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SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

FRIDAY, NOV 25, 2016 | EDITION 85

# JAMS: Just About Managing Schools?

**(Sorry, nothing for you)**

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

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## EDITION 85

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## NEWS

## LITTLE IN THE MINI-BUDGET FOR SCHOOLS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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CONTINUED  
FROM FRONT

A £200 million handout for grammar schools has been confirmed in the government's autumn financial statement, but school leaders hoping for additional cash to address "severe funding pressures" have been left empty-handed.

The chancellor, Philip Hammond, announced on Wednesday that a £50 million-a-year capital fund for the expansion of selective schools, a plan announced by the prime minister Theresa May earlier this year, would be allocated from 2017-18 and continue until at least 2021.

In her first months in office the prime minister spoke regularly of helping families struggling just above the breadline. After Wednesday's statement, school leaders said that the first financial statement of her premiership contained little to help those schools which were, to use her phrase, "just-about-managing".

The Institute for Fiscal Studies last year said that schools faced an 8 per cent real-terms cut in funding between now and 2020 because of the additional costs associated with National Insurance and pension changes.

Last month, the government also revealed that about 1,000 local authority-maintained schools and more than 100 academy trusts in England were now in debt.

Heads and teachers say that they might have to cut school hours to cope with the funding shortfall.

Schools are also awaiting the long-overdue second consultation on a national funding formula, which is expected to redistribute cash, but not add any.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was "disappointing" that the autumn statement "failed to address the severe funding pressures in schools and colleges.

"The situation is so serious that some are struggling to deliver a full curriculum, courses are having to be cut and some sixth forms are closing," he said.

"Education is arguably the single most important investment we can make. It provides the country's intellectual infrastructure; the knowledge and skills that will enable us to remain competitive in a global market."

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "The government has the levers to address rising costs, but has again failed to pull them."

A consultation on selection does not end until next month, but the government has re-emphasised its commitment to expand existing grammar schools, eventually lifting the ban on new selective schools that Labour introduced in 1998.

Addressing MPs on Wednesday, Hammond said the government had "raised

standards and expanded opportunity" through its education reforms over the past six years.

"The new capital funding that I have provided today for grammar schools will help to continue that trend."

It is unclear how money from the capital funding pot will be allocated, but the decision to spend it expanding selective schools while non-selective schools faced financial crises was criticised by Lucy Powell, the former shadow education secretary. She accused the prime minister of "abandoning the evidence on what works for social mobility by ploughing extra cash into her pet project", and warned that grammars would "not provide the game-changer we need.

"Rather than waste money on a policy for which there is no evidence, she should instead reallocate this cash to safeguard and expand nursery school provision," she said.

Positive news for schools was sparse elsewhere in the statement.

Although £1 billion of additional funding has been allocated for departmental spending in "priority areas", it is unclear whether the Department for Education will benefit or whether any additional spend will be passed to schools.

The government also announced that the Royal Society of Arts will receive a share of £7.6 million of funding for a pilot to promote cultural education in schools.

## Perry Beeches: from outstanding to inadequate in three years

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

The flagship academy of a scandal-hit trust once lauded by David Cameron has been rated as inadequate, according to a leaked version of a final Ofsted inspection report seen by *Schools Week*.

Perry Beeches the Academy is in "serious decline" with a "dysfunctional" governing body and "inadequate" leadership and management, the report says – with a specific concern that school leaders have been "distracted from the core purpose of the education of young people".

Rated as outstanding in 2013, the Birmingham school was considered a turnaround success for Liam Nolan who established his reputation as a "superhead" before using the school as a springboard to found the Perry Beeches academy trust (PBAT).

PBAT now runs five schools, some of which were praised by former education secretary Michael Gove, who claimed the trust had the "best two schools in Birmingham".

However, the trust's Perry Beeches III free school, opened by Cameron and Gove, was also rated inadequate last year.

Nolan stepped down in May after a government investigation revealed a string of financial breaches, including that he was paid a second salary via a private firm.

A new board of directors was appointed

with talks ongoing about a possible solution, including finding a new academy trust to take over the schools.

Perry Beeches the Academy was still rated "good" for both quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils.

Ofsted's report says: "This is a school in serious decline. The Perry Beeches Academy Trust has not held school leaders to account or challenged areas of weakness.

"As a consequence, previously outstanding standards and provision have not been maintained. The capacity for securing improvements is inadequate."

Inspectors said the local governing body had been "dysfunctional and is currently ineffective" and the school's website did not meet requirements of the funding agreement.

It also said that some younger pupils were not "fully aware of how extremist messages are communicated through social media".

Leaders, governors and staff were criticised for being "distracted from the core purpose" of educating young people.

A new board was appointed after Nolan's resignation, initially led by "Trojan Horse" turnaround head Adrian Packer, plus an executive board, including heads from all the other Perry Beeches schools.

Ofsted said the trust must now ensure all funds were "used appropriately and cost-effectively" after PBAT was ordered to pay back £118,291 of government funding after



Liam Nolan

it was found to have incorrectly recorded the number of pupils eligible for additional funds.

Paul Wheeler, interim chief executive of PBAT, said the trust could not comment on the Ofsted report.

But he said: "The trustees are working closely with the DfE and regional schools commissioner to see if the needs of our students and staff can be best served through rebuilding the capacity at Perry Beeches The Academy trust, or through transferring some or all of the schools to another sponsor or sponsors. This review is still on-going and no decisions have been made. When a decision is made, it will be first communicated to our parents and staff."

The Department for Education did not provide a comment when asked for an update on the PBAT talks.

The Ofsted report is due to be published this month.

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## NEWS

# The new way to join a trust: try before you buy

JOHN DICKENS

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Exclusive

Academy trusts are taking struggling schools on loan for a year as part of a "try before you buy" scheme.

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are being signed up on short-term deals to provide leadership support for schools enduring turbulent times, allowing both parties to scope each other out before a possible takeover.

Speaking at the National Governors' Association (NGA) conference in Manchester on Saturday, schools commissioner Sir David Carter also revealed a desire for more "MAT mergers" in which smaller primary trusts join forces, and "MAT mentors" in which experienced trusts help other schools set up their own trusts.

Robin Hood academy, a new MAT in Birmingham, has signed a one-year service level agreement to provide leadership support to stabilise a maintained school in the city in danger of an Ofsted rating of requires improvement or inadequate.

The trust was signed up by the Birmingham Education Partnership, a headteacher-led school improvement organisation.

Steve Taylor, executive head at Robin Hood, said the one-year deal could provide stability, but also allow the school to sound

out a formal partnership with his trust.

"It provides a transparent way of working that allows the impact of what has been done to be measured before a commitment is made. It also allows the MAT to carry out a very thorough due diligence."

Schools pay Robin Hood for their support, which could involve providing a head, subject leadership or financial support. The deals include a termination clause for both parties.

Taylor said his trust had supported about four schools under such agreements and that he had heard of other MATs involved in similar deals.

While the MAT would now move towards schools formally joining it, Taylor said trust leaders have seen the benefit of continuing the short-term deals to support schools that needed help "but are not yet ready to commit to a formal partnership". Carter also seemed to favour such arrangements.

He pointed to Outwood Grange trust, labelled a "top-performing" sponsor by the government, sending its deputy chief executive Paul Tarn to lead the struggling School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA) in March.

Carter said he didn't want to disrupt SPTA "any more than we had to". Another option would have been for Outwood Grange to take on SPTA'S 30-plus schools, but that would have impacted its own performance.



"SPTA is now thriving. Having a strategy that says 'let's get people rather than a trust in' is a way to do that. Some will work, some won't." He was now trying to find "levers" to drive collaboration between MATs.

He suggested more mergers between small primary trusts and plans to encourage large trusts to mentor schools setting up their own multi-academy trusts.

He said trusts with three years of experience and at least five schools, could loan trustees or leadership staff, potentially on a commercial basis.

Education Secretary Justine Greening

recently rowed back on an ambition for all schools to become academies by 2022.

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governors' Association, renamed at the conference as the National Governance Association, said this might be the start of more informal agreements.

"People are not going to jump into organisations that they know nothing about. But if you trust the people and see how they work – it's a helpful precursor to becoming part of one trust. I encourage people to do that sort of thing if the need arises."

## Panel reconsiders Shuter's teaching ban

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

A government disciplinary panel will meet today to decide whether to overturn a teaching ban on a "superhead" once dubbed a favourite of former prime minister Tony Blair.

Jo Shuter was banned from teaching for life in 2014 after a misconduct hearing into expenses she claimed while head at Quintin Kynaston school, in northwest London.

Shuter admitted claiming about £7,000 from the school for her 50th birthday party and charging for furniture worth £1,500 delivered to her home.

But the Department for Education (DfE) reversed the ban in November 2014, allowing Shuter to appeal the order after two years.

A National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) professional conduct hearing will now consider setting aside its original ban.

The hearing raises wider questions about the fairness of the NCTL disciplinary process in a changing education system.

Speaking after a government investigation into the expenses, Shuter told the *Evening Standard* in London that she was sorry and that she had made "really stupid mistakes".

But Shuter, secondary head of the year in the 2007 Teaching Awards and later appointed CBE for her services to education, said the findings mostly related to her strategic responsibility as the academy's accounting officer.



"Nobody ever spelled out my financial responsibilities. When I was interviewed for the job in 2001 I told the governors that financial management was not my strength. The nature of headship has changed and now requires a thorough understanding of financial and HR management systems."

It is also not clear what roles fall under the NCTL's disciplinary process. The Department for Education (DfE) confirmed that academy chief executives are exempt.

It said that banned teachers could also work as academy chief executives – it was up to schools to decide.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said this was "an anomaly and perhaps one for chief executives themselves to reflect on."

"Are they frontline educational leaders or middle-tier administrators? If the former, then perhaps they should welcome being regulated in the same way as other front-line professionals – it would set a clear marker on their standing and status."

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## NEWS

# Behaviour experiments unveiled

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The team behind David Cameron's controversial "behavioural insights" unit has told school leaders how they can use letters, texts – and coffee – to "nudge" pupil behaviour.

Behavioural Insights (BIT), a company partly owned by the Cabinet Office that researches the impact of small changes on people's choices, this week shared its annual report with an education audience.

At a central London seminar, Raj Chande, an economist and head of schools and early years at BIT, laid out five "insights" from experiments run or studied by the company.

**1. For unhealthy pupils** Making sugary drinks a "bit harder to reach" on a high shelf reduced consumption by 28 per cent in one trial. Most participants said they did not notice the change. In the case of school canteens, making junk food the last choice could have a similar effect.

**2. For demotivated pupils** People often respond if forced to recognise someone else has personally put in "effort" for them, Chande said. Unemployed people reminded by the job centre about an interview by text were 17 per cent more likely to go when the message included their first name, the first name of a job centre staff member, and the words "I booked you a space". Chande said that knowing the lengths that teachers went to for them could be a powerful motivator for pupils.



**3. For bunking pupils** A letter home stating the number of learning hours missed, compared with everyone else, proved effective during a trial at Bridge academy in Hackney, east London, said principal Chris Brown. Chande said the key was to compare the individual to the group they identified with.

**4. For pupil conversations with parents** BIT trialled "conversation prompter" texts home to parents once a week such as "Ask Anita why you can't hear a scream in space". More than half of pupils said they wanted it continued – showing "deep down, kids want their parents to ask and care", Chande said.

