone, offering all secondary-aged pupils access to the most inspirational speakers and renowned experts, and the opportunity to try new activities and experiences.

The Festival of Education, now in its seventh year, attracts influential, high profile speakers within a varied programme aimed at educators, innovators, policymakers and students. Last year more than 5,000 attendees enjoyed two days on the sunny Berkshire campus of Wellington College to relax, hear from some fantastic speakers including Carol Dweck, Sir Ken Robinson and Piers Morgan, and network. It was a glorious event that promises even bigger and better things next month.

It aspires to fill the gap between what students actually need to fulfil their potential, and what is able to be offered by most schools and parents, in a way that does not feel like "education". It's a mufti day for all concerned. The speakers have been chosen for their ability to communicate with this particularly discerning age group and the topics to be covered include: peer pressure, propaganda, internet safety, life choices, leadership, getting chosen, interpersonal skills, employability, entrepreneurship, personal impact, careers advice, degree apprenticeships and bullying. It's a comprehensive PSHE lesson, led by specialists, so you don't have to.

Throughout the two days there are talks, workshops –

Flashback to 2015 – but this year's festival promises to be even better



and activities, aimed at teenagers, welcoming interaction, provoking ideas and encouraging easy dialogue and discussion.

In addition there are numerous activities to educate and entertain, including robotics and circus skills workshops, performances and live dissection for students to participate in.

Highlights from the 2016 student programme includes:

- I had to lie, cheat and steal to become a lord – Lord John Bird, Big Issue Founder
- The Importance of USING YOUR VOICE – Jon Briggs, the voice of Siri
- Get yourself chosen – Kathleen Saxton, headhunter and entrepreneur
- The truth about drugs – Steven Mervish, Drugsline
- Dodging bullets – Dominic Hurst, BBC news producer
- Getting more from life – Moj Taylor, comedian, Push
- About degree apprenticeships – Cerys Evans, author
- How to be a brilliant teenager – Andy Cope, author
- First impressions matter – Rosie Nice, trainer
- Employability: selling yourself – Johnny Rich, Push
- Be your own boss – Ali Golds, entrepreneur
- How to choose what to do – Solomon OB, slam poetry champion
- The B word – bullying or banter? – Neill Lunnion
- Volunteering and charity work abroad – panel discussion
- Studying overseas – panel discussion
- Careers advice and guidance
- Operating theatre live – the UK's ultimate medical experience

The Festival of Education takes place on Thursday 23 to Friday 24 June 2016. For more information and to book tickets please visit WWW.FESTIVALOFFEDUCATION.COM

NEWS

IN brief

SIXTH FORM
RETENTION FIGURES

School sixth forms will be expected to have 91 per cent of their pupils completing their courses, new government figures suggest.

From this year, sixth forms will be measured by five headline statistics – one of which includes retention, the proportion of courses completed.

Official statistics released for the first time this week show that in 2014-15, 91 per cent of pupils completed their courses. Ninety-four per cent completed their A-levels.

Male and female students had equal retention rates, but the statistics did reveal that the average number of A-levels taken by pupils last year dropped from 3.9 to 3.6.

Sixth forms with low performance in their headline measures are expected to face intervention from regional school commissioners.

EXAM ADJUSTMENTS
CONSIDERED

Ofqual are seeking views on the way exams are adjusted to take account of disabled students' needs.

Possible changes up for consultation are the way human scribes or voice recognition software are used if an exam includes a score for spelling, and whether exam certificates should indicate if pupils were exempted from some part of the qualification assessment.

In 2011, the watchdog made a series of changes to the way exams are adjusted – for example, banning the use of British Sign Language in modern foreign language exams, and limiting the number of exams from which a pupil can be entirely exempted yet still achieve a qualification.

All changes must be made in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The closing date for responses is July 31. The consultation documents are available at Ofqual.gov.uk

HEADS REVIEW
PRIMARY REFORMS

Headteachers are completing a "fundamental review" of primary assessment reforms that they say have "alienated" teachers and parents.

The National Association of Head Teachers has announced a 13-member review group, which will examine assessment arrangements for all children from the beginning of primary school up to the start of key stage 3.

Chaired by Dave Ellison, deputy head at Foxfield primary school in Woolwich, south London, the group will invite representatives from the Department for Education, Ofqual, Ofsted and Standards and Testing Agency to attend meetings.

Ellison said: "Like everyone else involved in primary assessment, I have been disappointed and concerned by the recent crisis in assessment, with mistakes and misjudgments making the system not fit for purpose."

Excluded pupil plan needs
sorting now, say heads

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A plan to make schools responsible for excluded pupils must not be delayed any further, school leaders have warned.

A pledge for additional responsibilities for schools placing pupils in alternative provision (AP) was first set out in a government white paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, in 2010.

It described a trial giving schools responsibility for "finding and funding alternative provision" themselves.

A pilot in 11 council areas between 2011 and 2014 had a generally positive outcome – but no further action was taken.

A new plan was then included in this month's Queen's speech, which sets the government's legislative agenda for the next year.

A call from school leaders for clarity on details comes after an Ofsted warning that many schools are refusing to use poor-quality alternative provision, a rising rate of permanent exclusions and research from Education DataLab that suggests some schools are moving "challenging students" before their exams to boost results.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said schools needed to play a more "active part" in working with alternative

providers, adding that it was "very difficult to secure high-quality" provision.

"At the moment we don't have any real specific details as to how, and the pace at which, they're intending to take this forward," he said. "It's not something that can be put on the back-burner."

According to the latest government statistics, there are 11,291 pupils in 868 pupil referral units in England and a further 1,478 in academy alternative provision units.

Although the number of pupils given fixed-term exclusions decreased from 146,070 in 2012-13 to 142,850 in 2013-14, the number of permanent exclusions increased in the same period from 4,630 to 4,950.

Trobe said the lack of appropriate provision for excluded youngsters came at a "huge cost" to society. He would like pupils moved back into the mainstream after a short or medium-term stay in AP.

An independent evaluation of the government's original exclusion trial in 2014 said the evidence "overwhelmingly" suggested trial schools were taking "increased responsibility for pupils at risk of exclusion", with school staff "at least partly responsible" for making AP arrangements, which was not the case in comparison areas.

Teachers reported that "fewer children on average had been permanently excluded



from trial schools than comparison schools" but the evaluation found there was "no identified difference in attainment between trial and comparison schools".

David Laws, schools minister during the trial period, told *Schools Week* that he did not lead on the policy and so did not know why the trials failed to become policy. But he identified "a couple of issues" with its delivery.

"We don't want to create any bad incentive to discourage schools from admitting children with these types of issues in the first place," he said.

The government has said plans will be set out fully when its new bill, *Education for All*, is laid before parliament. No date has yet been set for this, although Laws said he expected it to try to get it through "pretty quickly".

AP school for 'gifted' pupils wants riverside apartment

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

A new alternative provision free school for 13 to 16-year-olds is calling its pupils "gifted" to shatter misconceptions about troubled teenagers.

The Ideas College, a creative digital media alternative provision (AP) school, is set to open in January next year after setbacks that include site delays and the loss of "key partner" the Kids Company.

But the school hopes to secure a floor of a swanky block of flats five minutes up the river from Greenwich Pier, south east London, for its anticipated 48 pupils.

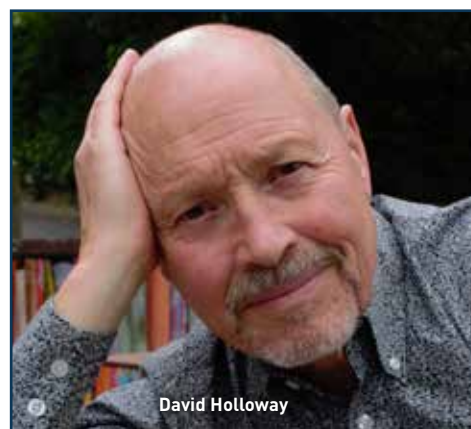
Literature promoting the school, sent to residents of the building, says that it is for "creatively gifted" youngsters who are not achieving in the "conventional education system".

David Holloway OBE, one of the school's founders, told *Schools Week* the wording was part of a plan to challenge stereotypes.

"I remember being at a conference about AP and nobody talked about what these kids are bringing in, just their problems. They are seen as a problem."

He said most pupils had "horrendous" backgrounds and that their behaviour was a way to "handle the world and keep adults away, because adults have been harmful to them in many ways.

"But they've had to negotiate their way



David Holloway

through all that and come out at the other end – nobody gives them credit for surviving."

Excluded pupils, or those at risk of exclusion, will be accepted from schools in the seven nearest London boroughs.

They will study five GCSEs including maths, English and media, and will each be allocated a mentor from a creative business agency with an eye to gaining a placement at their firm. Partners include the advertising giant Ogilvy & Mather.

The college will also stretch the usual 14 to 16 AP boundaries to include 13-year-olds, after demand from schools. Its application form says that this means it can provide "effective intervention at a critical transition time" for pupils.

The only obstacle left is signing the lease for its proposed new home, before builders start work from August.

But residents in the development are concerned about safety, added noise and a detrimental effect on property and rental values.

If it does open as planned, it will end months of frustration for the school. Its first application in 2013 was turned down, Holloway says, because the Department for Education did not like proposals to open without a principal.

The plan was to have a business manager and a lead teacher who would share the principal's duties.

A resubmitted plan in 2014 – with a principal post included – was approved. But Holloway said site issues held things up.

The school also lost partner, the Kids Company, which had signed up to provide therapeutic support for pupils, after the charity was wound-up following alleged mismanagement.

Holloway said: "We really liked that Kids Company never gave up on kids and that's quite something."

Talks are now underway to find a new provider.

Holloway dropped out of school at 12 before finding his calling as a community worker. He later went on to set up the Ideas Foundation, which offers creative provision for AP pupils.

"We want all these kids to know they are special. We have a beautiful building by the Thames – if they want to buy in to what we are offering, we will support them through it"

NEWS

Top-slice: how much do you pay?

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

Investigates

Multi-academy trusts top-slice a percentage of income from their schools' budgets to fund their operational costs. That includes paying central staff, such as the chief executive, and providing services for their academies, such as school improvement, human resources and financial services.

The name they use for this slice of income can vary; from partnership or membership fee to central services charge. As can, according to various chief executives, the level of service.

But that is not the only issue. A *Schools Week* investigation has also found how trusts have skimmed cash from pupil premium funds, raided their schools' reserves and built up their own cash supply

Top-slice

Most academy trusts top-slice between 3 and 5 per cent from their schools – way below the average 8 to 12 per cent charged by local authorities.

Allan Hickie, an academies specialist from accountancy firm UHY Hacker Young, says top-slicing is the most popular funding method. The percentage each school pays is decided by the academy trust board, which also has the power to raise or lower it.

The Kemnal Academies Trust upped its services charge from 1.8 per cent in 2014 (seemingly one of the lowest in the country) to 3 per cent last year. Ofsted had previously criticised the chain for not doing enough to support its pupils.

Oasis Community Learning charges schools a flat 4.5 per cent of their general annual grant (GAG) income, one of the simplest methods. In return, the trust offers services including governance, educational management and executive leadership. Oasis' national office also absorbs costs, such as audit and legal.

Oasis Academy Hadley in north London pays £411,000 a year, the largest amount of any of the trust's schools.

Variable contribution

Variable contribution, in which schools are charged different amounts according to their particular needs, is also popular.

The CfBT Schools Trust uses Ofsted grades to determine need. Outstanding and good schools pay 3 per cent, requires improvement schools 4 per cent and those rated inadequate 5 per cent, as they need the most support.

Latest accounts show the Danum academy in Doncaster, rated inadequate, paid £430,000 for central services in the 2014-15 financial year.

According to that figure, the trust would pay £249,000 if it were rated good.

Ormiston Academies Trust also charges schools up to 3.5 per cent, depending on their Ofsted grade. But its schools also pay a flat fee, £60,000 per secondary and £25,000 per primary.

Annual accounts show both the above trusts do not include pupil premium



funding in their top slicing.

But some do. It was reported last year that the Griffin Schools Trust included pupil premium income in its 5 per cent management fee.

Until September 2013, the E-ACT trust also skimmed from its schools' pupil premium. Ofsted said at the time it was "unclear how these deducted funds are being used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils".

Schools Week has been told many academy trusts still top-slice from their schools' pupil premium cash.

Pooling general annual grant income

Experts believe academy trusts are moving towards a funding system of pooling their schools' general annual grant (GAG). This means trusts would then be in charge of dishing out the cash to individual schools.