**5. For staff who don't want to give up their lunch breaks** Bridge moved coffee and biscuits for staff on to the top floors, where there were discipline issues. Rather than change staff timetables, pupils now all headed down to the playground to avoid being told off. "Both pupils and staff are happy, and it was a tiny change," Brown said.

But while these subtle "nudging" techniques had disproportionate effects, they also had to be embedded within other structures, he said.

"The thing with nudging is you can often avoid the structural change by doing the nudge. Not just discipline issues, but also, for

example, new teaching methods.

"Clearly, though, there are some things that nudging won't move. You use it as a sweep of interventions, you can't rely just on that on its own. A follow-up needs to happen."

Some educators listening to speakers from BIT, which is also partly owned by the charity Nesta, were doubtful about the effectiveness of such interventions.

"Isn't there a risk of a 'fade-out effect' for these interventions? I know when I get letters from charities with my name on, it makes a difference to start with, and after that I ignore it. Couldn't the same happen here?" said one delegate.

## School leaders' training groups join forces

Two education charities providing training courses to develop future school leaders have merged and rebranded as Ambition School Leadership.

Teaching Leaders and The Future Leaders Trust (TFLT) will now be run by one organisation led by James Toop, the former chief executive of Teaching Leaders.

Toop said the new organisation would combine the "middle leadership expertise" of Teaching Leaders with the "headship and executive leadership specialism" of TFLT to create a "seamless leadership development journey" for teachers.

To mark the launch, Ambition School Leadership released new research showing how disadvantaged pupils fell behind academically by up to two years in "social opportunity" areas, identified by the government as areas of low social mobility and targeted with £60 million of investment.

It also showed schools in these areas were more likely to decline in their Ofsted rating for leadership and management between 2010 and March this year.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the research was a "significant blow to the education strategy of the past few years" and should prompt the government to deliver "well planned, targeted investment" in leadership.

School minister Nick Gibb welcomed the merger and said the report underlined the need to focus the government's efforts in the "opportunity areas".

Teaching Leaders and The Future Leaders Trust have trained more than 3,500 school leaders as separate organisations.

## DfE told it must release grammar expansion proposal

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Ministers have been rapped for misinterpreting a "specific and clear" request to access a grammar school expansion application – a ploy that critics say averted a legal challenge to the new site.

The Department for Education has now been ordered to release a proposal submitted by Weald of Kent grammar school to open an annexe seven miles away in Sevenoaks.

The landmark application – for the first "new" grammar school in 50 years – was approved by former education secretary Nicky Morgan last year.

However, the government refused a Freedom of Information request on the plan, which campaigners say stopped them scrutinising the document and left them unable to pursue a judicial review on whether the government's decision to grant the approval was illegal or not.

The Information Commissioner's Office has now said the document must be published by mid-December.

Jo Bartley, from anti-selection campaign group Kent Education Network, said releasing the information meant campaigners could ensure Weald of Kent "sticks to the plan agreed".

"The government wants more grammar

schools to expand, and while I do not feel there is a need for this, if it does happen there should be openness with the plans and full consultation with local communities."

Alun Johnson, ICO senior case officer, said that releasing the information would help "to reassure the public it is an appropriate expansion", and would help groups planning similar expansions.

Schools Week has reported that at least ten selective areas were preparing expansion applications – before Theresa May announced plans to scrap the laws banning new selective schools.

The DfE argued that releasing the information would risk increased media scrutiny and would divert the school's attention from its core business of improving life chances for pupils.

It also argued that it would inhibit the "free exchange of views and advice", but the transparency regulator said the approval process had already ended before the FOI request was lodged.

The ICO also delivered a forthright verdict on the department's behaviour. The person who lodged the FOI request, who is not named, asked in October last year



Jo Bartley

specifically for the "proposal" submitted by the grammar school, for both the recent approval and an older application that was turned down in 2013.

However, the department interpreted "proposal" as the business case, plus additional information it had produced.

The ICO said there was no evidence to substantiate the view that the request encompassed additional information. "It is the view of the commissioner that there is nothing in the requests themselves – for example, the inclusion of any vague or indeterminate terms – that would indicate that they should be given a wider interpretation."

The DfE refusal meant the FOI requestor had to push for a review of the decision: a drawn-out process during which the three-month time limit on judicial reviews expired.

Bartley added the "secrecy meant no one could make a strong legal case and question whether this was actually a new grammar school".

A DfE spokesperson said: "We are considering the ICO's ruling and will respond accordingly."



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## NEWS

## WE CAN PICK OUT THE BOGUS RESPONSES, SAYS DFE

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Investigates

The government has insisted safeguards are in place to deal with bogus replies to its grammar school consultation after a campaigner successfully submitted a response from "Ebenezer Scrooge".

In a blog published by the Local Schools Network, schools campaigner Janet Downs said she used fake names to complete the government's survey on new grammars.

*Schools Week* revealed last week that the education department had created a shorter, eight-question online survey to encourage parents to take part.

Despite using the name Ebenezer Scrooge and answering none of the questions, Downs was given a reference number for her submission and told that it would form part of the government's consultation results.

She then submitted a second response, using another made-up name, from the same computer. It was also accepted.

She said any consultation that "makes it so easy to submit multiple responses that are not genuine is suspect".

However a spokesperson for the Department for Education (DfE) told *Schools Week*: "As with any government consultation there are a range of measures in place to identify responses that are not genuine."

The spokesperson did not provide further specifics about the safeguards.

But previous examples show the department looks carefully at responses.

Lord Nash, academies minister, speaking during a hearing on proposed independent school standards in 2014, said the department received 1,500 responses to its consultation.

However, after "analysing those quite carefully", it found 900 had come from a Christian co-operative organisation, all making the same point about same-sex marriage.

Nash said this sort of context was taken into account before the government responded to the consultation.

*Schools Week* reported last week that the grammar school survey, hosted on a No 10 webpage, appears to flout government guidelines on consultations.

For instance, it uses leading questions to highlight the positive aspects of reintroducing grammars, but does not highlight possible negative impacts.

The survey was also included in a tweet from the DfE's official account, which was found to have misrepresented statistics over pupil performance in grammar schools.

The UK Statistics Authority said it was "disappointed" with the tweet. The department, however, said it was sent by error and swiftly deleted it.

Since then it has faced more criticism for new tweets that link to the survey.

One read: "Selective schools are almost 50 per cent more popular than non-selective schools."

Conservative peer Lord Lucas said the tweet was "untruthful, misleading and a stain on your reputation".

The DfE spokesperson said: "We are consulting on proposals to create more good school places for everyone not just the privileged few... We would urge everyone to look at the detail in the consultation document and join that debate."

## Interim board steps in to troubled free school

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

A troubled free school has an "unusual" interim management structure in place as a takeover looms, although both the school and the government are refusing to take responsibility for setting it up.

Three education experts have been called in to join an interim academy board (IAB) at Parkfield school, in Bournemouth, to help to steer it through a takeover, despite the school opening just three years ago.

The school has been beset with problems, including the discovery of a credible bomb threat and bats at a planned future site. Test results have also been poor.

The IAB will make decisions using delegated powers from the current governing body, which has been temporarily put on hold.

A governance expert has questioned the "unusual" arrangement; former governors or trustees are normally discharged so an IAB can take over.

But when asked for clarification over who called in the board, the school and the Department for Education (DfE) blamed each other.

Graham Exon, IAB chair and a national leader of governance, said the board membership was agreed by Rebecca Clark, schools commissioner for the south west of England, following advice from the DfE.

However, a DfE spokesperson said the decision was "made by

Parkfield school and we hope it will drive up standards".

The IAB will provide support on governance, education and leadership, although the former governing body is still in place, with minutes showing its meetings will be suspended while the IAB makes decisions.

The IAB will provide monthly reports to the regional schools commissioner, minutes show, and it has already agreed a recommendation for a new sponsor and appointed a new interim headteacher, Alex Prout.

Gillian Allcroft, deputy chief executive of the National Governance Association, said interim boards often drove rapid improvement, but said it was "highly unusual" for a single academy trust, such as Parkfield, to delegate all the powers of its trustees to a new committee.

However, Exon said that the IAB membership was agreed by the RSC and, following advice from the DfE, "Parkfield's governors delegated their powers to this board.

"Governors are still in position as directors and the chair is a member of the IAB."

But the DfE said the decision to create the IAB was made by the school and insisted it would be wrong to report otherwise.

"Underperformance at any school is



Parkfield school site

unacceptable and one of the many strengths of the free school programme is that action can be taken quickly to tackle poor performance," said a spokesperson.

A letter sent to parents in August said the school was disappointed at recent key stage 2 results and decided "the best way to improve standards of education for next year is to appoint a group of education experts to direct improvements".

The letter, signed by Exon and chair of governors Matt Clarkson, said delays moving to a new site had made the "creation of a dynamic and engaging learning environment more difficult".

Parkfield has been based in a former office block in Bournemouth town centre since 2013. Its plan to move to its permanent home, a former national air traffic control training centre next to Bournemouth airport, have been beset by delays.

According to board minutes, the move will now happen at Easter.

## GCSE resit changes cost schools £6m

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Investigates

Schools and colleges have lost almost £6 million in funding this year as a result of new rules around GCSE English and maths resits.

More than £5.9 million of "adjustments" have been made to this year's funding allocations in more than 290 schools, sixth-form colleges and university technical colleges, with some losing six-figure sums.

Under the government's new study programmes, schools can lose half their per-pupil funding for every individual without a pass in GCSE English or maths who does not continue studying the subjects when in post-16 study.

The requirement has been in place since 2014, but adjustments are made in the year following any breach of the condition, meaning this is the first year schools have seen an impact on their budgets.

Schools are required to record information such as exemptions to the GCSE English and maths rule as part of the school census data collection, but Paul Hanks, a sixth-form funding expert who runs consultancy Pro16 Plus, claimed many were failing to do so despite correct training in place.

"The tragedy of this issue is, based on

my experience of the data we have looked at from sixth forms across the country is that most do, in fact, deliver English and maths qualifications.

The issue is more one of recording the data rather than not delivering," he told *Schools Week*.

"In the past year we have been told by [some] sixth forms that they do not record any level 2 qualifications, GCSEs or any November resits."

The amount of money lost depends on how many pupils a school is expected to enrol on English or maths courses.

Swindon academy, which according to government documents did not meet funding conditions for 185 of its pupils, has lost £317,984, while Nottingham academy lost £198,255 for 117 pupils.

Others with large losses include Sedgehill school in south London, down £196,690, and The Oxford academy, which lost £138,658.

Others have already questioned the drop in their funding and challenged the government to rectify the issue.

Last week, the *Telegraph* and *Argus* in Bradford reported that local schools Hanson

SWINDON ACADEMY	£317,984
NOTTINGHAM ACADEMY	£198,255
SEDGEHILL SCHOOL, LEWISHAM	£196,690
THE OXFORD ACADEMY	£138,658

academy and Tong high school blamed an administrative error for their combined loss of almost £190,000, while Buttershaw business and enterprise college said it did not have any pupils in need of resits, despite losing £38,398.

Bradford council told the *Argus* there was a "nationwide issue" with the funding.

Hanks warned that the relationship between census data and funding "often slips from the view of very busy school staff". Sixth forms also often did not have someone to review census data with an eye to the impact on funding and the funding formula.

A government spokesperson said: "The rules are clear that Education Funding Agency funding is subject to schools providing English and maths tuition up to and including GCSE level. This has been a requirement since 2014. We regularly remind the post-16 sector, including schools, of these requirements."

## NEWS

## Second go at attracting teacher returners

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

## Investigates

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) has launched another pilot to try to encourage qualified teachers back to the classroom – with the biggest financial rewards going to schools employing part-time or “flexible-working” returners.

Last year, schools were offered a “support package” of £1,900 to aid qualified teachers not currently in the classroom to return and teach one of eight “core” subjects. The schools only received the money if the teacher gained employment, either at the school or at another after it had helped to retrain them.

The Department for Education (DfE) has now launched a second pilot, this time offering up to £5,000 and focusing on just two regions and three subjects.

Aimed at the south-east and north-west, £2,500 will be made available for School Direct lead schools, multi-academy trusts and other institutions to retrain maths, physics and languages teachers only. The pilots begin in February and May next year.

The teachers will be given two to four weeks’ training before any offer of employment, according to the DfE’s newly released guidance.

Schools will receive a further £1,500 if

the returner teacher is then employed, and those in the south-east will also receive “up to £1,500” for every teacher returned on a part-time or flexible basis.

The guidance document states: “Many returners wish to return on a part-time, flexible or job share basis, and this has shown to be one of the most significant barriers for teachers wishing to return to the profession.”

Sir Andrew Carter, chair of the independent review of initial teacher training, said school leaders needed to stop “devaluing” part-time workers.

“Lots of schools don’t like the idea of part-time work, particularly secondary schools.

“I think part-timers are full-timers on their way. It’s a great way to get back in.”

About 335,000 qualified teachers in England are not currently “in service”, according to the DfE guidance – fewer than the 337,600 in 2013. About 2,370 more qualified teachers came back to the classroom in 2015 than in 2011, according to the guidance.

However, critics say the government should focus on the retention of current staff, rather than those who have already left.

James Noble-Rogers (pictured), executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), said teacher supply problems would be better solved through “financial incentives and the provision of effective CPD” for those already in the classroom.

Returner teachers can apply to the NCTL website and are evaluated by a “return to teaching adviser”, before being interviewed by a school on the pilot with a view to employing them.

They can also receive “up to £600” for the month-long course, or £150 a week, to cover childcare costs and time taken off work, said the guidance.

Late joiners are also the target of Now Teach, a scheme launched by 57-year-old journalist Lucy Kellaway who will leave her *Financial Times* job after 31 years to become a maths teacher. In its pilot year the programme will look for people in their forties and fifties who have never previously taught, and help to train them on-the-job.



Interview with Lucy Kellaway, page 16

## ‘Bleak’ picture continues for teacher supply

Teacher supply has not improved in schools for a third consecutive year, says headteachers.

A survey of 1,094 school leaders by the National Association of Head Teachers has revealed a “bleak picture” in which schools are unable to recruit at all in an average of 17 per cent of their advertised posts, rising to 23 per cent for special needs co-ordinator vacancies.

Among the respondents, 92 per cent of them from primary schools, the feeling that school budgets are to blame rose from 9 per cent last year to 22 per cent this year.

The union’s general secretary Russell Hobby said poor retention was “exacerbating” the problem, with heads increasingly reporting the shortage of teachers left them struggling.

The association’s call for a review of teacher pay was met by a government response that it was investing more than £1.3 billion over this parliament to attract “the brightest and best” into teaching.

“We are also working with the sector to tackle issues teachers tell us are most likely to lead them to consider leaving, such as unnecessary workload and poor pupil behaviour,” a spokesperson said.

The research showed only a slight disparity in recruitment problems between maintained schools and academies, despite government claims that pay flexibility in academies would help the hiring of staff.

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## NEWS

## NORTHERN STRATEGY AT ODDS WITH RESEARCH

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

### Investigates

A government adviser has claimed that accelerating the growth of multi-academy trusts will boost standards in the north, despite the research supporting his report saying that school structures don't make much difference.

The government published the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy this week, an independent review of standards in northern classrooms by Sir Nick Weller, chief executive of Dixons Academies trust.

The strategy called for a pilot "Teach North" scheme to recruit high-quality teachers and for schools to prove progress over three years before being allowed to convert into a standalone academy.

Weller said the academies movement had progressed "more slowly" in the north, adding that accelerating the growth of multi-academy trusts was the key to driving up standards.

However, the research that his report was based on, also published on Wednesday, cited numerous data publications that suggested school type did not appear to be a factor affecting school performance.

The research report, *Education in the North of England*, said: "There is a substantial variation in school performance between different local authorities which, in the research we have reviewed, is not explained by their rate of academisation."

Yet Weller said academy sponsorship was an important school improvement mechanism that "in my experience, enables outstanding headteachers to make a difference in more than one school".

He said that schools should only be able to convert into a standalone academy trust if they were rated good or outstanding or could prove progress over three years. All other schools that converted should join established multi-academy trusts (MATs).

He also said governing boards of current standalone trusts should consider mergers to form "more sustainable" MATs.

In response to recruitment issues, Weller recommended piloting a "Teach North" scheme that could "attract and retain" talented newly qualified teachers to disadvantaged schools.

Mike Parker, the director of Schools North East, said the problem of getting the best teachers into more challenging schools was "not new", and that organisations such as Teach First already did such work.

"It isn't clear how a Teach North initiative would be different from Teach First. The strategy also doesn't identify how to incentivise teachers to stay, particularly in more remote or disadvantaged communities."

The government, in a short response to the strategy published by the Treasury, committed to "design, fund and test" different approaches – such as effective professional development – to attract high-quality teachers.

## School cancels Trump supporter's speech

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

A teaching union is drafting new guidance for teachers and leaders on extremism after a Kent school cancelled a speech by an alumnus with extreme right-wing views.

Simon Langton grammar school for boys in Canterbury announced on Monday that it was ditching a talk by former pupil Milo Yiannopoulos following threats of protests and a call from the Department for Education's counter-extremism unit.

Yiannopoulos, a Donald Trump supporter and senior editor of right-wing news website Breitbart, has called the gender pay gap a "conspiracy", admits he "delights in offending people" and describes feminism as "cancer".

The former pupil was due to address sixth formers on Tuesday, but despite interest from more than 220 pupils, the school cancelled the event following talks with officials.

Criticism of that decision has led to calls for clearer guidance for leaders, with one union, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), working on fresh advice for its members.

Under Prevent, schools must carry out a risk assessment before allowing any speaker to address pupils, but government guidance is vague on how schools should



carry that out.

Anna Cole, a parliamentary specialist at ASCL, said there was a "growing need" for more detailed help.

Schools should evaluate "whether they are going to breach any legislation around inciting hatred or violence, and whether the school can keep children safe", including whether protest activity might be a security concern.

It follows a *Sunday Times* revelation that referrals relating to far-right extremism made under Prevent increased 74 per cent from 323 in 2014-15 to 561 in 2015-16, with more than half of cases involving under-18s.

Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said she would defend "to the death" the right of speakers such as Yiannopoulos to express their opinions, but said schools had a "particular" duty of care when it came to

exposure of pupils to extreme views.

"I do think there is an issue with him," she said. "This is somebody who says interest groups such as feminism and Black Lives Matter deal with feelings rather than facts."

"School is a place where pupils have a right to feel safe. They don't have a choice about being there and schools have a duty over what they are exposed to."

Simon Langton's head, Matthew Baxter, said the decision to cancel was made following contact from the counter-extremism unit, the threat of demonstrations at the school and "our overall concerns for the security of the school site and the safety of our community".

He told *The Kent Gazette* that the school remained committed to the "principle of free speech and open debate and will resist, where possible, all forms of censorship".

In a statement, Yiannopoulos questioned the reasons for the department's counter-extremism unit, claiming he was being punished for having the "wrong opinions".

The government insisted its call to Simon Langton was a "matter of routine" following public concern over the speech and was intended to check the school had "considered any potential issues", a spokesperson said.

"The decision to cancel the event was a matter for the school."

## Performance dips fail to change Ofsted grades

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted has promoted more than one in ten "good" secondary schools to outstanding, despite a "significant deterioration" in academic performance, a new analysis reveals.

Research by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), published on Tuesday, found large numbers of schools kept their positive Ofsted grades, despite lower results.

The analysis of Ofsted reports issued between 2005 and 2015 found almost two-fifths of good-rated secondary schools stalled in their academic performance between inspections, yet remained at the grade, while 11 per cent were promoted to outstanding.

The institute looked at the Ofsted inspection judgments of 1,221 primary schools and 228 secondary schools whose value-added progress decreased by an average of 15 percentiles per year and concluded that the watchdog "may not have been as effective at consistent recognition of deterioration in academic performance as it has been in the regularity of school inspections".

Ofsted said judgments were based on a wealth of evidence not just data, and insisted inspectors did not automatically mark down schools for a "sudden decline in a single performance measure". A spokesperson said the watchdog planned to dispute some of the EPI findings.

Union officials say inspections need to be



overhauled. Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said Ofsted needed to "address its apparent failure to spot the decline in academic performance in schools that have previously been rated good or outstanding".

The research found that a third of the 64 primary schools whose performance deteriorated substantially after they were given an outstanding kept their grade at their next inspection.

They were only fractionally more likely to be downgraded than schools where academic performance held up, the report said.

At the same time, more than two-thirds

of the 406 primary schools originally rated good, whose performance deteriorated substantially, were not downgraded. Sixty-four per cent remained "good", while 7 per cent had their ratings raised to outstanding.

Of the 47 good secondary schools whose performance deteriorated, 38 per cent kept their grade at the next inspection, while 11 per cent became outstanding.

Jo Hutchinson, the report's author, told *Schools Week* that Ofsted needed to focus more on progress measures.

"The value-added progress measure is probably the single best measure you could use," she said.

"Policy will shift more in that direction over the time, particularly with the introduction of Progress 8 at secondary level, but I don't think we can necessarily assume that will fix this problem."

David Laws, executive director of the EPI and former schools minister, said it was important to understand why Ofsted was not picking up sharp declines in performance.

But a spokesperson for the inspectorate said: "Inspectors use their professional judgment to look at performance over time, the progress being made by pupils currently in a school and the effectiveness of leadership and management."

"That means we would not automatically mark down a school for a 'sudden decline' in a single performance measure in a single year, as this report seems to suggest we should, if other evidence shows a school remains good or outstanding overall."

## NEWS

# The hidden world of APPGs

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Investigates

**In a second look at all-party parliamentary groups (APPGs), Schools Week gives a further taste of their varying influences on government policy**

APPGs seek to debate and bring about government policy change – with several of the education-centred APPGs managing to change the curriculum or prevent subjects being dropped.

Nineteen of the informal groups, run for members of the Houses of Commons and Lords, but often involving outside organisations and individuals, relate to schools. They range from food to nursery classes, and are run by an administrative organisation known as a secretariat, which may set up meetings and run research.

The secretariats, often a charity or industry body with shared interests, cover the costs of APPG work through wider fundraising, contracts or membership fees.

The groups vary widely in their approach to changing policy.

For instance, the maths and numeracy APPG has published research, while the modern languages group prefers to debate external reports – but in most cases the work of members is tightly bound up with their secretariat.