Hickie says this is the least favoured method, used by about 2 per cent of trusts. It was made possible only recently after a change in funding agreements, but he believes it will become more popular in the future because it allows a trust to alleviate financial pressure on an individual

academy by "ironing out between periods of fluctuating income and expenditure".

He recently worked with a trust that was exploring taking the reserves from one of its schools (that was financially healthy) and diverting the cash to help other schools (that had converted in financial trouble).

Mike Cameron, a school governor and former teacher, has also written about this practice in *Schools Week* – calling it the "real reason" behind the government's determination to turn all schools into academies. "Putting all schools into MATs enables shared reserves and flattens out financial risk... It reduces short-term risk of school financial failure."

The practice is politically controversial as it goes directly against the government's claims that becoming an academy means headteachers have more autonomy.

But Jonathan Simons, head of think tank Policy Exchange, says that the more a multi-academy trust is seen as the "institution" and the schools the component parts, the easier it is to "conceptualise all of the funding going to the MAT and then it being allocated to schools".

Building reserves

More trusts are now storing a slice of their management fee charge to build up their own reserves, *Schools Week* has been told.

Annual accounts for the Boston Witham Academies Federation, which runs four schools, say it aims to accumulate £200,000 of "free reserves" that can be spent at the trustees' discretion.

The accounts state the reserves "provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies such as urgent maintenance".

Hugh Greenway, chief executive of the Elliot Foundation, called this "good and sensible practice".

He previously had to ask schools to contribute part of their reserves to fix a collapsed roof at a school that had joined the trust in its early days. The trust could not afford the costs at the time.

"Our view is that a school's money is a school's money. It means our schools are comfortable, but the centre [trust] runs a zero budget."

Some trusts, however, are actually running at a deficit. Academies Enterprise Trust posted a central services deficit of £1.5 million last year.

Top-slice service is decision for trusts

It is up to academy trusts to decide which services they provide for schools as part of management fees.

But academy chain chiefs say that this has led to large variances in provision.

Two have separately called for more transparency over what each school offers – including a possible "core offer" that all trusts must adhere to.

Sir David Carter, the national commissioner, told *Schools Week* it is up to trust boards to decide what they do with top-slice cash.

But he says the key issue is the relationship between the trust's "strategy and delivery plan".

"Of course, the trust will want to ensure that it sees value for money as well, but striking the balance between compliance, meeting the conditions of the funding agreement signed with the secretary of state, and improving the standards in its schools are the starting points for this strategic debate."



Allan Hickie



Jonathan Simons



Sir David Carter

NEWS

IN brief

FUNDING CALL FOR THE NORTH

Teach First and IPPR North say funding formula reform should be used to boost educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the north.

Research suggests that secondary schools in the north east add more value to pupils' learning than in other parts of the country, but less than a third from low income backgrounds are achieving 5 A*-Cs (including English and maths) at GCSE.

The report warns that these weak results could impact the government's Northern Powerhouse project, which aims to boost economic growth in the north.

It sets out a number of recommendations, including a request for funding to be fairly distributed to northern schools.

Mike Parker, director of Schools NorthEast, said if schools in his area were funded at the same level as in London they would have an extra £360 million a year.

The Teach First and IPPR North report also said targeted teacher recruitment in the areas of greatest need and better leadership would also boost standards in the north.

THIRD TRUST FOR ACADEMY CHAIN

The REACH academy chain has been given permission to set up a third trust to sponsor 15 schools, despite two-thirds of its current ones still waiting to be inspected.

The chain's two trusts – REAch2 and Reach4 – are in charge of 52 schools across the country. The new trust, Reach South, is expected to take over 15 schools in its first year.

It marks a rapid expansion for the REACH brand, although just 16 schools have been inspected, just two of those 16 have been rated outstanding.

Reach4 last year was given a slice of £5 million funding last year to "drive up standards" in northern schools.

Sir Steve Lancashire, founder of REACH, said the trusts have a "proven model that works" and that the new arm was a "direct response to the need for more capacity within the education sector to oversee new academies".

ONLINE TEST BIDS DUE TO CLOSE

Contractors wishing to deliver the government's planned "multiplication check" for primary children must get their bids in by the end of next week.

The first online times-tables tests for 10 and 11-year-olds, a manifesto commitment made by the Conservatives before the general election last year, are due to begin in May next year.

In an article for The Sunday Times, Nicky Morgan, the education secretary, wrote that every pupil would be expected "to know their times-tables off by heart, to perform long-division and complex multiplication and to be able to read a novel. They should be able to write a short story with accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar."

The paper also reported that senior leaders failing to get 100 per cent of pupils to pass the tests for two years running faced being replaced.

A contract notice for bidders states the tests will be "focused on 1-12 times-tables". Their length and timing is "still to be decided following a wider consultation".

No delay on KS2 resits, says DfE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government still expects to publish sample materials in December for key stage 2 SATs resits for year 7s, but will not start consulting schools until September at the earliest.

From 2017, pupils will resit English and maths tests in their first term of secondary school if they fail to reach an "expected standard" in year 6, a manifesto commitment made by Nicky Morgan (pictured), the education secretary, before last year's election.

But the unannounced removal of guidance from the Department for Education's website prompted questions about the future of the policy. It had been displayed on "useful timelines" published on the Gov.uk website until as recently as January.

Mel Muldowney, a blogger for JustMaths – which revealed the information's disappearance – and a teacher at Alcester academy, Warwickshire, said the government needed to say when consultation would begin.

She is concerned that if it does not begin



early enough, publication of the resit materials will be put back.

"Some of their consultations take months to get to the point of publishing outcomes," she said. "This particular idea has massive implications for teachers in terms of planning and, of course, the poor students who will get subjected to more testing under the premise that they have failed."

She was concerned about the "unprofessional", "unsettling and very unfair" way the guidance had been removed from the government's website without any notification.

"It's the one place that should be up to date and the source of information and updates for the profession."

At a Westminster Education Forum on Monday, Vanessa Pittard, the Department for Education's assistant director for curriculum and standards, said the tests would be piloted this year after the consultation was completed.

Keith Denchfield, from the Dartford-based Leigh Academies Trust, questioned "the possibility of a test perhaps by Christmas" given that consultation would not happen until September.

Pittard reassured him that the full test would not be introduced until 2017.

When *Schools Week* asked the department about the disappearing guidance, it initially claimed nothing on the resits had been removed from its website.

It then declined to comment when *Schools Week* gave evidence of its removal, including webpages archived by the Institute of Education. A spokesperson said the government "always endeavours to give schools ample time to prepare for any new tests and our intention remains to publish sample papers in December this year.

"We are determined to ensure children are mastering the basics of numeracy and literacy and our proposals for resits of key stage 2 tests in year 7 are part of this."

Ofsted's 'worrying' mental health record

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY_NEWS

Exclusive

Ofsted inspectors are identifying good mental health provision in schools more often than poor, according to exclusive analysis by Watchsted and *Schools Week*, calling into question Ofsted's claims that it is identifying both equally.

Additional mental health criteria were added to the Ofsted framework in September last year, but a recent report by think tank IPPR said mental health and well-being keywords have been mentioned in just one third of inspection reports since then.

The group called for inspectors to do more to assess mental health provision.

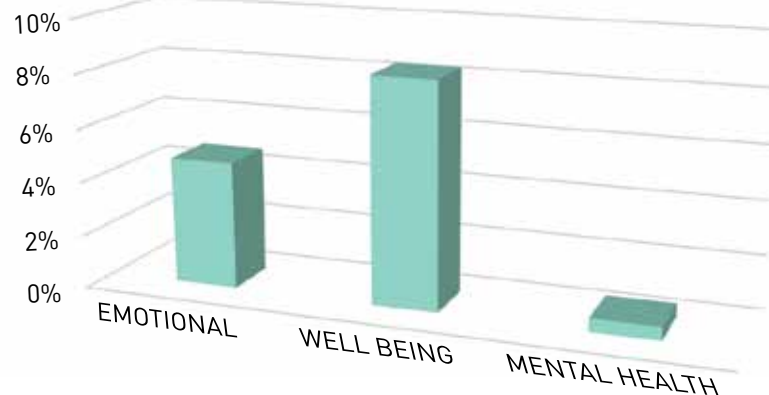
But Ofsted said there were no specific requirements for inspectors to report on mental health, but they would do so when provision was particularly poor or good.

In the 806 reports published since January, "well-being", and "emotional" or "mental health" were mentioned in 21 per cent of summaries and key recommendations for outstanding schools, but in only 11 per cent of requires improvement and 14 per cent of inadequate reports. In most cases, the references related generally to well-being, with the term "mental health" appearing in only four reports.

And even in reports of schools rated requires improvement, the provisions highlighted are overwhelmingly positive.

Sarah Brennan, chief executive of the mental health charity YoungMinds, told *Schools Week*: "While no one wants to add to the burdens teachers face, it's crucial

KEYWORDS IN 2016 OFSTED REPORTS



that schools are accountable for the mental health of their pupils".

She added that interventions were "of little use" if the inspection framework encouraged schools to treat wellbeing as "an optional extra".

An Ofsted spokesperson said that school inspectors evaluated the experience of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including those with mental health needs.

There was no "specific requirement" for inspectors to report on this area, but they did so when there was a "cause for concern, or if the school is particularly skilled in supporting pupils with these needs".

Craig Thorley, IPPR research fellow, said it was "worrying" that two thirds of Ofsted reports made no mention of mental health provision.

"We know that Ofsted can help to drive changes to school behaviour. If mental health provision is routinely reported, it will help to ensure that pupils who need

mental health support do not go under the radar."

The Ofsted inspection criteria include two specific mentions of emotional and mental health or well-being, one in each of the "outstanding" and "good" categories.

But neither the requires improvement nor inadequate categories specifically mention mental health provision. Those descriptors reference "pupils' personal development and welfare" and their having "healthy, positive" physical and emotional lives.

Ofsted declined to discuss how the criteria were created.

To conduct the analysis, *Schools Week* used Watchsted's database of report summaries and key recommendations of all this year's reports to run a search for the words: "well-being", "wellbeing", "emotional" and "mental health". Each of the identified reports was checked manually on the Ofsted website and the context of the mention (positive or negative) noted.

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NEWS

Institute and Deloitte team up on course for academy chiefs

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

A new executive leadership training programme will launch later this year, the latest to pop-up in response to the government's £500 million drive for new academy chief executives.

The Institute of Education (IOE) has partnered with consultants Deloitte to create the new nine-month programme aimed at helping senior staff expand their academy trusts.

Registration is due to open in June, before an autumn start for the first course. A price has yet to be finalised.

The government has set aside £500 million over the course of this parliament to build capacity in the system – including “developing strong multi-academy trusts”.

Toby Greany, professor of leadership and innovation at the IOE, told *Schools Week*: “This [course] will help staff design and lead an effective organisation that has clear educational purpose, vision and values.”

He said it would run for whole leadership teams from medium-sized multi-academy trusts (MATs) with about five to 15 schools, and would include three “intensive” residential modules.

Julie Mercer, a partner at Deloitte, said the firm's work in trusts highlighted that leadership teams faced a “real challenge” responding to the complexities of expansion.

“This is a new sector being asked to do new things and it is not surprising that leaders do not yet have everything they need in their leadership toolkit.

“We know from our organisational health check work with MATs that many do not have the financial, organisational and governance expertise needed to support sustainable growth at scale, while protecting the quality of the education offer that is critical for our children's future.”

She said the course would expand leadership and management skills by bringing in ideas from other areas, including the third sector and commercial enterprise.

The Future Leaders trust launched its executive educators' programme for current and would-be academy chain chief executives last year.

Cambridge Education also runs a five-day course for trust bosses looking to build capacity.

The Department for Education provided £50,000 towards the IOE programme. A spokesperson said: “We have been clear that we are taking steps to encourage the development of strong multi-academy trusts and this is part of that commitment, following a successful pilot programme with Future Leaders last year.”

Some of the country's best universities and business schools were now coming forward to help increase leadership capacity in schools to “ensure there is a wealth of senior leaders equipped to lead trusts.

“We are committed to growing more high-performing academy sponsors and we are building a network of system leaders, ensuring we have high-quality leaders in every part of the country.”

New maths GCSE a ‘seven-day week’ job

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

New maths GCSEs are being introduced too quickly, subject leaders told a recent forum in London, with one head of department telling delegates that he worked seven days a week to implement the changes.

The new exams, to be taken by pupils for the first time next summer, require pupils to demonstrate a greater grasp of problem-solving. The government is hoping the tougher exams will improve the quality and number of pupils progressing to maths A-level.

But implementation of the new syllabus has been criticised by leading academics and government advisers speaking at a Westminster Education Forum event in London earlier this week.