Modern languages is “formally independent of the British Council [its secretariat], and reaches its own decisions on policy issues”, according to

its spokesperson. Others are clear that their secretariat – such as literacy charity Dyslexia Action for the Dyslexia APPG – produce reports for the group and place experts from the charity on parliamentary committees.

Yet a secretariat can be removed if it is considered to be no longer in line with the direction of the APPG, according to Stephen Lloyd, a former Liberal Democrat MP and founder of the religious education APPG.

Lloyd claimed in a blog that the RE Council was sacked as secretariat after it took a more “fundamentalist” approach.

He said it had been removed to “specifically exclude the teaching of values of people with no faith”. The group does not now have a secretariat.

When asked to respond to the blog, Fiona Bruce MP, chair of the APPG, said the group was committed to challenging the government to “meet the needs of today through the positive and proactive use of modern religious education, whilst always upholding the right of everyone to hold, maintain or indeed change their individual beliefs – whether of any faith or none”.

A spokesperson for the education APPG said its policy approach was focused on gaining an audience with government figures such as schools minister Nick Gibb and schools commissioner Sir David Carter.

The nursery school and nursery classes APPG said ministers did listen, claiming their work had contributed to a recent government decision to hand £55 million

extra funding to nurseries.

But other groups sidestep ministers. The education governance and leadership APPG appeals more directly to schools, with publications such as 20 Key Questions for School Governing Boards and 21 Key Questions for Multi-Academy Trust Boards.

## APPG Highlights:

### Education APPG

The Education APPG was formed several years ago because politicians felt there wasn't a “broader brush approach to education policy”.

Its secretariat is PR and political consultancy firm Ranelagh Political Communications, one of the only private firms to hold a secretariat role.

The estimated cost of organising meetings, writing them up and running the annual general meeting is the second-highest amongst education APPGs, at between £22,501 and £24,000.

Costs are met by the British Educational Suppliers Association, a trade organisation for businesses that sell equipment and services to schools.

### Art, craft and design APPG

The group has written two reports over the past four years. It also recently joined with other APPGs, including those on music and dance, to host an event on a broad and balanced curriculum and promote the arts.

Estimated costs to its secretariat, the

National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), are £3,000 in staff time and £1,000 in travel.

The APPG said it has helped to review and achieve separate discount codes for GCSE art and design and GCSE photography so pupils can easily take both subjects.

### Modern languages APPG

Rather than producing full reports based on research, this APPG tends to publish position statements, with support from its secretariat, the British Council.

Manifesto for Languages, published in July 2014, criticised language learning as “being the preserve of an intellectual or affluent elite”, while a post-Brexit document warned of the impact on language teaching.

The group meets six times a year, with officers speaking to ministers afterwards.

### Dyslexia APPG

The group helped create the two-year No to Failure project, a scheme to support pupils with dyslexia launched in 2009.

Unlike some other groups, the APPG distinguishes between its own activities and that of its secretariat, the charity Dyslexia Action.

Dyslexia Action's head of research, John Rack, was on the expert advisory committee as part of the Rose report into teaching of early reading in 2009.

The charity also supported MP Sharon Hodgson with her successful SEN information bill.

APPG	Setup	Value of Benefits	Secretariat	Description of secretariat	Reports published/activities	Secretariat funded by
Education	2010	£22,501 - £24,000	Ranelagh International	Public affairs consultancy on politics and parliament	1. Report of the Inquiry into Overcoming the Barriers to Literacy (2011) Speakers and awareness-raising activities	British Educational Suppliers Association
Modern Languages	2008	£10,501 - £12,000	British Council	Charity and public body which promotes cultural	1. Manifesto for Languages (July 2014) 2. Brexit and Languages: A Checklist for Government negotiators and officials (October 2016) 3. Contributed to government review of national curriculum	Projects, education and development contracts - with 18 per cent of funding from government
Maths and Numeracy	2014	£4,501 - £6,000	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales	Industry organisation for finance and accountancy	1. Maths and Numeracy in the Early Years (2014) 2. Session report on Mathematics in primary and secondary education	Membership fees
		£3,001 - £4,500	National Numeracy	Charity to raise standards of numeracy in children		Charitable trusts and foundations
Nursery School and Nursery Classes	2015	£3,001 - £4,500	Pen Green Research Base	A research centre into early years originally chosen by DfE to raise standards in EY settings	Awareness-raising activities	Fundraising from various sources and donors
Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties	2007	£3,001 - £4,500	Dyslexia Action	Charity that supports children and adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties	1. Dyslexia Still Matters (2012) 2. The Incidence of Hidden Disabilities in the Prison Population (2005) 3. Review of research on effective intervention (2005) 4. The Study of Dyslexia (2005) 5. Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties: Policy and Practice review	Variety of trusts and funds, and sale of education products and training provision
School Food	2010	£3,001 - £4,500	Association for Public Service Excellence	Not-for-profit local government body working with over 300 councils	1. Packed lunches position paper Awareness-raising activities	Membership subscription fees
14 to 19 Education	2016	£1,501 - £3,000	Edge Foundation	Independent education foundation which promotes technical and professional education	Meetings	Endowment fund
Art, Craft and Design in Education	2012	£1,501 - £3,000	National Society for Education in Art & Design	Professional association and independent trade union	1. The National Society for Education in Art and Design Survey Report 2015 - 20162. Art, Craft and Design Educator Survey Report 2014	Membership fees to NSEAD
Education Governance and leadership	2011	£0	National Governors' Association	Charity supporting governors and trustees in maintained schools and academies	1. 20 Key Questions for School Governing Boards (2012) 2. 20 Key Questions for School Governing Boards, updated (2014) 3. 21 Key Questions for Multi Academy Trust Boards (2015)	Membership fees to NGA

## NEWS

# Academy financial notices hit record high

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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The number of academy trusts issued government warnings for financial mismanagement has increased more than 250 per cent in a year, calling into question the sustainability of academy finances.

Government data published last week reveals 25 financial notices to improve have been issued to trusts this year, compared with seven in 2015.

The government also revealed that 25 schools in seven trusts had to be switched to a new trust after financial mismanagement.

A series of high-profile investigations involving chains previously praised by ministers, such as Durand, in south London, and Perry Beeches, in Birmingham, have brought the issue to prominence.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "The record number of financial notices to improve is cause for serious concern.

"The current system is a headlong plunge into the unknown: falling budgets, limited oversight and growing challenge make for a toxic environment. We should pause and reflect on how to offer better support and structure to schools."

However, the government will point to the growing number of financial investigations as proof it is on top of overseeing academies.



Financial notices to improve, or "FNTIs", are issued by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to academy trusts that have breached rules set out in the academies financial handbook.

Such notices restrict a trust's spending. It must also meet certain conditions to keep its funding.

Responding to a written question from the Labour MP Jess Phillips, children's minister Edward Timpson said the removal of schools from some trusts was "for a range of educational, financial and governance reasons" and "cannot be attributed solely to an FNTI having been issued".

Recipients of FNTIs this year include the Oldershaw academy trust, in the Wirral, which

was told in February that it must achieve an in-year surplus by next March after it asked the government for money to balance its budget.

In March, Bright Futures, the sponsor of nine schools in the north west, was told it must improve its "weak financial position and financial management" or face closure.

And in March, a notice was issued to the Perry Beeches trust after an investigation found it had given more than £1 million to a private company that then paid a "second salary" to the trust's "super head" Liam Nolan.

But not all trusts that break rules receive notices. Earlier this month it was revealed that Bright Tribe, a "top-performing" trust given government cash to drive up standards in northern schools, would not be subject to a FNTI – despite having breached rules over payments to trustees.

But some trusts have criticised the conditions set by the government.

Dame Dana Ross-Wawrzynski (pictured), about to retire as chief executive of Bright Futures, last month attacked the government's own financial management, telling a London event that there was "not enough money in the system" and accusing the EFA of trying to cover up information about its own spending.

The EFA also has its own gripes. Chief executive Peter Lauener said he was "not happy" with the length of time it has

taken for the government to intervene in some academy trusts.

Giving evidence to the public accounts committee in October, he highlighted Durand – which has been told its funding agreement will be terminated after it was issued with an FNTI last year – as an example.

He blamed the delay on the "failure" of the trust to "produce adequate responses" to various government warnings.

Durand has vowed to fight the termination notice in court.

A Department for Education spokesperson said fewer than 1 per cent of trusts were issued with a financial notice this year. "Academies operate under a robust system of oversight and accountability, and we will not hesitate to investigate and take action where concerns are identified."



Russell Hobby



## Barber to leave Pearson

Sir Michael Barber is stepping down as chief education adviser to Pearson.

Barber (pictured), who led Pearson's research on education policy and advised on education strategy in the developing world, will leave next year. He joined the company in 2011.

A former partner at McKinsey and adviser to Tony Blair, Barber was described by Pearson chief executive John Fallon as having been "at the forefront of global thinking in education for the past 20 years".

Barber said his recent 60th birthday has prompted his decision to "transition out" of the company and to move his focus to "helping governments be more effective at delivering outcomes for citizens".

He rose to prominence as a chief adviser on school standards during David Blunkett's tenure as education secretary in the late 1990s.

He later moved to working directly for the prime minister in his Delivery Unit, and became famous for co-inventing "deliverology" – an initiative for governments to implement change using targets, data and accountability, which had a significant impact on the schools landscape.

Fallon said: "We're very grateful for the expertise he has shared with Pearson and our partners as we continue to work to improve access and outcomes in education.

"Michael has brought to Pearson innovative and rigorous thinking on education technology, the future of assessment and teaching, and low cost education in the developing world among other topics. Most importantly, he has helped to put efficacy and the science of improving learning outcomes at the heart of everything Pearson does."

## Well done on the hard work, Ofsted tells Poole

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Ofsted has praised the "hard work" of Poole council in driving improvement in local schools a year after it received a damning inspection report and posted the joint lowest key stage 2 results in the country.

Bradley Simmons, Ofsted's regional director for the south west, said it was "only right" he publicly congratulated Poole on its improved results.

Last year he expressed "serious concerns" when Poole posted its key stage 2 results, but last week sent a letter to the council's leaders praising its "culture change".

The letter is more positive than other recent Ofsted letters condemning school standards in Swindon, Reading and the Black Country.

Thirty of the 41 schools in Poole are academies; however, Ofsted has consistently said that local authorities must take responsibility for their improvement.

Poole was warned in October 2015 that its "poor challenging" had led to a "slow pace of improvement" at primary and secondary schools.

Inspectors said the council lacked a clear "ambitious vision" for school improvement and bemoaned the lack of a strategy to address the underachievement of

disadvantaged pupils.

But Simmons has now praised the council. "You have been resolute in addressing the issues we raised in our inspection of your school improvement service published last year," he said.

He particularly highlighted the area's primary tests as a source of improvement.

Last year, just 73 per cent of pupils achieved a level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2.

A new scoring system has meant that this year's data could not be directly compared with last year, but Simmons said Poole had moved from "the bottom of the pack" to the mid ranks.

Its schools also performed above the national average at key stage 1.

The watchdog's decision in April to criticise Reading council for the performance of its four academy and two local-authority maintained secondary schools was widely questioned, while officials in Swindon complained when a similar letter was sent to them earlier this week.