Anne Watson, emeritus professor of maths education at the University of Oxford and a representative of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA), advised the government on the new curriculum but said she was “concerned” there had been “little support provided for this very radical shift of focus in teaching.

“There seems to be little understanding of the time it takes to alter classroom attitudes of mathematics, both those of teachers and schools and students, and to establish the new kinds of teaching necessary.”

She said that while the eventual plan



Anne Watson

was for a “more numerate population” her “expectation” was that the scale and pace of the change would result in a “mess”.

She said it would be particularly difficult for schools that did not already teach problem-solving, with teachers not receiving adequate training to support the change.

While there was a “ground-up approach of teacher education” through the government's maths hub schools, their quality was “variable” and only reached schools that provided the time and funding to staff for training.

Peter Mattock, head of maths at Leicestershire's Brockington college, said his school had switched to a two-week timetable so pupils could receive more maths teaching. The shift had taken “two years of really hard

graft” and the work was “nowhere near done.

“There's no getting away from it. It's been seven days a week, it's been 10 o'clock at night, it's been hard work. We're starting to see the rewards of it now, I think. We're starting to see pupils that are changing the way they approach maths, slowly.

“In terms of teaching in the classroom it has made it harder because you always have to be on your A-game. Every answer is probed, is challenged. You can't let anything slip by now because you've got to test their understanding all the time.”

Anne Haworth, chair of the Association of Teachers of Mathematics, also said the new GCSE was “hugely challenging” for teachers, who had a “very short space of time” to prepare pupils.

Vanessa Pittard, the Department for Education's assistant director for curriculum and standards, defended the “significant reform programme”, adding that advanced study of maths improved not just earning potential but also productivity.

“As a subject, mathematics has gained specific attention in these reforms,” she said. “Arguably the biggest changes to content have been in mathematics, and there are important reasons that are not just about qualification design.

“As a country and culture we do need to reform our whole approach to mathematics, our expectations, our teaching, our attitudes to maths.”

FACT CHECK: are term-time holidays decreasing?

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT

Schools minister Nick Gibb told parliament last week that a change in government policy, in which heads were no longer allowed to authorise term-time holidays, had led to fewer school days missed as a result of agreed family holidays.

He also claimed that “even a week off at secondary school can have a significant impact on a pupil's grades”.

But a statistical release last Thursday suggests the picture is murkier.

So what do the stats say?

Official figures show that authorised family holidays in autumn 2011 and 2012 accounted for 6.4 and 6.2 per cent of absences.

The figure now sits at just 1.1 per cent for the autumn term 2015.

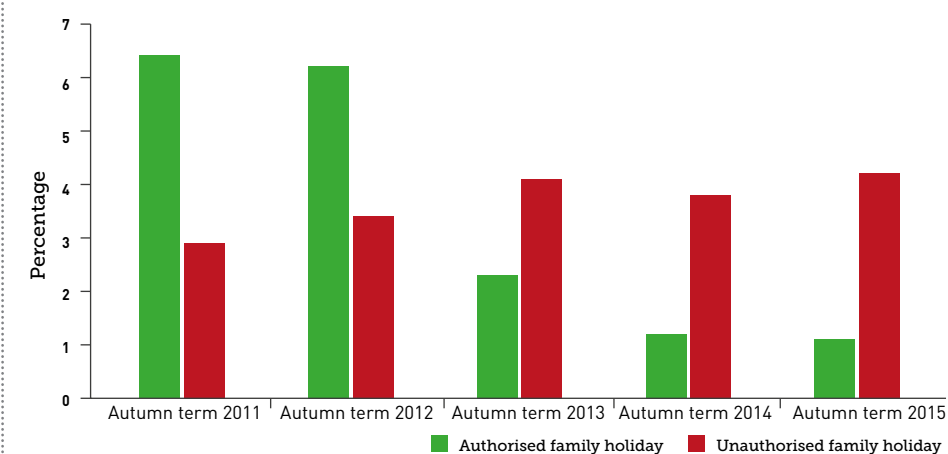
But “unauthorised” absences because of family holiday have correspondingly risen over the period.

In 2011, just 2.9 per cent of unauthorised absences were due to family holiday not agreed with the school. By autumn 2015, they were up to 4.2 per cent.

Or, to put it baldly, in 2015 there were 270,220 absence days due to unauthorised family holidays compared with 176,570 in 2011.

But the number of agreed holidays last year was just 73,395, down on the 394,980 absence days signed off in 2011.

Percentage of absences due to authorised and unauthorised holidays



Still confused?

The graph above shows things more clearly.

So, has the policy impacted on term-time holidays at all?

Sort of. Overall, the number of absences due to holidays has dropped since the policy was introduced. But, more parents are taking their children out of school without permission.

Does this mean grades will shoot up?

Not quite. Government data has previously trumpeted that pupils with no absences achieve a higher proportion of GCSE passes in subjects such as English, maths and science, compared with pupils who miss 14 days of lessons in years 10 and 11.

But researchers at Education Datalab and fact-checking organisation Full Fact have both questioned the decision to use

“traditional subjects” for the measure, as the difference is much lower if looking at a wide range of qualifications.

Speaking to *Schools Week* last year, a Full Fact spokesperson said the figures didn't prove that lower grades were caused by missing school... “it just highlights that one is associated with the other.

“For example, absence is higher among disadvantaged pupils. But the research doesn't tell us whether it's disadvantage, absence – or another factor altogether – causing lower performance.”

Was Nick Gibb correct?

He wasn't wrong: term-time authorised holidays have fallen dramatically and there is some evidence that a week off at school can impact grades. But those facts are not the whole picture of what is going on with absence, nor its impact.

NEWS

EEF research: three pilots and a trial

SOPHIE SCOTT

@SOPH_E_SCOTT

Last week, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published evaluations of four pieces of research.

As part of an ongoing series, *Schools Week* will analyse that research and its potential impact in schools.

The four projects were independently evaluated and a report published by the EEF last Friday.

The projects received a combined total of about £1.3 million, with almost £1 million of that going to a project conducted by the Communications Trust, the only full trial.

Two pilots, the Research Champion scheme and Research into Practice, shared about £100,000 from a £1.5 million pot from the Department for Education and the London Schools Excellence Fund, which was set aside to fund projects to "improve the link" between research and school practice.

The EEF has previously found that teachers "struggle to interpret and act on findings". But evaluation could find no substantive evidence that the projects had an impact on classroom practice and the use of academic research.

A third pilot, Powerful Learning Conversations, again found no evidence that the method improved learning as intended.

Despite the overall negative results of the pilots, Kevan Collins, the foundation's chief executive, said: "The three evaluations of pilot programmes contain nuggets of information about teachers' changing practice. Take all three together and you get an important lesson on how to translate research to classroom practice.

"They tell us that providing structured support for teachers focusing on specific actions for implementing interventions can be effective."



Education
Endowment
Foundation

WHY THE PADLOCK?

EACH PIECE OF RESEARCH IS GIVEN A "PADLOCK RATING" BY THE EEF OF BETWEEN 0-5. THIS IS KNOWN AS THE SECURITY RATING: THE HIGHER THE SCORE, THE MORE CONFIDENCE CAN BE PLACED ON THE FINDINGS.



ASHFORD TEACHING ALLIANCE RESEARCH CHAMPION
FUNDING: £54,792
RUN BY: ASHFORD TEACHING ALLIANCE
COST TO A SCHOOL: £66,310

SECURITY RATING N/A

This pilot involved five schools in the Ashford Teaching Alliance in Kent, four secondary and one primary. A senior teacher from each school was given the role of "research champion" during the academic year 2014-15.

There were four components to the study: school audits of research need; three research "symposia" days, where workshops and seminars were given to staff; twilight forums to explain how to use research in the classroom and at a senior leadership level; and a research support

service for each school.

The project aimed at promoting engagement with research evidence to discover if engaging teachers in research had the "potential" to improve their use of research to support pupil progress.

Despite a positive response, the levels of teacher engagement "varied" and evaluators from NatCen said there was no evidence teachers' use of research changed as a result of the scheme.

RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE
FUNDING: £52,840
RUN BY: ROCSDALE INSPIRATIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
COMMUNITY NETWORK | COST TO A SCHOOL: £74,759

SECURITY RATING N/A

Linked to the project in Ashford, this too wanted to improve pupils' outcomes by supporting teachers with research. In this case it was to help them use evidence-based teaching and learning strategies through professional development.

Delivered in 10 primary schools in the Rochdale area, the evaluation found there was an improvement in teachers' attitudes towards using research and evidence-based practice, and that they were "very positive" towards methods.

But, as there was no comparison group, the report could not

attribute this entirely towards the project.

As the pilot was run with an already-established network of schools, the evaluators said there would need to be "careful thinking" about how the level of school engagement could be replicated outside such a group.

The cost of the intervention was estimated at £267 per pupil, but this would be expected to go down (to about £170 by its third year) as more pupils benefited from the scheme.

POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATIONS
FUNDING: £206,515
RUN BY: YOUTH SPORT TRUST
COST TO A SCHOOL: £70 PER PUPIL

SECURITY RATING N/A

The evaluation found no impact on pupils' attainment in English, but there was a small improvement in maths, equivalent to an extra six months' progress. But the National Institute of Economic and Social Research said this could not be attributed to the programme.

Conducted in 20 schools between January and November 2014, the pilot centred on improving the feedback teachers gave year 9 pupils.

Teachers were trained to use sports coaching techniques,

giving feedback immediately after a task.

A quarter of the schools dropped out, and a further four schools could not complete one of the maths tests due to "technical difficulties", which could have biased the results.

A lack of resources and time also meant schools struggled to deliver the programme. Teachers also raised concerns about losing control of their class when they were putting the programme into practice.

TALK OF THE TOWN
FUNDING: £967,780
RUN BY: THE COMMUNICATIONS TRUST
COST TO A SCHOOL: £13,244.46

SECURITY RATING 4.5



Working with almost 3,000 primary school children from 64 schools across three local authorities, this two-year study aimed at improving children's speech, language and communication (SLC).

The evaluation by Queen's University Belfast found no evidence that Talk of the Town had any impact on the SLC of children who had been identified as having weaker reading comprehension skills, and a very small negative effect was found on reading comprehension – although as this was so

small it could have "occurred by chance".

But 90 per cent of participants who responded to a survey said they were "happy" their school had participated in the scheme.

Teachers, senior school management teams, speech and language therapists and managers from the local authorities also said the intervention had a positive effect on pupil learning and confidence.

TALK OF THE TOWN: ALMOST £1M AND 'NO EVIDENCE OF IMPACT'

This batch of evaluations included a two-year scheme run by the Communication Trust, which hoped to improve children's attainment through improving their speech, language and communication.

It was granted almost £1 million by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to run the Talk of the Town trial, although the evaluation found no evidence of impact.

The 64 schools selected to be part of the trial had to be in areas of social disadvantage and have at least 20 pupils in years 2 and 5. Schools were located in the north east, north west and south of England.

Success was based on how much children's reading comprehension progressed at the end of the trial.

The trust said it was disappointed with the results, but pointed towards some positive findings. Octavia Holland, the trust's director, said: "Talk of The Town is a complex whole school approach to supporting pupils' language and

communication in areas of social disadvantage.

"While the primary findings from this randomised control trial in reading comprehension do not show a positive impact, the EEF evaluation includes findings about other benefits from the Talk of the Town approach, including that 88 per cent of respondents felt the programme was an important addition to provision in their school.

"Teachers felt more able to identify children who needed support and to monitor language and communication development; they were clear that they hoped to see improvements in reading and writing in the long term, and that behaviour had improved as a result of the strategies used."

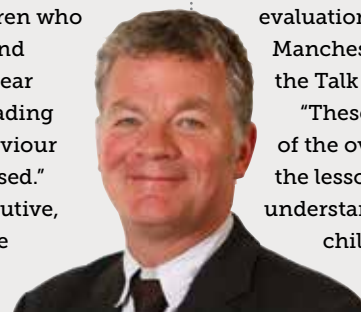
Kevan Collins (pictured), EEF's chief executive, said he was confident of the accuracy of the results, as the evaluation was awarded four

out of five padlocks, a method used to score the robustness of evaluations.