Writing in *The Swindon Advertiser*, council leader David Renard said that while most of the area's secondary schools were academies and "come under the remit of the regional schools commissioner", the council had set up partnerships with good and outstanding schools to share best practice.

## NEWS

# Gibb promises £300m to keep music hubs humming

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools minister Nick Gibb has been urged to prove his commitment to the arts by introducing a "more creative EBacc" after announcing £300 million funding to secure the future of music education hubs.

Gibb said the continued investment for the hubs, running since 2012, will help thousands of youngsters from all backgrounds to enjoy life-changing activities.

Just over 120 hubs across the country help 5 to 18-year-olds to learn instruments, to sing in a choir or to join a band through partnerships involving schools, councils and arts organisations.

But Gibb has now been urged to prove his commitment to the arts by making the government's EBacc "more creative".

James Bowen, director of middle leaders' union NAHT Edge, said: "The accountability system must allow for pupils to take music if they want to. Who can argue that learning an instrument is not rigorous?"

He said there had been a 5 per cent drop in the numbers taking GCSE music: "Too strong a focus on EBacc subjects, driven by high stakes accountability, with little room for any additional subject choices at key stage 4, means pupils can be limited in their subject choices at A-level too."

The number of pupils entering at least one arts subject has fallen 1.7 per cent this year. And the National Union of Teachers last week claimed that creative arts teachers are also facing increased job insecurity.



The government has spent £271 million on the music hubs, overseen by Arts Council England, since 2012. The £300 million will secure funding until 2020.

Analysis shows the hubs reached 18,811 state schools (86 per cent) in 2014-15, an increase of 2.2 percentage points on the previous year.

In nearly two-thirds of cases they were supporting the schools' music education plans to help to raise the quality of music education in the classroom.

The study, by the National Foundation for Educational Research, found many hub leaders reported they were making good progress.

However, they did flag problems over accessing hard to reach schools, pressures on resources and a turnover of music specialists.

A series of other schemes aimed at helping youngsters from lower income families to access the arts includes the music and dance scheme, which will receive an additional £29 million a year until 2018, to help talented artists to attend world-leading institutions such as the Royal Ballet School.

# DICKENS WINS TOP AWARD

*Schools Week* staff were jokingly cautioned to "pipe down" when chief reporter John Dickens won an outstanding national education journalism award last week.

Accepting the gong at the CIPR Education awards, held at The Shard in central London, Dickens was nominated for his investigations into independent school standards, parents unable to pay private school bills, and his "philanthro-philies" series that uncovered the wealthy donors bankrolling the academies project.

The award was presented by Emma Leech (pictured with Dickens), director of marketing and advancement at Loughborough University, who said the judges agreed the work was "excellent and tenacious".

In particular, Dickens was congratulated for weaving "human interest stories" with "the nuts and bolts".

"The pieces were strong in their own right," Leech said, "and, together, created a completely thought-provoking piece of work."

At the announcement of Dickens' win – who was up against four nominations from *TES* – Leech cheerfully asked his colleagues to

"pipe down" and pointed out that sister newspaper, *FE Week*, had already "done the double" earlier.

Paul Offord, deputy editor of *FE Week*, won the award for outstanding further and vocational education journalism, with senior reporter Alix Robertson claiming second prize.

Dickens said: "Winning the award caps off two years at *Schools Week* where we have led the way in asking difficult questions and cutting through the bluster to report need-to-know information during a turbulent time."

He was also pleased to see the judges acknowledge the importance of investigative journalism, "something we are passionate about at *Schools Week*".





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SOCIETY

## NEWS

# RSCs: where are we now?

## The south-east and south London: Dominic Herrington

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

**D**ominic Herrington started his tenure with a distinct advantage over his colleagues.

As a Department for Education insider – he had been the director of its academies group – he was well-placed to work closely with Whitehall officials. But has the inside knowledge helped?

Although the number of academies in his area has grown 35 per cent from 675 in 2014 to 914, the overall proportion of schools that are academies is still one point behind the national figure of 28 per cent.

As with other regions that include parts of London, most of the large-scale growth has been outside the capital, in areas such as East Sussex where the number has increased 66 per cent, and Kent, where the rise has been 48 per cent.

Herrington has proved to be at ease when fielding questions from MPs, but has also courted controversy with his interventions in schools.

Last November, he was criticised for requesting an underperforming school to grade its teachers, despite Ofsted ditching the controversial practice the previous year.

He had written to Astor college in Kent to ask for evidence that at least 80 per cent of teaching at the school was “rated to be good or better” including in English and maths,

and was duly rebuked by education leaders.

That same month, on a dull Wednesday morning, Herrington also gave us the joyful news that the regional schools commissioners occasionally shared best practice and experience over dinner.

“We meet monthly. Occasionally we have dinner together,” Herrington told MPs in one of the lighter moments of a routine grilling from the education select committee.

The headteacher board Herrington assembled in 2014 remains fairly intact, although several of its elected members now represent trusts, rather than individual schools.

Rhona Barnfield and Ian Bauckham, both initially listed as heads and now included as representatives of the Howard Partnership trust and Tenax schools trust respectively, remain on the board, with Sir Andrew Carter, the head of South Farnham school.

Angela Barry still represents the Woodland academy trust as an appointed member, while Nikki King, whose appointment was made two years ago while she was the boss of the Isuzu trucks company, now officially sits on behalf of the Greenacre academy trust.

Mark Ducker, from the STEP academy trust, was co-opted in early January 2015 and has been one of the most regular attendees since. Solent academies trust boss Alison Beane was co-opted earlier this year.

The only member to leave is Denise



Dominic Herrington

Shepherd who, according to minutes, attended the last recorded meeting in May, but is no longer listed by the Department for Education as a member.

This follows a trend of summer

appointments and departures, presumably to avoid disruption.

As of September 2015, Herrington earned a basic salary of between £125,000 and £129,999.

### THE SOUTH-EAST AND SOUTH LONDON

	OPEN SCHOOLS	OPEN ACADEMIES	
	2016	2014	2016
Bexley	79	33	44
Brighton and Hove	72	5	5
Bromley	101	53	86
Croydon	126	46	61
East Sussex	192	32	53
Greenwich	88	8	14
Hampshire	531	45	48
Isle of Wight	51	8	8
Kent	581	155	203
Kingston upon Thames	52	12	18
Lambeth	91	14	15
Lewisham	87	5	5
Medway	103	39	55
Merton	56	6	7
Portsmouth	64	12	21
Richmond upon Thames	58	10	15
Southampton	75	21	23
Southwark	108	25	29
Surrey	389	70	107
Sutton	61	17	23
Wandsworth	85	14	18
West Sussex	285	45	56
<b>Total</b>			
The south-east and south London	3335	675	914

### Headteacher board

27%  
OPEN ACADEMIES

28%  
NATIONALLY

#### 2014

**Chair** Dominic Herrington (RSC)

#### Elected

Rhona Barnfield (Effingham school, Leatherhead)  
Ian Bauckham (Bennett Memorial diocesan school)  
Andrew Carter (South Farnham school)  
Denise Shepherd (Rochester grammar school)

#### Appointed

Nikki King (Isuzu Truck UK Ltd)  
Angela Barry (Woodland academy trust)

#### 2016

**Chair** Dominic Herrington

#### Elected

Rhona Barnfield (the Howard Partnership trust) attended 25 of 27 meetings  
Ian Bauckham (the Tenax schools trust) attended 23 of 27 meetings  
Sir Andrew Carter attended 19 of 27 meetings

#### Appointed

Angela Barry attended 22 of 27 meetings  
Nikki King (Greenacre academy trust) attended 21 of 27 meetings

#### Co-opted

Alison Beane (Solent academies trust)  
Mark Ducker (STEP academy trust) attended 17 of 19 meetings

It's been two years since the first regional schools commissioners and their headteacher boards were appointed. To keep you up to date, *Schools Week* is running four updates in which Freddie Whittaker looks at two RSC areas each week. Who's new, who's still there – and how they are doing on those all-important academisation rates. **WEEK THREE: The south-east and south London; North-west London and south central England**

## North-west London and south central England: Martin Post

Former grammar school head Martin Post oversees an area spanning parts of London, the south-east and several home counties.

Analysis of the government's open academies and free schools databases shows varying growth in academy numbers across the region over the past two years.

Northamptonshire now has 159 academies, up 34 per cent on 2014 and representing 49 per cent of the area's schools.

Just over a third of schools in Oxfordshire are now academies, up 39 per cent on two years ago.

However, in other areas with large numbers of schools overall, the increase has been more gradual.

In Hertfordshire, 105 of the county's 535 schools are academies, just 20 per cent of the total. The number of academies has only increased 14 per cent, from 92, since 2014.

One of Post's first interventions was in the crisis-hit Cuckoo Hall academies trust in north London, which was issued with a financial notice to improve in February 2015 following allegations relating to safeguarding, staff bullying, recruitment, and SATs



Martin Post

assessment. The notice is still in place.

Post's headteacher board has also undergone several changes after a series of high-profile appointments.

All four of the original elected members remain in place, although two are no longer serving heads, but previous appointees Dame Alison Peacock and Dame Kate Dethridge departed this summer.

During her time on the board, Peacock, now the chief executive-in-waiting of the College of Teaching, attended just 18 of 42 meetings, following other busy superheads whose attendance at different boards also fell behind their colleagues.

Dethridge, who has now been appointed to a paid role as a deputy to Post, attended 35 meetings.

Several further high-profile appointments

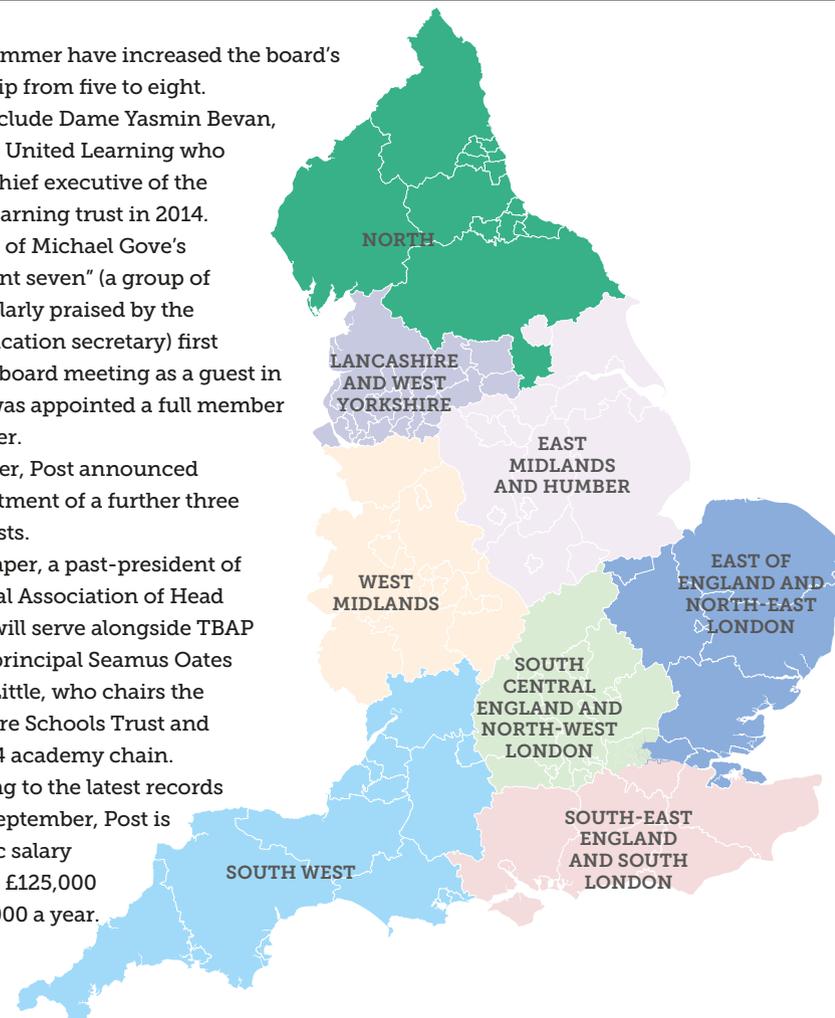
over the summer have increased the board's membership from five to eight.