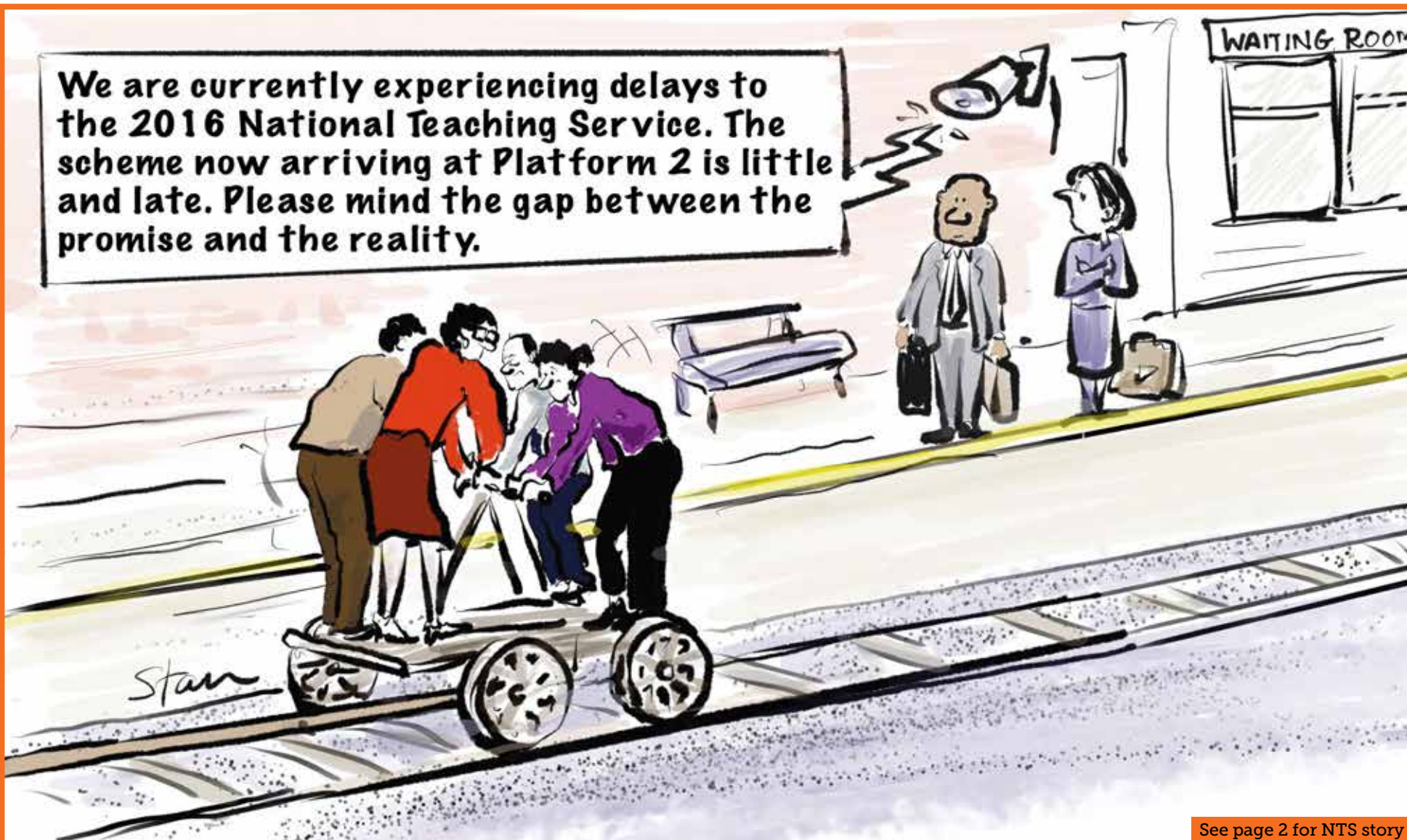
"Robust evaluation of a widely used programme like this is incredibly valuable, whatever the result, and will help schools spend their budgets in the most effective ways."

Holland added: "We look forward to sharing a secondary report that brings together the findings of the EEF evaluation report, information from an independent evaluation undertaken by the University of Manchester and data collected by schools involved in the Talk of The Town trial.

"These three sources give us a really clear picture of the overall impact of Talk of the Town and the lessons we can learn to further develop our understanding of how to most effectively support children and young people's language and communication."



We are currently experiencing delays to the 2016 National Teaching Service. The scheme now arriving at Platform 2 is little and late. Please mind the gap between the promise and the reality.



See page 2 for NTS story

My change of heart about coaching

After joining *Schools Week* as deputy editor, Cath Murray was sent to mingle with readers at a training event - and bring back her observations.

I approached the "coaching" day for education professionals with trepidation. Faye Kilgour, our trainer and lead coach for Graydin, a professional development organisation, had signed her preliminary email, "With heart". On receiving it, the seat of my own emotions sank.

I'm no stranger to the heart-centred group activity. I spent three years teaching in an "eco-village" study-abroad programme in Costa Rica, for goodness sake. I know all about holding hands and sharing. And I know it has value, in a community-building sense.

So why the "heart" sign-off made me uneasy, I'm not quite sure. But it's fair to say I entered the training session with some prejudice and a modicum of internal grumbling about airy-fairy CPD sessions, proper use of public money and wasting teachers' valuable time.

But here's what I learned.

1. Coaching is about helping people to access existing knowledge

We weren't allowed to give advice, or tell people what

to do. When paired up to "coach" each other, Kilgour encouraged us to "plant seeds, not give presents". This meant we should listen, and occasionally interject with questions to guide our partner: "What do you think is stopping you?" or "How might a more experienced teacher approach this problem?"

We were to avoid judgmental "Why?" questions and never indulge our own curiosity. Neither could we throw in anecdotes, go off on tangents, or simply change the subject when our partner became boring. This was not a conversation: it was about remaining intensely focused on the protagonist, while being ready at any moment to lob in a pertinent question. It was like being a ball-girl at Wimbledon - and just as exhausting.

But when we switched over and I took centre court, a strange power was unleashed. My ball-girl faithfully darted after every trailing ball, throwing it back to me: "What is your priority here?" "How might you approach that conversation?" "What steps are you going to take to achieve that?" Draining, once again, but also strangely exhilarating.

2. You have to start with the heart

No, really. I took Kilgour to task over the "heart" stuff. One participant said the "heart" focus immediately told her it would be her kind of training. I said I

never would have come if my boss hadn't made me.

But however you phrase it, this instruction basically means you have to start by establishing what your values are. In other words, the "What's important to you about X?" kind of questions.

The idea is that until you know what you want from a situation, you're not going to work out what steps you should take to achieve it.

Work out what you want, lay out your options, then decide on an action plan. Not rocket science. Except that all the while, you're being supported by the equivalent of Anita - the beautiful, placid synth in the BBC series *Humans* - basically a human-like figure who looks, speaks and moves exactly like a human, but has no interest in turning the conversation to their own life.

3. Coaching won't work for everyone

There is a place for mentoring, and for consultancy, both of which - we were told - are more focused on *imparting* knowledge.

At lunch, I talked with Kate Fiddian, assistant head at Orchard School in Bristol and a passionate advocate of coaching, who said she wouldn't recommend it for "floundering" NQTs. "If you have somebody being coached who doesn't have the answer, they can end up feeling frustrated."

But for Fiddian - who first engaged with

coaching on Future Leaders - getting more experienced teachers to "find their own route" through difficult situations is a great way to give them "ownership" of their professional development.

Then there's the idea of "buy-in" - that you have to want to be coached. Fiddian hopes to include it as one of several options in her school's CPD, but told me about a school that had tried to force it on all their teachers. It didn't work.

I left feeling slightly vulnerable (it's hard to tell strangers what you really want out of life!) yet more connected, and overall, more human.

Naomi Ward, editor of the upcoming *Teacher 5-a-day* journal and handbook, said she never received coaching as a teacher, despite requesting it. She left in 2013, after 15 years. "I might still be in teaching," she told me, "if I'd had a coach."

I don't think it's a magic bullet. But at the end of the day, my overall reaction was kudos.

At its essence, the workshop seemed to be about how to find out what you really want to do, and how to go about achieving it. And it felt like everyone cared. The facilitator cared, the participants cared, and I imagined that behind each of these attendees, must have been an organisation that cared enough to send them.



READERS' REPLY



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Ofsted should take responsibility for primary curriculum bias

Frederick Sandall,
address supplied

Well said Colin! In my recent visits to a number of schools across the country I have found that just two subjects dominate the curriculum. Schools spend the entire morning on mathematics and English. This is not surprising as not only are they "inspected" but also "tested" to the exclusion of anything else.

A former pupil at one of the schools of which I was head has just written an open letter to Ms Morgan. I am pleased to say this letter has picked up wide publicity. Unfortunately it says why she is leaving teaching after six years and the main reason is the assessment that is forcing schools to narrow the curriculum.

We must keep the pressure up to ensure that our young people have experiences in school that inspire them to learn about the many wonders of the world as well as the many problems they will need to help to solve if we are to survive as a species. Education please, not just training!

Government confirm £300m available for academy conversion – the rest will go to existing trusts

Ian Taylor, Bristol

So Lord Nash, academies minister, who runs his own trust, announces that £300 million of OUR money will be given to . . . academy trusts.

Nice little earner if you know the right people.

Coates review of education in prison – the schools bits

Colin Richards, Cumbria

Michael Gove wants to reform prisons as academies. Which one will be the first reformed prison to term itself a "crime academy"?

Schools ban watches to outsmart exam cheats

Jill Greenwood, Hertfordshire

Our school has introduced a blanket ban on watches. It's hugely unfair on those who have perfected their exam timing techniques, but we were told that this is the word of Ofqual. Cheating in any exam should be dealt with harshly, to protect honest students; but then the cheats bring the school into disrepute, so it may be that it is covered up out of necessity.

José Picardo @josepicardoSHS
Schools are doing this to "outsmart"

students? Not sure it's the students being outsmarted.

Alternative provision academy to offer International Baccalaureate



Debbie Fisher @historytiglet

Interesting idea. Should all students have the chance to study broader range of subjects?

Linda J. Graham @drlindagraham

Will be interested to see how this goes.

Colin Diamond @Anfieldexile

I'm nervous about post-16 alternative provision, but understand that many can get lost in big FE colleges.

Why three-day qualifications can be just as valid as GCSEs



Tom Sherrington @headguruteacher

There is simply no parity between ECDL and most GCSEs. Perpetuates the gaming culture we've nearly beaten.



Janet Downs, Lincolnshire

If graduation was moved to 18 then pupils could approach graduation via multiple routes. This could include the ECDL or even the UK driving test. The problem comes when such exams are given an "equivalence" for league table purposes. The answer is clear: scrap league tables; judge exams on their own merit and allow accredited qualifications, prior learning, practical experience, voluntary work, Duke of Edinburgh awards and similar, national careers service, etc, to be included in a graduation portfolio.

Ignore social media, pupils can cope with hard GCSE exams



Clare Sealy, London

My son checked the cover of his GCSE biology paper twice during the exam as he thought he must have been given the wrong paper by mistake. So did his friend and so, according to social media, did other students. It wasn't that the exam was hard, it was that it was odd and lacked opportunities to show off the biological knowledge they had been learning. He felt short-changed. He's really good at maths so being asked to do lots of data analysis wasn't hard for him. If anything it made the paper easier. But he wanted to be tested on the biology he had worked hard to learn - or at least some of it.

Head denies creating a 'technical academy' is a form of streaming

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Roger Titcombe, Cumbria

Vocational courses are different in principle from traditional school qualifications such as the GCSE. The aim of vocational education is to bring as many trainees as possible, regardless of ability, up to a threshold level of competence. This is achieved by requiring them to demonstrate familiarity and competence with a limited number of closely specified scenarios. It is therefore training in how to respond to the circumstances required to be met in a specified job application. This criterion-referenced approach is entirely appropriate to job training where uniform standards are required.

Such teaching is structured to make minimum possible cognitive demands and is unconcerned with general intellectual development.

Of course there should be high quality vocational education in our school and college system, but it should be post-16.

Before that the curriculum should be developmental. Academic potential is not fixed and intelligence is plastic.

REPLY OF THE WEEK
RECEIVES A SCHOOLS
WEEK MUG!



DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

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

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THE INTERVIEW

THE MEN BEHIND THE

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_MCINERNEY

Last month the Centre for High Performance – a company created by two academics – received more than 20,000 messages. Unfortunately, most of them were hate mail.

Things looked bad. It was all because a summary document, which was based on a working paper by the two academics and two other colleagues, went viral – rapidly. From the screenshot that was shared it looked as if the two academics were saying school leaders wanting to successfully turn around academies should “exclude poor quality students” and “improve admissions” (which, as the left-wing children’s author Michael Rosen wrote in a blog, sounded a lot like a euphemism for picking the kids who are easiest to teach).

Persistent snarks were shared on Twitter and Facebook as outrage built. Rosen led much of the campaign, harnessing the power of his 86,000 followers. Other campaigners, particularly those in the Anti-Academies Alliance, an online pressure group, called the researchers money-grabbing consultants with the summary document as proof that academies shaft the poorest pupils. At one point, a journalist rang the group’s advisory board suggesting the academics were frauds – even asking “are you sure they aren’t actors?”