These include Dame Yasmin Bevan, a trustee of United Learning who retired as chief executive of the Chiltern Learning trust in 2014. Bevan, one of Michael Gove's "magnificent seven" (a group of heads regularly praised by the former education secretary) first attended a board meeting as a guest in April and was appointed a full member this summer.

In October, Post announced the appointment of a further three educationists.

Tony Draper, a past-president of the National Association of Head Teachers, will serve alongside TBAP executive principal Seamus Oates and Peter Little, who chairs the Bedfordshire Schools Trust and the Reach 4 academy chain.

According to the latest records from last September, Post is paid a basic salary of between £125,000 and £130,000 a year.



### Headteacher board

28%  
OPEN ACADEMIES  
28%  
NATIONALLY

#### 2014

**Chair** Martin Post (RSC)

#### Elected

Richard Edwards (Nicholas Hawksmoor primary school)

Sir Michael Griffiths (Northampton school for boys)

Claire Robins (Sir John Lawes school)

Teresa Tunnadine (The Compton school)

#### Appointed

Kate Dethridge (Churchend academy)

Dame Alison Peacock (Wroxham teaching school)

#### 2016

**Chair:** Martin Post

#### Elected

Richard Edwards (former head) attended 41 of 42 meetings

Sir Michael Griffiths (former head) attended 39 of 42 meetings

Claire Robins attended 38 of 42 meetings

Teresa Tunnadine attended 35 of 42 meetings

#### Appointed

Dame Yasmin Bevan (former head of Denbigh High and executive headteacher of The Chiltern Learning trust)

Tony Draper (head of Water Hall primary and past-president, National Association of Head Teachers)

Peter Little (Bedfordshire schools trust and Reach4 academy trust)

Seamus Oates (TBAP multi-academy trust)

### NORTH-WEST LONDON AND SOUTH CENTRAL

	OPEN SCHOOLS		OPEN ACADEMIES	
	2016	2014	2014	2016
Barnet	125	27	31	
Bedford	79	26	28	
Bracknell Forest	39	1	3	
Brent	84	17	22	
Buckinghamshire	234	41	49	
Camden	63	4	5	
Central Bedfordshire	132	49	50	
City of London	1	0	0	
Ealing	95	9	12	
Enfield	95	13	19	
Hammersmith and Fulham	61	18	28	
Harrow	61	15	18	
Hertfordshire	535	92	105	
Hillingdon	100	34	44	
Hounslow	79	19	23	
Islington	68	8	9	
Kensington and Chelsea	40	5	8	
Luton	70	11	14	
Milton Keynes	112	23	26	
Northamptonshire	325	119	159	
Oxfordshire	295	76	106	
Reading	59	13	20	
Slough	51	28	30	
West Berkshire	82	8	9	
Westminster	61	20	21	
Windsor and Maidenhead	66	12	24	
Wokingham	68	8	1	
<b>Total</b>				
North West London and South Central	3,080	696	874	
England	21932	4419	6189	



## PARENTS COULD PLUG SCHOOL BUDGET GAPS, SAYS HEAD

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

State schools should consider emulating independent schools and “work for profit” by charging parents a “premium”, says a leading headteacher.

Sir Andrew Carter, head of South Farnham school educational trust and chair of the independent review of initial teacher training, said the state sector might need to follow independent schools in “asking parents for a contribution” to plug budget gaps.

Speaking to delegates at the Girls’ Schools Association (GSA) in Oxford on Monday, Carter said state schools could charge parents a

“premium” for the activities they offered not covered by current government funds.

“There has always been that question, why don’t we make the whole of education private? That’s tricky. Now, maybe schools could work for profit. We could therefore legitimately ask parents for a contribution.”

*Schools Week* reported earlier this month how all but one of the secondary school heads in Carter’s Surrey area had written to education secretary Justine Greening to express their “deeply held, vehement opposition” to the government’s grammar schools policy, urging her to focus instead on stretched funding.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, Carter said: “We’ve got an 8 per cent cut in school budgets, and

schools need to be able to be more creative about bringing in money.

“I could say to my parents, look, there is a premium for all the other things we do at this school above and beyond what the state funds us to do. Just as with independent schools, we can’t do it for nothing. And that premium is £500 a year, for example.”

When asked whether the fee would be compulsory, Carter said it would not be for parents whose children got pupil premium funding, but agreed contributions could be a squeeze for those in the lower-middle income bracket.

He said such contributions could be “the thin end of the wedge” towards the more general

privatisation of education, but the problem was “already here”.

In the case of his own school, Carter said he would use extra revenue to employ more teachers and so reduce class sizes and workload.

A spokesperson for the GSA said independent schools, as charities, reinvested any profit back into the school.

State schools have previously been criticised for asking parents for contributions towards running costs, such as Tiffin grammar school, in west London, which has a “suggested” donation of £520 a year.

The West London Free School secured almost £70,000 in its first two years from monthly parental donations.

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinerney | laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk

# Man up Philip and show your face to the cameras

I wrote a grumpy thing this week.

Twice a year, when the Chancellor announces their budgets in the Commons, *Schools Week's* designer and I huddle around a screen to select which photograph will go on the front.

In previous years we had lots of choices. George Osborne may not have been a charismatic man, but he knew how to pose for a photo with his red briefcase or turquoise book and smile. When he said every school was about to become

an academy it caused a roar, but at least people knew who to direct it toward.

The new political leadership are purposely less flashy. In part, it's to show they're down with the “ordinary folk”; in bigger part, it deflects their decisions.

Which is why, when I saw the picture of new chancellor Philip Hammond, creeping out of No 11 before rushing off so quickly that the photos look like they were taken by a six-year-old on a disposable camera, I got a little grumpy.

One picture, where he was looking downwards, particularly got my goat.

In response I tweeted: “Maybe our front page can say: ‘If I just don’t look at schools, THEIR BUDGETS WON’T EXIST.’”

Super grumpy. But true.

Schools are getting towards a budget crunch point but the government are averting their eyes, running away, simply screaming “grammar

schooooooos” as they go.

If you have to tell someone bad news, you should show up looking the part, look them in the eye and say it.

Sigh. Whoever thought I’d end 2016 actually missing George Osborne? No wonder I’m feeling grumpy.





## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Competitive salary package



The mission of Ninestiles Academy Trust is "to be nationally and internationally acknowledged as a high achieving, innovative and exciting group of schools which recognise and respect the richness and diversity of their communities." Inclusion, high achievement for all and celebration of the diversity amongst our learners and communities are all central tenets of our work. Ninestiles is a unique Trust, seeking to empower all learners and members to achieve their best in everything they do.

Trustees are now seeking to appoint a new Chief Executive, following the appointment of the previous post-holder to the role of Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the West Midlands. The new Chief Executive will have the proven skills, knowledge and experience in the education sector to shape and drive forward the future education landscape across the Trust and have the capacity and ambition to lead the growth of the Trust in a carefully planned and sustainable way. You will be an outstanding and innovative leader; a creative and forward-thinking practitioner; a colleague who is capable of not only consolidating but building on the Trust's, and the constituent academies', achievements.

The new Chief Executive will co-create and lead the conditions for the Trust's continued success, championing and leading the work of the Trust

and developing relationships across the city and beyond. This is a high-profile role, at the leading edge of the sector, so you'll need to bring a deep understanding of how academies improve at pace, alongside the personal skills to influence, persuade and negotiate at the highest level.

So if you're passionate about making education better and ready for a new challenge in a high-profile role, visit [www.leadninestilesacademytrust.co.uk](http://www.leadninestilesacademytrust.co.uk) or talk to Jo Fish or Rachel Singer at Navigate on **0113 287 8445** or **0203 637 5007**.

Closing date: Monday 12 December 2016.

Long-list interviews: 12 January 2017.

Final panel interviews: 24 & 25 January 2017.



## Ofqual Board Member

**Ofqual**

The Secretary of State for Education seeks to appoint up to five Members to the Board of the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

Ofqual regulates qualifications and assessments in England. It ensures high standards and public confidence in the qualifications system. Ofqual's Board provides strategic leadership, setting Ofqual's aims, values and standards and overseeing its work.

The Secretary of State is seeking to appoint a number of board members to make a direct and relevant contribution to the leadership of Ofqual. Candidates will bring top level management and/or board experience, the ability

to contribute to strategic development and the ability to build effective relationships at high levels. Candidates with secondary education, further education or senior financial experience would be particularly welcome. The Board meets six times a year and members would also be expected to support a Committee or Advisory Group. Remuneration of £6,000 is payable per annum.

To find out more, please visit:

[www.publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/)

For a confidential discussion, please contact Felicity Little on **020 7340 8112**



Department for Education

**Closing date:** noon on Friday 9th December 2016

## The Stockwood Park Academy

# PRINCIPAL

**Salary: L33-39 - more for an exceptional candidate  
Required for April 2017**

This is a very important post. It is a great opportunity for the Trust to recruit a leader with drive and ambition to lead The Stockwood Park Academy and build on the good work that is already taking place. The post has arisen due to the previous Principal being promoted to Chief Executive Officer of The Shared Learning Trust. The Associate Principal has been appointed Interim Principal from September 2016 for a fixed period.

To promote the highest expectations and standards of behaviour the Principal is expected to be available for duties during the school's day and use these opportunities to interact with staff and students alike during this time. The Trust views the quality of teaching and attainment with the utmost importance so the new Principal will be actively involved with learning walks and drop-ins to lessons and leading the strategy on academic achievement.

All applicants should have sound business acumen, problem solving abilities and strong passion and resilience.

Finally, our school leaders are Principals rather than Headteachers. As such, skills and attributes will be utilised outside of the academy, in the leadership of strategic groups across the Trust. In addition, the Trust has strong partnerships across Luton and the expectation is that the new Principal would play a key role in this.

For further information and details of how to apply, please visit:

**[www.thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk](http://www.thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk)**

and return completed application forms with a covering letter to:

Kevin Martin, Human Resources Manager,

The Shared Learning Trust,

Wilbury Drive,

Dunstable,

LU5 4QP.

E-Mail: **[academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk](mailto:academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk)**

Tel: ask for **Kevin** on - **01582 211226**

Visits to the Academy are warmly welcomed.