I even received one of those phone calls. Two weeks before the kick-up I had written a *Schools Week* front-page story about the negative costs of heads behaving in precisely the way the academics were allegedly suggesting. But I also knew the very authors now under-fire were those who had provided the data. I knew they believed the opposite of what was suggested. What they had told me was that target-setting by the government and Ofsted, encouraged practices such as excluding low-attaining pupils so school leaders looked successful. The conclusion of their five-year research was that this came with serious costs. The angry people on the internet had missed this critical point.

After the furore died down I finally met, in-person, the four academics who carried out the original research – Alex Hill, associate professor at Kingston University; Ben Laker, lecturer at Kingston; Richard Cuthbertson, senior research fellow at the University of Oxford; Terry Hill, emeritus fellow at Oxford.

Alex Hill and Laker are keen to put the story straight regarding their website: they didn’t mean to offend anyone, they were not promoting exclusions, they are not out to make money. They are simply researchers who want their findings used in the broader world.

“If people won’t use the research, we



Left to right: Richard Cuthbertson, Ben Laker, Terry Hill and Alex Hill

question why we do it,” says Terry Hill, a management guru of manufacturing strategy, the eldest of the group, and Alex’s dad.

Over the past five years the group collected data from a range of organisations. Laker, as part of his PhD (passed just days before we meet), gathered data on 160 schools that converted to becoming academies in 2010 after being in special measures. Comparing that data led to their conclusions of what people were doing to achieve the stated goals.

But Alex Hill and Laker are not saying this is what, morally, people should do. They were trying to flag to the government what a target culture pushes people towards.

Targets affect behaviour because they clarify purpose, explains Cuthbertson, whose research usually focuses on retail and consumer service companies at Oxford’s Said business school. “Ask any manager, football coach, supermarket leader, and it is clarity of purpose that

they use to decide ‘I’m in’ for an initiative or to say ‘this isn’t for me’. When targets are set by an outside body that doesn’t deliver itself – Ofsted is a classic example – then people may make a trade-off in their decision to achieve functional goals, even if detrimental to overall aims.”

Alex interrupts to explain that businesses therefore vary targets based on context: “Research shows different things work in different parts of the country and for different pupils. Could Ofsted have different targets for different schools? Yes. But the DfE says no because they don’t want to water down their principles – but it would be better.”

Cuthbertson noted that targets can never be perfect. “Everywhere you have criteria, you may have gaming,” he says. Progress measures could be exploited by gaming intake.

Over their years studying different types of organisations the group has learned that expansion comes at a cost. But Alex says that the best school leaders refuse to be pushed into expansion or

gaming and instead focus on long-term growth. “They are often fighting off stakeholders who want short-term results. But they have the self-belief to know all will come good in a few years.”

We talk for an hour about what can be learned from organisations such as Amazon (end-user focus), supermarkets (“they change targets for their stores depending on the context”) or the growing preference for privately schooled individuals to take jobs in the charitable sector, including schools (“this suggests it’s where the real power is”).

What becomes clear is that, more than anything, they want to warn the schools sector about the dangers of poor management and help it overcome its fear of thinking about schools as organisations that need managing, albeit non-profit ones.

Terry compares education to engineering, the sector he knows best. In the 1960s, a fourth year was added to engineering degrees to give time for learning management skills instead of

E GAMING MESSAGE



Alex Hill: "the best school heads have self-belief"

"DIFFERENT THINGS WORK IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY"

just "technical" ones, which are what professions prefer to focus on. "Look at the courses now, though, and the fourth year is more engineering," he says wearily.

The fury over the summary document was a reminder that people in schools are not always comfortable with management concepts, with the language of the findings called into question.

Alex admits words can be misinterpreted and is working with an advisory group of heads to avoid such slips-ups in the future. In the meantime Alex and Ben have deleted the offending webpage and an original version of the research has been uploaded to a repository so the findings only exist as an academic document. It was one of the things that prompted people to speculate about their existence, but they say it was done to try and draw a line under the episode.

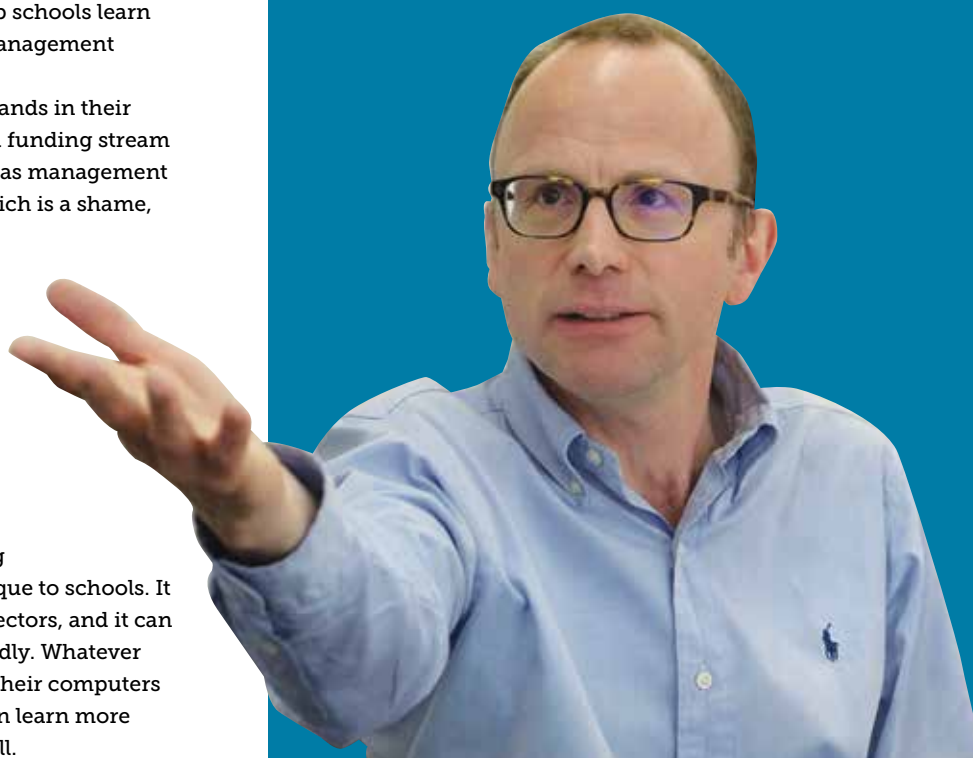
Though it might be easier for them to turn their back on schools, and focus

again on other sectors in which they specialise, Alex is driven by an almost evangelical force to help schools learn the best and worst of management practices.

Only one thing still stands in their way. There is no natural funding stream for research on schools as management organisations. All of which is a shame, as the data they have gathered is some of the most powerful and engaging I've seen in education research – but without funding there's a risk it will sit, unused, on computer servers.

What these four have shown is that managing "performance" isn't unique to schools. It happens across many sectors, and it can be done well or done badly. Whatever the angry people sat at their computers might say, I hope we can learn more about how it is done well.

Richard Cuthbertson:
"targets affect
behaviour"



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OPINION



GERALD HAIGH

Retired primary head

SPAG bol**** that needs more than reheating

Grammar exercises and tests do little but fill in the government's beloved tick-boxes and are not the best way to use precious classroom time, says Gerald Haigh

When I was a child I had a Meccano set. It was the daddy of them all, ultra deluxe, in a wooden chest gold-stencilled "Meccano" in that distinctive font. It had many compartments, and the full complement of parts. You could build anything with it, up to, and including, a working model of the Runcorn to Widnes transporter bridge.

It strikes me that the teaching of formal grammar follows the Meccano principle. Gather a set of generally shared conventions and stylistic alternatives, get people who did Latin at school to declare them "rules", and you can screw them together to produce simulations of real English prose.

Or, as the Bullock report, *A Language for Life*, had it in 1975: "The traditional view of language teaching was, and indeed in many schools still is, prescriptive. It identified a set of correct forms and prescribed that these should be taught, as they were mastered, the pupil would become a more competent writer and aspire to a standard of 'correctness' that would serve him for all occasions."

The tone here clearly assumes that what was being described was on the way out. By then, studies across several decades had concluded that teaching children formal grammar out of context did not improve the quality of their writing.

It's not that the Bullock authors, nor those of like mind today, are opposed to teaching children the conventions of appropriate, stylish and fluent English. What's at issue is whether doing exercises and grammar tests is a productive way to spend precious classroom time. Probably not, is the reasonable conclusion, and many today would echo Bullock's belief that formal grammar instruction "... has nurtured in many the expectation of failure and drilled others in what they already knew."

So, why does it still go on, now with additional "rules"?

Let me suggest these related reasons.

One is that in a political environment that gives priority to accountability measured by grades, the use of tick-box grammar

exercises and tests seems tidy and clear cut. All that's necessary is to add up the ticks.

Then, there is an assumption that language, like every area of life, has rules that, learned and diligently followed, will ensure success, whereas what it actually does is generate caution and stifle initiative and creativity.

Rules on language can stifle initiative and creativity

Another contributor to the zombie reboot is a deeply embedded top-down belief that difficult tasks have intrinsic moral value in addition to their actual purpose. There are always those who believe that SATs and exams toughen up children for "the real world" of heartbreak, failure, bad hair and redundancy.

In education this approach is betrayed by the frequent use of the word rigour. I notice, by the way, that, over time, the use of rigour in school has subtly changed. In the Gove era it meant making curriculum subjects harder to learn. Now, it seems to mean more difficult tests. Last November, the education secretary said: "New, more rigorous standard assessment tests (SATs) are already being introduced at the end of primary school," and going on to claim that the government, in the past five years, has carried out a "rigour revolution".

All I can suggest here is that perhaps the rigour is wrongly applied. Given that the profession believes the spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) regime, and other top-down interventions, to be counter-productive, what's really needed is a rigorous assessment of their fitness for purpose.

I never did, incidentally, build the Runcorn to Widnes transporter bridge. I fuffed about with my Meccano, but, essentially, I couldn't see the point. At that time my dad was a chauffeur for the coalmine directors, and I learned from him how to drive, by sitting on his lap and steering. It was not a risk-free process, but we both loved it and I went on to lap up the shared techniques, vocabulary and rules as the need arose. Which, when you think about it, is how we've all learned most of the stuff we really know.



DAVID BORROW

Finance spokesman for the County Councils Network, deputy leader of Lancashire County Council

Embrace us, don't cut our funds

The government may have made a "u-turn" on academisation, but dramatic reductions in the Education Services Grant will prevent councils from adequately supporting schools, argues David Borrow. The plan to sever the link between local authorities, schools, and their communities, he says, is ill thought-out and undemocratic

No doubt about it: the government's climbdown over academies was as welcome as it was sudden. But as swiftly as the dust settled, the outlook is still bleak for the future of local authorities in education.

This is despite councils still currently providing vital support services to some 13,000 schools.

The reforms included in the so-called Education for All bill at no point recognise the strong partnerships that schools and councils have forged over time, and are designed with the goal of full academisation in six years' time.

The two triggers Nicky Morgan outlined for forced academisation – council "unviability" and "underperformance" – still make areas hugely vulnerable for conversion, despite the "forced" part of the policy being dropped.

The Education Services Grant (ESG), used by councils for school improvement and special needs pupils, and to plan for school places, is reducing at pace and scale. Some £600 million will be cut nationally over the next two years, leaving authorities with an almost non-existent budget with which to improve education standards.

The withdrawal of the ESG is on the presumption that schools would stop receiving local authority input, as they would be academies by 2022. My council, Lancashire, has already seen its grant go down from £20 million in 2014-15 to £14.5 million in 2016-17, with the worst yet to come.

In light of the government halting forced academisation, we need ministers to look again at the scale and pace of these cutbacks. Otherwise, it will be inevitable that councils will find it unviable to support schools, leading to drops in performance, therefore hitting both academisation triggers.

You could argue this is forced academisation by the back door.

My council is not anti-academy, but the government has forgotten that local authorities don't run schools anymore, but maintain state-run ones. They have a good track record in forging positive partnerships with all types of school to drive up improvement.

Indeed, in Lancashire, well over half the academies in the county purchase school improvement services from my council. And in Buckinghamshire, a charitable trust brings together local authority and schools'

Only half the battle has been won. We still have a role

knowledge to improve education. Our expertise should be embraced, not diminished.

These proposals are further exacerbated by a new schools funding formula. On one hand, counties welcome a fairer distribution of money, as schools in county areas have been historically underfunded for years. On the other, it further removes councils from making decisions, in partnership with schools forums, on where to best route money to meet local needs and priorities. We fear this could lead to smaller rural schools, which are cross-subsidised, becoming financially unviable.

If these cuts are not re-examined, how can local authorities successfully plan for school places? Or require academies to expand in areas with a population boom? And if an academy chain fails – and there have been high-profile recent cases – who will pick up the pieces?

The answers aren't clear, but we can be sure that in practice, it will be councils. And we'll have to do that with non-existent budgets.

Localism is at the heart of our schools system. When I was MP, I was able to successfully lobby the schools minister to keep open a threatened primary school. The plan to sever the link between local authorities, schools, and their communities is ill thought-out and undemocratic. If councils are written out of the education script, who can continue to beat this important drum?

County Councils Network members are happy that the government has been willing to listen to their concerns. But only half the battle is won. We must press our case that local authorities still have a valuable role in the world of education, and that they should be fairly funded to continue to improve standards in a mixed economy of schools.

Whitehall listened to our concerns the first time, and must be willing to work with us again to ensure that the reforms deliver well thought-out and evidenced changes to the education system that pupils, parents, and teachers deserve.

As many as three pupils in each class may be struggling with mental health problems, but many of their teachers say they feel ill-equipped to respond. Cuts are decimating statutory services, Ellie Mulcahy says, moving the onus on to school leaders to put improved support in place

Teachers and schools need the skills to spot the warning signs and respond to mental health needs. One in ten young people suffers with a mental health disorder, according to a recent Centre Forum report, and GPs warn that the prevalence is rising. This means that, on average, three pupils in each class will be struggling with mental health problems. As cuts continue to decimate statutory services, school leaders increasingly need to call on third-sector expert organisations to fill the gap and help to support their pupils.

Mental health problems often worsen when treatment is delayed. Yet stigma remains a significant barrier to early intervention: one in three fathers reports he would try to stop his child receiving counselling, according to the charity Place2Be. While teachers cannot be expected to provide mental health support in isolation, they do need to identify warning signs early and refer pupils to appropriate services quickly. However, a report by the NfER found that fewer than two-thirds of teachers felt able to identify mental health needs and only a third felt their training on mental health was adequate.

Multiple government reports and reviews have acknowledged the problem and called



ELLIE MULCAHY

Junior associate at the education and youth think-and-action tank LKMco

On the frontline in the fight against youth mental illness

for improvements. The Department of Health report *Future in Mind* highlighted the need to “promote resilience, prevention and early intervention” through a focus on resilience-building in the early years and a whole-school approach to positive mental health. Meanwhile, the Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT) argued that trainees need to understand typical child and adolescent development to address mental health needs.

Worryingly, training on child and adolescent development was found to be particularly lacking in secondary ITT courses. The report recommended that child and adolescent development should form core content of all ITT courses to underpin an understanding of mental health. However, it lacked specificity on how the former would actually aid the latter. School leaders therefore need to put improved support into place, something that should involve both building teachers’ expertise

and making arrangements to provide more intensive, specialist support for pupils where necessary.

First, schools should assess current and incoming staff members’ confidence and expertise and arrange suitable training. Programmes such as In Our Hands show teachers how to develop a preventive approach that promotes positive mental health and develops resilience, while organisations such as Mental Health First Aid provide detailed guidance on spotting early symptoms of mental health disorders. This training is particularly useful because it focuses on practical responses to mental health distress, for example, how to reduce the stigma surrounding the discussion of suicide risk.

Second, many schools recognise that while they cannot do everything, neither can they count on threadbare statutory services to step in where necessary. They have therefore

established links with organisations such as Place2Be and Family Links, who provide ongoing mental health support in a more intensive and regular form. A strength of these organisations is that as well as providing intensive support and counselling for pupils, they work with staff and parents to create an environment that promotes positive mental health at a whole-school level.

Stigma remains a significant barrier to early intervention

Unfortunately, some teachers work in schools that do not prioritise mental health as much as they should. These teachers may have to go it alone to seek information, support and guidance. Online tools such as MindEd can help by giving teachers a basic understanding of the most prevalent mental health problems in each age group, the factors that make children vulnerable, the signs that should cause concern and how they can help by working in partnership with professional services.

Nearly 50 per cent of teachers do not believe they know how to support pupils with mental health needs, yet heightened prevalence and shrinking public services mean they will increasingly need to do so. School leaders need to draw on the expertise of specialist organisations to ensure early identification and the right support is put in place. Only then can action be taken before issues escalate.

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ANALYSIS

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TEA

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT

Investigates

In the recent white paper, the Department for Education pushed the expansion of teaching schools as its preferred method of school improvement.

In fact, teaching schools – which are Ofsted outstanding schools

that collaborate with others to provide high-quality training and development – were mentioned 33 times in the 128-page document.

Yet, the Teaching Schools Council (TSC) was namechecked only once, something that underplays its role as a provider of management and support for the 730 teaching schools across the country.

Schools Week decided it was time to find out more.

WHAT IS THE TEACHING SCHOOLS COUNCIL?

In 2011 the government approved its first cohort of teaching schools and established the Teaching Schools Council (TSC), a “middle-tier” body set up to co-ordinate teaching schools and their alliances. Its existence, however, is not as widely recognised as other middle-tier bodies such as the regional schools commissioners.

The nine-member board has a mix of elected and co-opted members.

Vicky Beer, its former chair, has now moved on to become a regional commissioner, and has been succeeded by Dr Gary Holden.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, he said the purpose of the TSC was to “support coherence” across the schools system.

Carolyn Robson, one of his vice-chairs, said “collaboration” was the key theme of the council’s work. “We are passionate about collaboration and on the potential to transform education in a networked way. No school is an island.”

In the white paper, the DfE raised its

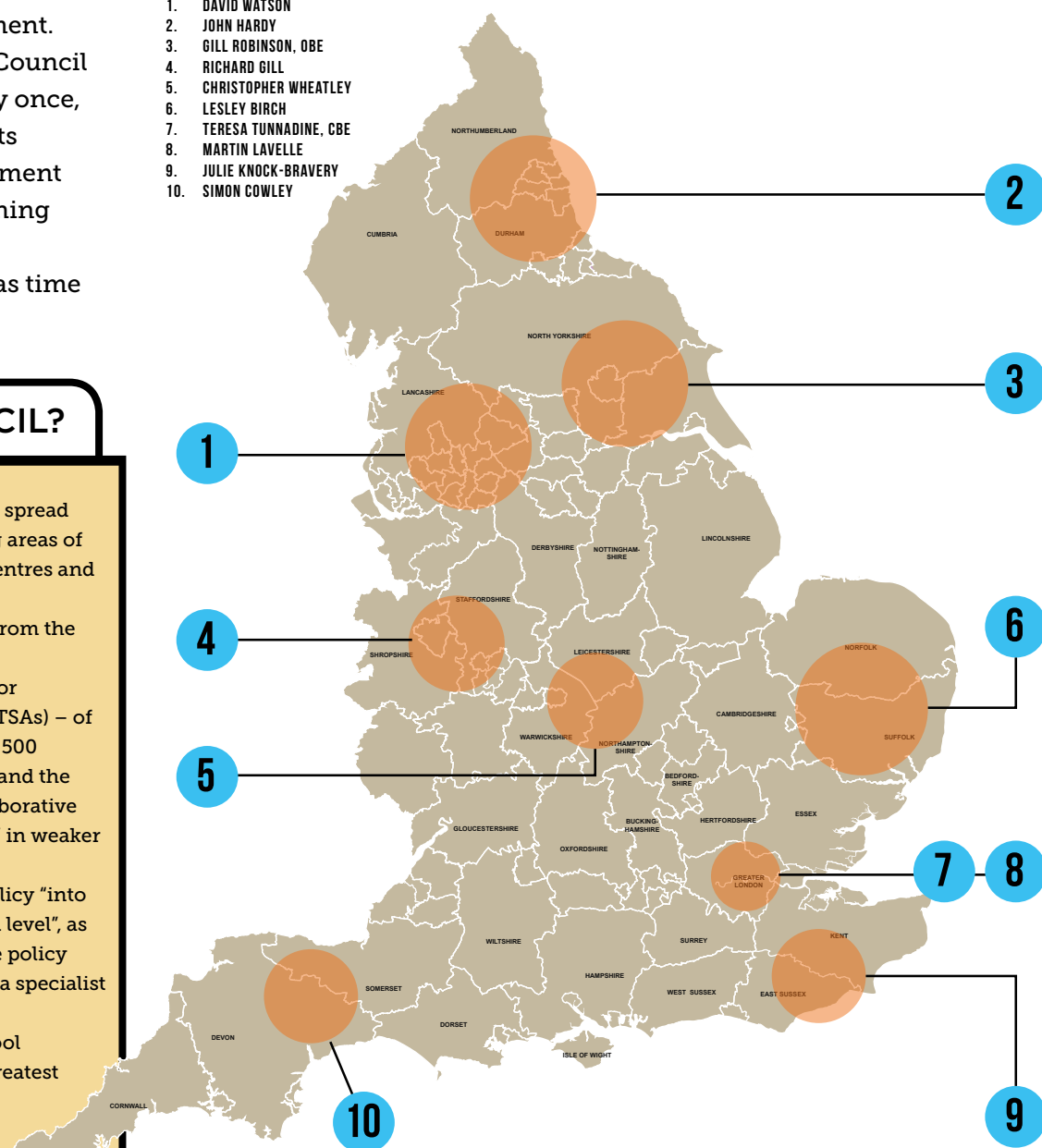
concerns about the geographical spread of teaching schools, highlighting areas of the country without any of the centres and promising a further 300.

Speaking with representatives from the TSC, its stated aims include:

- acting as a national voice for teaching school alliances (TSAs) – of which there are more than 500
- working with Ofsted leads and the RSCS to “enable more collaborative and focused interventions” in weaker regions
- translating government policy “into coherent practice at school level”, as well as help to shape future policy (each council member has a specialist area)
- making sure teaching school alliances impact areas of greatest need, such as those with greater deprivation (for example coastal areas)
- helping choose future system leaders and TSAs

WHERE ARE THE TSC REGIONS?

1. DAVID WATSON
2. JOHN HARDY
3. GILL ROBINSON, OBE
4. RICHARD GILL
5. CHRISTOPHER WHEATLEY
6. LESLEY BIRCH
7. TERESA TUNNADINE, CBE
8. MARTIN LAVELLE
9. JULIE KNOCK-BRAVERY
10. SIMON COWLEY



Alongside the national members, there are 10 regional representatives (see map). A parliamentary committee has already raised concerns that school commissioner regions do not match Ofsted areas. To add to the confusion, the TSC regions are different again – making

it difficult to organise support after a poor Ofsted or commissioner warning. Carolyn Robson told *Schools Week* the regions “represent local groupings, rather than fixed boundaries”, but that they were under review with an aim to “align more coherently” with RSCs.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), an arm of the DfE, supports the existence of the Teaching Schools Council (TSC).

Council members are not paid, but their schools are given a grant by the NCTL to “backfill” their time.

This means each school is compensated by the NCTL for allowing the council member to travel across the country to speak at events and meetings. The money does not go directly to council members.

Carolyn Robson said the level of

funding “varies depending on the role undertaken by each representative”.

The regional leads, as outlined in the map above, were appointed in June 2014, so are fairly new on the TSC scene. The hope is that they will extend the role of the TSC and make it more collaborative and coherent.

Every region has its own action plan, which Robson said is shared with “other key players”, such as local authorities and regional schools commissioners.

The regional leads are tasked with creating new networks, or building

upon existing work, to make sure there is a “clearly understood” sub-regional strategy. As an example, in the north west, boards oversee school improvement strategies in various sub-regions, whereas in the north east there is just one board for school improvement.

In the white paper, the DfE said it planned to work with the TSC to expand the school-led system by “partnering schools with the potential to become strong system leaders with existing teaching schools” and national leaders of education.

TEACHING SCHOOLS COUNCIL

WHO IS ON THE COUNCIL?