**Closing Date: 9am on 7th November, 2016**

**Interview Date: w/c 14th November, 2016**



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(Ofsted, May 2015)



### We would like from you:

- Substantial leadership experience as a Principal or Deputy and a track record of improvement and impact.
- The determination and confidence to strive for, and achieve, even better outcomes for all of our students.
- The interpersonal skills to bring out the best in students, parents, staff, Governors and the wider community.
- To play a role in promoting and developing partnership and collaboration through effective leadership.
- To be a leader who will have a strong presence around the Academy.

### We can offer you:

- “The academy’s provision for safety is outstanding. Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that students are safe in and around the academy” (Ofsted)
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- A strong commitment to your training and professional development within a standalone multi-academy trust.



## SIMS / MIS Data Manager

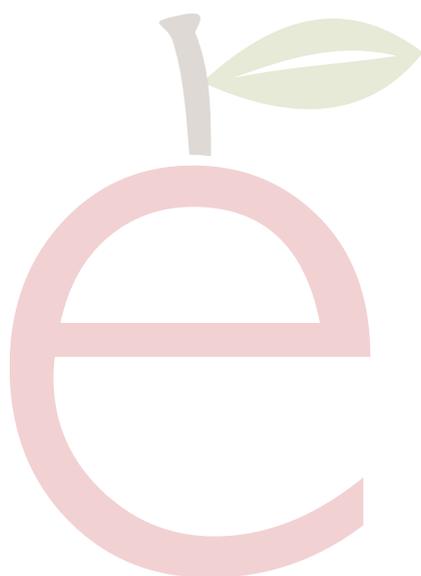
**Salary:** £140 - £175 day (PAYE / Umbrella / Ltd.)  
**Location:** near Epsom, Surrey  
**Interim cover / short-term contract** 4 - 8 weeks (possible temp to perm option).

Our client a mixed secondary school and Sixth form have an urgent requirement for an experienced SIMS / MIS Data Manager to cover an interim period, while they look to recruit in to the permanent position.

To be considered for this position you must have experience working as the Data Manager in either a college or secondary school, with extensive knowledge using SIMS and its various modules including Assessment.

Any experience of Nova T and / or 4Matrix is also highly desirable.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Application to the Disclosure and Barring Service.



## Finance Officer

**Salary:** Circa £14.83 PAYE or £18.69  
**Location:** East London  
**Contract** - part time 20 hours per week to start possibly rising to full time - to start ASAP

On behalf of an East London based primary school we are recruiting to a Finance Officer contract to start as soon as possible.

Using SIMS FMS you will be required to support the School Business Manager with day to day finance tasks such as processing orders, sales invoices, monitoring best value and ensuring timely collection of debts, BACs and Cheque runs, allocating invoices to departmental/nominal codes, dealing with supplier queries, petty cash reconciliation and school dinner money.

### The Package

This is a part time three days a week contract to start paying circa £14.83 PAYE or £18.69 via an umbrella company. The contract could rise to full time but this is not guaranteed.

### Job Requirements

it is essential you hold previous school finance experience using SIMS FMS and can be available to start work as soon as possible.

If you feel you have the necessary experience and skills in order to apply for this role please forward your CV for immediate consideration.

If you have any queries or require any further information regarding this position please call **Carly Wootton** on **020 8559 2077**.

It is essential you hold experience of heading up a Learning Resource department with responsibility for library services and technical equipment/associated consumables.services and technical equipment/associated consumables.

## School Business Manager

**Salary:** £41,493 - £54,381 per annum  
**Location:** South London  
**Full time permanent** - all year round - to start ASAP

The School Business Manager is an integral post within this individual academy, and the academy federation it sits within. As part of the SLT team you will be responsible for the control and efficient operation of the academies non-academic functions namely managing academy Finances, HR, Administration, IT, Estates, Catering, Health and Safety and compliance.

You will be responsible for leadership of staff in order to work towards academies strategies and objectives, management of school staff, staff induction, performance management and professional development of non-classroom staff.

Other duties include budget planning, delivering agreed budgets and consistently inputting finance policies, you will be required to oversee the planning and execution of capital build projects and building developments.

It is essential you hold experience of working within a finance/operational position within an education setting - experience of complex building projects/academy education building projects and school design is desirable however not essential.

If you feel you hold the necessary experience to be considered for this position please forward your CV for immediate consideration.

To apply for any of these roles, please send your CV to: [schoolsweek@esp-recruit.co.uk](mailto:schoolsweek@esp-recruit.co.uk)



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This is an exciting opportunity to join an innovative, dynamic team working to produce top-class assessments. This role would suit an experienced English / Social Sciences specialist looking for a new challenge. The position will involve supporting the management of a range of qualifications in English and Social Sciences for assessment products such as Cambridge International A Level, Pre-U, IGCSE and O Level.

Closing date: 4 December

## EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT

Location: Jordan

To be considered for this post, please send a detailed CV to Waseem Al Hanbali [AlHanbali.W@cie.org.uk](mailto:AlHanbali.W@cie.org.uk)

We have an excellent opportunity for an Educational Consultant with a strong academic background and extensive business development experience in international education. The purpose of the role is to grow our coverage and maintain our core business with schools in Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. The post-holder will develop Cambridge's business strategy to deliver world-class educational support for schools.

Closing date: 30 November

## OPERATIONS SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR

Full time – Fixed term contract (until March 2017)

Salary: £20,900 to £23,600

Working within the Operations Division, you will support eight teams through the exam cycle to contribute to the successful completion of accurate information for our learners and customers. You will be learning new processes, gaining knowledge and understanding in each placement that is undertaken making you an expert in our processes across Operations.

Closing date: 27 November

## SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

Salary: Competitive

This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced Senior Project Manager to join our team, with a focus on delivering large scale IT projects in technology or application development. You will play an active part in responding to business initiatives, proposing and negotiating appropriate ways to address problems. Our Project Managers are responsible for establishing and leading enterprise-wide, cross functional strategic and operational initiatives.

Closing date: 27 November

## DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR (ORACLE & SAP HANA)

Full-time, Permanent

Salary: £41,300 - £46,500 plus benefits

This is an exciting opportunity join the Database Services Team in our Business Technology Services Department. You will have extensive experience working with Oracle databases within a large SAP environment. Additional experience working with SAP Hana would be a distinct advantage to represent the team as the Technical Lead for our expanding SAP Hana database estate.

Closing date: 30 November



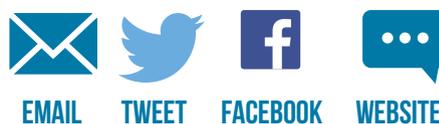
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# READERS' REPLY



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WWW.SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK

## Why the views of 12 million parents matter – to the government

**Janet Downs, Bourne**

Politicians have always misled the electorate and been economical with the truth. But it's now done with a cynical disregard for facts. The media is usually compliant (*Schools Week* is an honourable exception) in churning whatever stuff is spewed out by the Department for Education.

We are . . . entering the age of the sycophant where those willing to support the department line and trash those who don't will be praised and rewarded. Those who oppose are crudely labelled as "Marxists", "enemies of promise" and the "Blob". The term "evidence-based" has taken on a new meaning: evidence is whatever supports politicians' prejudices. Anything that doesn't is dismissed – after all, the UK has had enough of experts, apparently.

**Helen Farrell, address supplied**

We're rather in the hands of existing heads here. They need to be much more proactive in following the excellent example of the Surrey heads. Why are they not all writing to their parents setting out the powerful case against a return to secondary moderns?

## Teach First should shun London

**Education State, address supplied**

"The report also recommended that student loans should be written off for teachers after they had worked in challenging schools for five years". But doesn't Teach First actively encourage graduates to leave teaching after two? You couldn't make it up.

**@Samfr**

Just a third of placements will be in London this year. We're in all the "opportunity areas" already.

## Admissions watchdog rejects 'Catholic certificate'

**Lesley Brennan**

Good one. I don't like this idea and can't see what was wrong with the old system.

**Mark Watson, Gloucester**

Where I live is an excellent primary school, regarded as the best in the area. It is a Church of England school and it requires parents of prospective pupils to attend weekly services for at least a year before starting school (to be clear I don't know whether this is a formal requirement, but what I do know is that there is an absolute local understanding that if you don't go, your child won't get in). Needless to say the church is always full to the brim. However, the congregation is constantly changing as the vast majority of "worshippers" are parents putting in the time to get a place at the school.

Once they get in, they stop going.

It's seen as "just one of those things" and most people put up with it because the reward of a school place is worth it. I see it as complete hypocrisy.

That's not to say I completely disagree with some entry requirements, and if a religious organisation wants to run a school it makes sense if they run it as a Catholic/CofE/Hindu/Muslim school, etc. But any system that requires you to "prove" you believe in something is open to abuse.

## Two-year wait for guidance on exclusions to be replaced

**James Wilding, Maidenhead**

It is an enormous problem; because there is not an agreed procedure nationally on the handover for a child who is being permanently excluded from a school to education welfare services. The local authorities (LAs) we work with seem to be adopting a Venus de Milo approach – no arms with which to reach out and take hold of the baton. So, while the government asks schools and LAs to worry about children going missing in education, locally LAs seem not have the resources to handle in-school-year problems because all resources have already been deployed at the start of the year.

## To help mental health, get your pupils to talk to their friends

**Harold Maio, retired mental health editor, Florida**

"Lessen the stigma of mental health." No, we need to stop saying there is one. We have to begin rejecting the idea. We have to stop teaching it. We have to start taking note of people who do, and educate them. We have to stop repeating them.

**@Susanfella1**

Totally agree having run such a scheme in a secondary school for many years. Know how students benefit in so many ways.

REPLY OF THE WEEK  
RECEIVES A  
SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



## Contact the team

To provide feedback and suggest stories please email [news@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:news@schoolsweek.co.uk) and tweet using @schoolsweek

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

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

## No thanks to 'reward' for retiring teachers

**LORENA ARIKAMEDOSHIKA WOODFINE**

They can stuff their letters. Their thanks are unimportant. Whereas yesterday I was approached out of the blue by a member of the special needs team (who I didn't think even knew who I was), with an apology for sounding sappy and not saying thank you sooner! All because I work well with the SEN kids in her care. I had no idea anyone took any notice of me. The kids obviously do. And she must have taken notice of them.

It's those people – the other teachers, parents, and most importantly the kids – whose thanks matter. Fortunately, my students (difficult pains in the backside that they can be) thank me regularly. That, and being trapped into the career by the pay and holidays, are reasons I go to work each day, not a pointless DfE card!

## Correction

Last week's story, The hidden world of APPGs, had two factual inaccuracies. It stated that Money Advice Service had funded three prior reports for the Financial Education APPG. These reports were actually funded by Pfeg. The article also stated that the APPG costs solely covered PR and marketing. Research and inquiry costs should also have been included. Finally, it is important to make clear that while donors such as Asda, JP Morgan and the Department for Education fund the Young Enterprise, they did not fund the work of the APPG specifically.

In the same edition, the article ECDL impacts on Progress 8 said that schools which had entered for the European Computer Driving Licence could face a negative effect on their progress 8 scores. To be clear, this would only occur if Ofqual or the Department for Education decided to rescale scores so pupils' grades were worth less and would only be for future cohorts.

## THE INTERVIEW

## LUCY KELLAWAY

LAURA MCINERNEY  
@MISS\_McINERNEY

### Lucy Kellaway, co-founder of Now Teach

It is a cliché of modern times that awful education policies are followed by a plethora of so-called “open letters” in which sad teachers announce they are flouncing from the profession.