DR GARY HOLDEN

TSC ROLE: CHAIR

Day job: Executive principal/ chief executive officer, Sir Joseph Williamson's mathematical school, Kent
Other: National leader of education; Ofsted inspector



CAROLYN ROBSON, CBE

TSC ROLE: VICE-CHAIR

Responsible for: Curriculum; maintaining links and dialogue between Department for Education (DfE) and national work
Day job: Executive headteacher, Rushey Mead school, Leicester; chief executive officer, Rushey Mead educational trust
Other: Chair, design and technology expert group; Nottingham City educational improvement board; founder member and senior partner, Challenge Partners; fellow, Royal Society of Arts; National leader of education



STEPHEN MUNDAY, CBE

TSC ROLE: NATIONAL MEMBER

Responsible for: Initial teacher training and leadership development
Day job: Executive principal, Comberton Village college, Cambridgeshire; chief executive, Comberton Academy Trust
Other: Ofsted inspector; national leader in education; associate head, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust; fellow, Royal Society of Arts; government adviser, Headteachers' Reference Group and National Council for Educational Excellence



ANDREW WARREN

TSC ROLE: VICE-CHAIR

Responsible for: Maintaining links and dialogue between the DfE and TSC regions
Day job: Director, Britannia teaching school alliance at Belgrave St Bartholomew's academy, Stoke-on-Trent
Other: Qualified coach and professional mentor; Local leader of education



DIANE REYNARD

TSC ROLE: NATIONAL MEMBER

Responsible for: SEN
Day job: Principal, East Specialist Inclusive learning centre, Leeds
Other: National leader of education; additional Ofsted inspector, secondary, and lead associate for schools requiring improvement or in special measures



DR JENNY BLUNDEN

TSC ROLE: NATIONAL MEMBER

Day job: Director, Cornwall teaching school
Other: Responsible for CPD provision, specialisms in science, mathematics and leadership; leads initial teacher training through School Direct and SCITTs; vice-chair of governors at a primary school



DAME ALISON PEACOCK

TSC ROLE: PEER MEMBER

Day job: Executive head, Wroxham teaching school, Hertfordshire
Other: Member, College of Teaching, Royal Society education committee and regional school commissioner's headteacher board, North West London and South Central; senior primary partner, Challenge Partners; trustee, Open Futures Trust and the Teacher Development Trust; National leader of education; sits on DfE's curriculum assessment group



DR LESLEY CURTIS, OBE

TSC ROLE: NATIONAL MEMBER

Responsible for: Early years
Day job: Head, Everton nursery school and family centre. Liverpool
Other: National leader of education; training to become an Ofsted inspector; nursery is lead school within the North Liverpool teaching school partnership



SIR ANDREW CARTER

TSC ROLE: PEER MEMBER

Day job: Head, South Farnham school, Surrey
Other: National leader of education; former vice-chair of TSC (2011-15); sits on initial teacher training policy group, NCETM's group for maths, and the NCTL's academies group; South Farnham is a national support school

REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit
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Our blog reviewer of the week is Jill Berry, a former head, now educational consultant and Twitter addict @jillberry102

This week I've looked back over posts I've enjoyed in recent months. The world of blogging moves fast, so for the benefit of those who might have missed them, here are four favourites.

The world is not wallpaper @chrishivers2

Chris Chivers reflects on the place of the senses in the way we experience the world, and how important it is that we encourage children properly "to look, to listen, to feel". He recounts his own experiences, his acute observations of his environment and his underpinning knowledge and understanding of it, and he recognises that his senses of smell and taste are diminishing with age. Teachers have the capacity to protect children from a different kind of sensory deprivation. I found this an uplifting and affirming post, and loved its final call to action: "Sometimes, there is no substitute for real experience. Put on a coat and go and find out."

Radical candour @Marymyatt

Mary Myatt talks of the principle of "humans first, professionals second" and suggests that, when organisations operate in this way, people are more receptive to, and less threatened by, accountability "because they want to do their best work and know that any aspect of their practice can be critiqued because it is not an attack on them as a

human being". She cites Kim Scott, who talks of the difference between "guidance" and "feedback": "The single most important thing a boss can do is focus on guidance: giving it, receiving it and encouraging it. Guidance, which is fundamentally just praise and criticism, is usually called 'feedback', but feedback is screechy and makes us want to put our hands over our ears. Guidance is something most of us long for."

Undergirding and ESP @kevbartle

Mary Myatt's exploration of core values and positive relationships underpinning professional practice connects with my next choice, from Kev Bartle. He describes using the word "undergird" in a senior team discussion of how best to support staff, and explains how the principle of "undergirding", with its connotations of strengthening foundations, bolstering or buttressing in a fundamental way, can "challenge us to get the foundations of staff happiness right, not tinker with the peripheral elements: deal with underlying causes and not merely the symptoms".

However, he argues that we need to pay attention to symptoms too. He describes some of the pressures he has experienced during his time as a head, and the support needs that we all have. He connects this to his involvement with the Education Support Partnership, suggesting that both giving and receiving support is crucial for our effectiveness and healthy balance.

#Teacher5aday - the missing ingredient @chrysalis leader

Julia Steward reflects on the #teacher5aday initiative and its success in raising awareness of the importance of giving priority to our own well-being. She links this to the New Education Framework's emphasis on the value of connecting, being active, taking notice, keeping learning and giving.

Steward suggests that, in addition to these areas of focus, we need to think about the importance of sleep. Its restorative power is something to which we do not pay sufficient attention, and she connects this to her own experience: "As I became more tired last term, my resolve to continue my 5-a-day pledges weakened. Developing new habits means over-writing old ones, but like when you re-save something on your computer, the old version doesn't go away. It's just hidden. When I'm tired it's easy to slip back into unhelpful habits."

She taps into personal experiences, her reading and reflections and offers some practical advice. "We all need positive feedback. In leadership sometimes we have to give it to ourselves."

BOOK REVIEW

The Life Project

Author Helen Pearson

Publisher Allen Lane

ISBN-10 184614826X

ISBN-13 978-1846148262

Reviewer Cath Murray



Cohort studies have taught us everything we know. Well, not quite, but working my way through Helen Pearson's *The Life Project*, it started to feel that way.

The relationship between smoking and low birth weight, between smoking and cancer, or even that pollutants you're exposed to during childhood can cause serious diseases in later life – these are things we just know, right?

But according to this book, the key to this knowledge – and so much more – began with one over-ambitious maternity survey of every baby born in a single week in 1946, and persisted for several decades, due in large part to the single-minded determination of a doctor and an education expert.

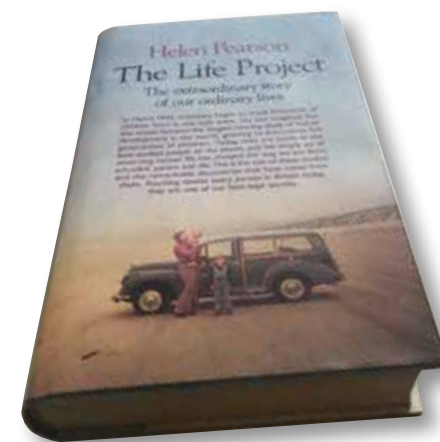
Having grown up with a mother who loved to tell tea-time tales about milkmaids and cowpox revealing the secret of vaccination; or cholera-spreading standpipes mating with street maps to give birth to epidemiology, I was surprised to read the argument for cohort studies as the 20th-century's equivalent. They must have been too contemporary to my mother's 1960s education at Liverpool school of medicine, to have yet entered into the realm of lore.

Perhaps these are the stories today's junior doctors are telling their children, who knows? But although originally conceived as maternity studies, the six British cohort studies launched between 1946 and 2000 contributed to much more than medical knowledge.

In the 1960s, they revealed that the brightest children do just as well in comprehensives as in grammar schools. And it was the 1958 cohort study that revealed, by administering its own intelligence tests on its subjects, that bright, working-class children were less than half as likely to win places in grammar schools as equally intelligent, middle-class children – a finding that Labour used to drive its massive expansion of comprehensives in 1965.

In the early 70s, the studies showed that divorce itself has less of a negative impact on children's life choices than the resultant poverty into which it often throws single mothers. (A finding duly ignored by the government, but that's another story...)

And it may seem obvious now that smoking causes lung cancer, but in 1951 when 80 per cent of men smoked and only



a fraction of those got lung cancer, the causal link was far from given. By launching a cohort study on 41,000 British doctors, and working out exactly what evidence was required to prove that smoking caused cancer (rather than, for example, lung cancer having some bizarre side-effect of making people want to smoke), researchers were able to alert the public to a massive public health risk.

So what about the people behind the cohort studies?

When the 70th anniversary of the first British cohort study was celebrated in March this year, the BBC made a big song-and-dance about the group's surviving members. And as the septuagenarians' anniversary party appeared on just about every radio and TV news broadcast that day, I admit feeling a little burned out on cohort-study excitement long before I picked up this book.

But the volume is a gem for its depiction of the characters – and entities – behind the scenes: the doctor who doggedly pursued his interest in the lives of the thousands of individuals under his watch, fighting to keep the studies alive; the bicycle that transported millions of punch cards across London to be counted on a tabulating machine (described as the 1950s equivalent of a high-speed data link); the 9,000 placentas that are still in a storage shed near Bristol.

Also fascinating is the relationship between the data scientists, politicians and the media, as findings get headlined, distorted or buried – as suits the political or news agenda – to the continual frustration of the academics dedicating their lives to extracting meaningful findings from the tens of millions of data points.

Now every time I read "cohort study" on a piece of research, I admit I get a little bit excited...

NEXT WEEK
The Power Paradox
By Dacher Keltner
Reviewed by: Ian Comfort

What have you been working on?

The impact of school-based careers talks, with people from outside school, on earnings at age 26.

We analysed data from the British cohort study of 1970 – which covers 17,000 people – to work out whether they had an impact, and, if so, what type of interventions and at what age.

What did you find?

That careers interventions appear to have a real impact on earning potential. For example, pupils who received at least six high-quality careers sessions at age 14-15 – and were in full-time employment at age 26 – were earning the equivalent of £2,000 more than their peers (adjusted to 2016).

To achieve this, the sessions had to be given by someone outside the school and be classified as “very helpful” by the pupils. But there was also an effect for other pupils. For each career talk (whether rated as “helpful” or not) with someone from outside the school at age 14-15, young people benefited from a 0.8 per cent wage premium when they were 26.

The relationship was found for those aged 15-16 only when the career talk was “very helpful”, though, which implies that career talks had a greater value for the younger cohort.

Why are the talks more useful for the younger group?

They were more effective if received in the old fourth form – now year 10 – than in year 11. We hypothesised this could mean

RESEARCH CORNER

Q&A

ELNAZ T. KASHEFPAKDEL

PhD candidate at University of Bath,
research analyst at Education and Employers



Do careers talks in schools improve pupils' chances?

they were more receptive at this stage in their education; by fifth form (year 11) they might have been too focused on exams.

How can you prove that it was the careers interventions that produced those results?

First, these findings are statistically significant at 5 per cent, meaning that there is a 95 per cent certainty this correlation did not occur by chance.

Second, we controlled for several variables that are known to have an impact on income in later life, so we were sure to be comparing like for like.

We controlled for parental social class, which is an indicator of disadvantage and financial stability, and for academic ability, which is one of the main drivers of income. We also controlled for home learning environment – how involved parents were in their upbringing, how many times they read books to them, how many times they watched TV, etc; also for gender and ethnicity.

We were unable to control for school type (private versus state) as the data was gathered in 1986 when there was a teachers' strike and wasn't reliable. But that's something we're looking to examine

in the future.

Why is this important?

This study tested whether school engagement with the world of work can help young people transition into employment, and it found a positive relationship.

The wage premiums we found are probably not the result of pupils learning new skills and knowledge (known as human capital) through their career talks. What's probably happening is that even short talks from professionals provide useful information and networks, which help young people access the required social and cultural capital for smoother transitions from education.

What do you hope the impact will be?

We hope to contribute to the debate about careers interventions in schools. A positive result of this study, given the results, would be that pupils, from an early age, receive lots of high-quality career talks with employers of all kinds, so they can hear first-hand about different jobs, careers and opportunities after school.

The article, which was published in the Journal of Education and Work, can be

downloaded at:
www.educationandemployers.org/research/career-education-that-works-an-economic-analysis-using-the-british-cohort-study/



A week in Westminster

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

Wait? Where did the daily headers go?

Let us explain. We heart doing our Westminster diary. But between bickering about the EU and SATs cock-ups we're worried things are getting stale. So for your half-term pleasure – we have a game. HOLD ON TO YOUR PAPER.

The Queen's Birthday Honours are next month and, because we love Lizzie and education superstars, we've created a sweepstake than you can take part in.

The odds are based on the thoughts of a select panel of readers (people who replied to our emails) invited to tell us who they think will get the nod, and who they want to be honoured.

The scamps among you took the opportunity to be wry, with many simply plumping for “some academy chain head”



and several suggesting Liam Nolan, former head of the Perry Beeches trust in Birmingham that was found to have been inappropriate with finances. He has been nominated for his services to accounting. Chortle.

Mary Berry was also in there, but, despite her educating us all about soggy bottoms, WiW is not sure how much she has contributed to education.

The most named was Tom Bennett, the government's behaviour tsar (also a teacher one day a weekend: he'll get mad if we don't mention that) and Ofqual's interim head Amanda Spielman – who is supposed to be the next chief of Ofsted if the people who send us

what feel like daily tip-offs on the matter are to be believed.

Regional schools commissioners were also a favourite: we'll leave it up to you to decide whether they were sarcastically entered.

I thought you said there was a game?

Shh. There is. We've created a sweepstakes betting form on which you can pick who you think is most likely to be nominated.

It's available online at www.bit.ly/queenshonoursgame. Go there. Make your selection. Press the enter button. Easy as hiding a second salary from the EFA. Boom.

What are the rules?

Every potential nominee has a price. You can pick people up to a value of £10. (So, Tom Bennett is worth £7, whereas regional schools commissioners are just £4 – a bargain!) Every person you select who goes on to get an honour wins you some points.

And points mean prizes?

Of course! The person with the guesses that garner most points get glory, their

name in *Schools Week* and a mug. WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?

So, that's for the people who we predict will be nominated. What about the people we would like to nominate?

We already asked for those and it turns out that Laura McInerney, our editor, is the person people would most like to get an honour. So the paper is endorsing her for future iterations.

Week in Westminster considered this might be a conflict of interest, but McInerney left the room when we made this decision, so it's definitely totally independent and not at all affected by the fact that she's our boss.

We'll also be sure to release our minutes of the decision-making process. Sorry, our “summary” of minutes. In two-and-a-half years from now.

Transparency for the win.

See bit.ly/queenshonoursgame for more details of the sweepstake

School Bulletin



Chestnut Grove Academy pupil Mia Burgess presented with the Accord Inclusivity Award

Academy wins inclusivity award

The Chestnut Grove academy has won this year's Accord Inclusivity Award for the range of religious and social issues taught in RE.

The south London secondary was praised by the judges for providing RE that "covered a range of religious beliefs and humanism, and which simultaneously dealt with many controversial issues, such as sexual diversity, homophobia and gender".

The judges, who included Neil Carmichael, chair of the education select committee, and Sir Anthony Seldon, the former master of Wellington college, said the school also focused on safeguarding issues such as sexual bullying, female

genital mutilation and gang violence.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, chair of the award, said: "Some schools shy away from controversial issues or trends, out of a misplaced sense of not trying to offend or disadvantage any particular group of people. Chestnut Grove shows that schools can explore such topics in ways that are both challenging and thoughtful."

The annual award seeks to highlight schools that "work hardest" at promoting inclusion, equality of opportunity and growth of mutual understanding.

Cale Green primary in Stockport came second; Paddock secondary from Roehampton, south London, third.

Grim Reaper comes second



Arthur Terry School pupils at the "reaper run" challenge

Lucky Arthur Terry school pupils have reaped the rewards of a gruelling physical challenge to raise funds for a trip to help children in South Africa.

During a "reaper run" at a local paintballing park in Coventry, the secondary students battled against obstacles, lots of mud, and even the Grim Reaper himself, who jumped out of bushes and kept the students on their toes.

They tackled more than 40 obstacles along the 10km run, from sliding into lakes to climbing over walls.

Kezia Swanwick, a year 12 student, says: "There were so many obstacles to complete, like running and catching on to a wall, or sliding in to a lake. It was so muddy – I was covered from head to toe.

"If you didn't keep running, you'd have frozen. It took me two and a half hours to finish, but I was the first. It took some people nearly four hours."

The funds raised will sponsor 42 students at the school to travel to South Africa for two weeks in July where they will help out at local primary schools.

Lift-off for horticulture experiment

FEATURED

Hopeful horticulturalists in Wiltshire have launched their own space-related mission by growing seeds that have travelled beyond Earth and back.

Pupils at Bulford St Leonard's primary school are one of up to 10,000 schools to receive a packet of 100 seeds from space.

The children will plant the "out of this world" seeds alongside seeds that have stayed closer to home and measure the differences in growth over several weeks.

It is part of Rocket Science, an educational project launched by the Royal Horticultural Society and the UK Space Agency to promote gardening in schools.

It aims to celebrate British astronaut Tim Peake's mission to the International Space Station (ISS) and "inspire young people to look into careers in science, technology, engineering and maths subjects", including horticulture.

Pupil Jude Ward, 9, says: "Space fascinates me, how on earth do astronauts survive in space? I was definitely excited to be part of this project as we had watched Tim Peake's space walk. It feels like a big responsibility."

In September, 2kg of rocket seeds (a peppery salad leaf) were flown to the ISS on board the Soyuz 44S where they spent several months in microgravity or weightlessness before being sent back to Earth last month.

The ISS, which orbits at about 220 miles



Bulford St Leonard's pupils with the "space" seeds
Inset: Astronaut Tim Peake

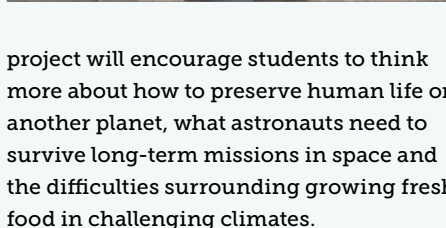
above the Earth, serves as a weightless research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, astronomy, meteorology and other fields.

Kadie Todd, 10, says she was "so excited" when she heard about the project.

"I love science and we have learned about the solar system, plants, life cycles. When I told my family, my brother, who is in year 3, screamed. He was so excited that we were going to actually touch something that had been in space."

Sarah Ward, Bulford's head, says the experiment is an "excellent way of encouraging our children to be curious, think scientifically and share factual information with the whole school".

It is hoped that the nationwide science



project will encourage students to think more about how to preserve human life on another planet, what astronauts need to survive long-term missions in space and the difficulties surrounding growing fresh food in challenging climates.

At a later stage of the experiment, schools will be invited to input their results into a national online database so that results can be compared across the UK.



CREATE A NEW MR MEN CHARACTER

Primary pupils could soon make their own contribution to the iconic Mr Men series while also raising money for charity.

Children with Cancer UK wants them to design a new character and write a new story for the series.

Younger students aged three to six can also take part in a colouring-in challenge.

The sponsored entries will be pored over by the Mr Men designers and Children with Cancer UK team, and the winners will be "brought to life" and featured in the Mr Men Little Miss magazine.

Cliff O'Gorman, chief executive of Children with Cancer UK, says: "Mr Tickle, Little Miss Sunshine, and Mr Bump have been a part of so many people's childhoods, and it is exciting to be able to give a new generation the opportunity to create an inspiring character.

"By taking part in our Mr Men and Little Miss challenges, pupils, parents and teachers can help children today and in the future."

The deadline is August 31 and the winners will be announced on September 15.

Teachers can sign up at www.childrenwithcancer.org.uk/mrmenlittlemiss to receive a challenge pack

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Andrew Jordon has been appointed executive principal of Thorp academy in Gateshead in addition to his current role as head of Dyke House school in Hartlepool.

He will start his dual role in January and says that leading the two schools, both part of the Northern Education Trust (NET), will be a "significant challenge" but one that can prove beneficial.

"At Dyke House we have spent quite a lot of time trying to build a leadership model involving middle and senior leaders that is sustainable so that we have people who can further develop the school without me being in the building all of the time."

Geography will also be a challenge as Thorp is about an hour from Dyke House.

Jordon says there is a "cross fertilisation of ideas" between the two schools, which means they can "lean on each other's strengths" to improve outcomes.

He studied geography at Durham followed by a PGCE.

Sarah Harty is also joining the NET as its new procurement adviser, where she will look after the trust's support services as it grows from its current ten primary and ten secondary schools.

Harty has spent most of her career working



Andrew Jordon



Sarah Harty



Katrina Handford-Smith

in the public sector, including a series of senior roles within various London boroughs, latterly as an assistant director with Wandsworth in south London where she was responsible for managing staff in the capital programme, departmental and schools finance, HR, IT, schools traded services and contracts.

She says her new role will allow her to "build on all my experience to date" although it will be "enormously challenging."

"My short-term goal is to review how all 20 academies are operating now and to better understand the issues involved. With such ambitious future plans, it is essential for the trust to have a procurement strategy in place that supports value for money and quality services for academies."

She read modern history at the University of Oxford.

Katrina Handford-Smith has been appointed as the new deputy head at Nottingham girls' high school.

She takes on the role on from Julie Keller, now the school's headteacher.

Handford-Smith was deputy head of the school's sixth form and pastoral assistant head.

She joined Nottingham from the University of Birmingham where she studied economics and social history, before completing a PGCE and master's in education.

An advocate of single-sex education, she says her priority is to "ensure the happiness and well-being of the girls" and make them "able to compete and succeed in male-dominated professions."

"I have benefited hugely from a single-sex education where I gained confidence and was encouraged to be the best I can be."

"Having experienced first-hand the benefits of an all-girls' environment, I am delighted to be able to offer our girls a similar experience to help them to develop into the leaders of the future."

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

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- **EYFS Class Teacher** at the Rushden Primary Academy in Northamptonshire, closes 7 June 2016 at noon
- **Class Teacher** at the Welland Primary Academy in Peterborough, closes 7 June 2016 at noon

The Greenwood Academies Trust specialises in transforming underperforming schools operating in areas of economic and social disadvantage. We aim to help children realise their full 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 promotion and professional growth.

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Visit our website for a full list of vacancies: www.greenwoodacademies.org/vacancies



Loyauté m'oblige

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

TEACHER OF P.E.

FULL OR PART-TIME

SALARY: MPS + FRINGE

REQUIRED SEPTEMBER 2016

The Role:

- Permanent teaching post
- Ability to teach football, rugby and cricket essential
- Opportunity to join lead school of the Herts & Bucks Teaching School Alliance
- Exceptional student attitude, attainment and achievement
- First class CPD and career development opportunities

TEACHER OF DRAMA

PART-TIME

SALARY: MPS + FRINGE

REQUIRED SEPTEMBER 2016

The Role:

- Temporary teaching post - until 31st August 2017
- Opportunity to join lead school of the Herts & Bucks Teaching School Alliance
- Exceptional student attitude, attainment and achievement
- First class CPD and career development opportunities

FULL JOB DESCRIPTION IS ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE: WWW.STCLEMENTDANES.ORG.UK

Application to be sent to Mrs. J. Price, (HR Admin) by Friday 10th June by 10am. Please include a covering letter, completed teaching staff application form from the school website and include names of two referees.

Interviews week commencing 13th June 2016.

Email: enquiries@stclementdan.es.org.uk

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

Tel. 01923 284169 Fax. 01923 284828

St Clement Danes School

St. Michael's Church School



TEACHER NEEDED

SALARY: NQT/ MPG / LEADERSHIP DEPENDENT ON EXPERIENCE.

LOCATION: SOUTH STANGROUND, PETERBOROUGH

CONTRACT TYPE: FULL TIME | CONTRACT TERM: PERMANENT

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**Are you already, or could you be an outstanding teacher/ leader?
Do you work hard and thrive on a challenge?
If so we really would like to hear from you.**

We are looking for teachers with:

- Excellent classroom practice and a commitment to learning and raising achievement.
- An understanding of how pupils learn and the unique challenges involved in working in a brand new school.
- Energy and ambition.
- Warmth, sensitivity and resilience.

In return we can offer you:

- A brand new, inspiring working environment with excellent resources.
- The opportunity to be involved in shaping and growing an inclusive church school
- The scope to be enterprising, creative and innovative.
- Professional support and development
- Teaching assistant support.
- Dedicated release time.
- Good location for transport links.

Please arrange a convenient time to visit us, meet the children and to discuss the opportunities we have on offer.

Please telephone the school office to arrange a visit.

Mrs P. Nuzzo, Office Manager

01733 306778 | pnuzzo@stmichaelschurchschool.co.uk

To apply please complete the application form and provide a letter to support your application.

Closing date: Wednesday 8th June

Shortlisting: Thursday 9th June

Interviews: Thursday 16th June

*The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children and Young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
An enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure will be sought from the successful candidate.*

PART-TIME TECHNOLOGY TECHNICIAN

SALARY: H3 POINT 14

(£16,231 P.A. + £824 FRINGE ALLOWANCE FULL TIME EQUIVALENT)



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- 20 hours per week - term time only
- Experience of product manufacture and the workshop
- Understanding of Health & Safety requirements in the workshop
- Knowledge of CAD / CAM desirable
- Experience of stock control, ordering and working in a team

Full job description is on the school website: www.stclementdanes.org.uk

Application to be sent to Mrs. J. Price, (HR Admin) by Friday 17th June by 10am. Please include a covering letter, completed teaching staff application form from the school website and include the names of two referees.

INTERVIEW DATES: TO BE CONFIRMED

Website: www.stclementdanes.org.uk

Email: enquiries@stclementdanes.org.uk

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

Tel: 01923 284169

St Clement Danes School

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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.