“I cannot cope in this terrible job any longer,” they sign-off, pointing fingers as they go. In return, social media goes wild.

On Sunday, however, a 57-year-old journalist who has worked at the same newspaper for 31 years, caused her own social media storm with her open letter about teaching.

Only she was flouncing into the profession.

In a *Financial Times* column titled “I’m leaving and I want you to join me”, Lucy Kellaway – a beloved writer at the paper – told her readers that from September next year she will be teaching maths in a London comprehensive via a new programme called Now Teach, a programme she has co-founded with Katie Waldegrave.

“Nobody can go on doing the same thing forever,” she wrote. “In most jobs two decades is plenty. I’ve stuck at mine for 31 years because my job is the nicest in the world. But even so, it has been long enough. With jobs, as with parties, it is best to leave when you are still having a good time.”

By the time she leaves the newsroom she will be 58. There are many other things she could go to. So why teach? Why now?

We speak over the phone on Tuesday afternoon, in the sort of interview that Kellaway has done countless times herself with chief executives. She is enthusiastic about the reaction to her column.

“Social networks and the media are so strange. I have been cooking up this idea for a long time, and suddenly it is very real and it is all so everywhere! The reaction is miles, miles better than I had expected in my wildest dreams.”

More than 150 people have already applied to follow her lead. For its pilot year, the Now Teach programme will place career-changers into London secondary schools, to train on-the-job, in shortage subjects – particularly maths and science. If all goes well the programme will quickly expand beyond the capital.

“We’ve just tapped into a real nerve of people who are wondering what to do with the rest of their lives and have this sort of yearning to do something more useful. They thought that teaching might be what they like, but they thought they would be too old.

“I expected that we would have lots of people approaching us to say can we find out more, but that we would have 150 people in the first couple of days is amazing!”

Kellaway is known for her forthright journalism, slapping down chief executives who make wild claims. Earlier this year she berated Meg Whitman, the head of Hewlett Packard, for venturing the idea that “you can always go faster than you think you can”. Kellaway’s response: “It’s nonsense. Often in business you can’t go nearly as fast as you fondly think you can. When you try, you fall on your face – and Ms Whitman, of all people, should know that.”

Hence, in characteristic style, she points out the application numbers may not be indicative of quality. “When we actually interview some, it may all fall to pieces and there won’t be quite so many. But for the time being, it is great!”

Kellaway is not so cautious about her enthusiasm for the classroom, however. She is rapt.

“My daughter is a Teach Firster and it’s amazing what she’s done. She joined four years ago and watching her learn was

“THERE’S  
THIS  
YEARNING  
TO DO  
SOMETHING  
MORE  
USEFUL”



very stimulating. She started off, like all these Teach Firsters, without the first clue – which is how I will start off next September – and she learned very quickly. It was extraordinary. I had forgotten what it was like to learn as quickly as that.

“Then, when she got the hang of it, she had the satisfaction – huuuuuge satisfaction – of getting kids to do things that they didn’t think they were capable of. Nothing is more satisfying than that.”

Kellaway concluded that the disillusioned workers in their forties and fifties that she so often writes about would benefit from such an injection of enthusiasm. Likewise, schools regularly losing older teachers could also benefit from a more diverse staffroom.

“I know Lucy Heller [chief executive at Ark] very well and I was going on and on at her saying we needed something like a ‘Teach Last’ and she said, ‘well, why don’t you come and do it with us?’”

This is not unusual for Ark: the group has incubated and spun out a number of projects, such as Frontline (a social work equivalent of Teach First) and Teaching Leaders for department leads.

Kellaway is also aware that Teach First takes on career-changers, but she feels their pitch tends to be towards “the younger end of the market. Something similar, but for older people – that seemed to me like a great idea. A few days in it feels as if we were right!”

For the first year, trainees will be placed in Ark schools only, but the aim is to become “provider-neutral”, with any

willing school able to take on Now Teach trainees. Funding comes via the bursaries and salaried schemes available via Schools Direct.

Some teachers have told her that she is “mad”, but Kellaway is uninhibited by concerns about behaviour or learning to lesson plan.

Her bigger concern is the dentist, and coffee. “A lot of people like me are used to working very hard ... when it suits us. But if I fancy going off and having lunch with a friend, or if I need to go the dentist, or if I need to do anything at all, I just do it.

“When I am teaching, I will need to be there whether I like it or not. It is something I am just going to have to learn to deal with.”

In recognition of the fact that career-changers may have time commitments that cannot be dropped, Now Teach will operate over a four-day week, unique among teacher training programmes.

Kellaway is also sad to be leaving colleagues – “dear friends” – at the *Financial Times*. “But then, if they’re really good mates, I can still see them outside – if I’ve any time! My daughter has prepared me about that... and it will be even worse as I am going to be helping with the Now Teach recruitment.”

Another open letter, written in a year’s time about her first term, might just be the best way to do that.

Applications are now open at [www.nowteach.org.uk](http://www.nowteach.org.uk) for career-changers looking to teach in a London secondary school from September 2017 in a shortage subject.



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## OPINIONS



## JAN DUBIEL

National director, Early Excellence

### Having data on children can only be a good thing

Those against data collection in early years are missing the point, says Jan Dubiel. How else will early years' practitioners know how they (and the child) are doing?

The appropriateness and value of collecting data on children has been hotly debated over the past couple of years, sparked in part by the introduction of baseline assessment.

As the largest provider of baseline assessment in 2015, it's unsurprising that at Early Excellence we believe that data collection (or information gathering) has an important role in understanding performance – of children themselves, practitioners and the government. This is the case in early years/foundation stage (EYFS) settings and schools in particular, but the same principles apply throughout a child's time at school.

Data is simply another word for

### We need to document a child's progress from birth to 5

information, and the reality of life as an early years' practitioner is that collecting information is a constant feature of what we do. We're always picking up information about the child as a learner, their qualities and behaviours, as well as about what they know, understand and can do. This informs the decisions we make and how we support their learning from the first day of the school year to the last.

In short, early years' practitioners, through the very nature of the job and the continual assessment that is part of that, are constantly collecting information on children and using this to achieve the best results for them.

Those who are against the data collection in early years (often labelling it the "datafication of childhood") miss the point. Without knowing how we are doing and what progress is being made, how can we possibly teach effectively?

We can look at the information collected on a number of levels, via what I describe as the "telescope" effect.

At an individual level, it allows practitioners

to make interventions that have a positive impact. Move the telescope a fraction and you have information about children in a whole class or school, and their skills and capabilities. Zoom out further and we're able to produce a nationwide dataset for a whole cohort – rich and valuable information for the Department for Education, researchers, advisers, practitioners and many others to comb through, find the evidence for what works and identify where specific developments and approaches make an impact. This allows us to put in place the principles and pedagogy that really will improve the life chances and opportunities for success of the children in our settings.

A numerical score is a useful starting point for summarising and understanding each "zoom" of the telescope. It is not a means of defining a child and I know of no teacher who would describe one of their children purely in terms of the numerical score they attain at baseline or in any other assessment or test.

At Early Excellence, we argue for more data and more information. This is why we have spent the past two years building a new assessment system known as the Early Excellence Assessment Tracker. This allows for the ongoing collection of information of children, from birth to age 5, and will produce the rich levels of data we require to build effective teaching techniques. It will also allow use over time to monitor the success of key government interventions such as the pupil premium, as well as allowing researchers to identify gaps in attainment by using data on demographics, gender and ethnicity.

The debate around the role of data in early years is about much more than on-entry assessment. To truly understand the effectiveness of early years we need a complete, continual approach that documents a child's progress from birth to 5 years.

With the increasing government interest in early years, the free childcare pilots and our new prime minister's emphasis on meritocracy, this is a vital opportunity for the early years' sector to work together and secure the funding and political support required to develop a system that truly delivers for all children. Theresa May says "I actually look at the evidence, take the advice, consider it properly and then come to a decision". In this context, having data on children can only be a good thing.



## JAZ AMPAW-FARR

Literacy adviser, author, speaker and school governor

### Schools must be free to look beyond the data

Data can inform starting points but should never be used to cap expectations of learners, says Jaz Ampaw-Farr. "Based on data, I believed I would never succeed."

As a child my trajectory was pretty bleak. On paper I was a disadvantaged, female, looked-after child on free school meals with an ethnic background of "other (please specify)".

However, data does not tell the whole story. It's just not that black and white (or, in this case, black African and white Irish Traveller).

At an administrative level, pupil data is a case of "numbers, not names". In looking for trends, it's not expedient to have to wade through the unnecessary detail of personal stories. Data, by its very nature, dehumanises learners by stripping away the human element.

In any system, the administration (government) is set up to serve those delivering the product (schools), not vice versa. When the slave becomes the master, teachers (that's creative professionals who came into teaching to make an impact on lives, change the world and, well...teach) can spend more time collecting and analysing data – ticking off the right boxes – than they do teaching.

While waiting to speak at a conference recently, I listened to three other speakers stress the importance of pupil premium money going to children eligible for free school meals to improve their academic achievement. I'm right behind that. What made me uncomfortable was the shared certainty that not being able to afford to buy your own slice of pizza automatically guaranteed you a place at the wrong end of the bell curve.

For teachers it's "names, not numbers". Data can inform starting points but should never be used to cap our expectations of learners. Schools should use the national data to compare their demographic, but must also be free to look beyond it to the unique circumstances of each mini-human in front of them. After all, school is the place to challenge unconscious bias, not encourage it.

We know that what gets measured, gets done. Data collected through some kind of assessment or test is usually related to knowledge and/or skills. As teachers we'd be mad, brave or probably both, not to show learners how to play the odds on multiple-choice test papers.

Some schools under pressure are forced to

go further, focusing on teaching directly to the test, with little time for the essential skills that aren't measured, such as mindset or resilience.

As a consultant, I have sat in literacy meetings with school leaders who, without blinking, have insisted that this year's focus is the children who could possibly get higher scores in SATs. When I asked what was in place for the children who were not yet able to read, write and spell, the head replied that they were "not a priority this year"!

### Data, by its very nature, dehumanises learners

Such is the fear of "getting it wrong" that a school is forced to concentrate, not on what is best for their individual collection of learners, but on where they know the administration will be looking.

We're better than that.

The irony is that teachers know who needs support and who doesn't. Their decisions aren't based on data relating to average learners belonging to a particular race, sex or class but on investing time building relationships, establishing expectations and setting challenges.

A more neutral definition of disadvantaged students would be those living with some level of chaos in their home lives. As one of those children, the expectations set by the data hindered my chances of progressing. And when it comes to success, ability is not the main driving force – it's expectation.

For me, teachers who presented me with possible outcomes that didn't conform to my perception of reality made all the difference.

Based on data, I believed I would never succeed; I would always get stuck and fail. Based on data, I believed, I was worthless.

I was lucky to have a handful of teachers who disagreed.

Those teachers held a vision of success for me until I was ready to take ownership of it for myself. They changed my life by holding an unconditional positive regard for me, above the forecast trajectory based on data.

That's why I became a teacher. How about you?

**It's a lottery as to which primary schools encourage their pupils to consider a grammar school. That needs to change, says David Jesson**

The government's education green paper has provided the basis for an enlivened debate about the purpose of grammar schools and whether more pupils should have the chance to experience this form of education.

A major proposal (8) is: "Selective schools must have in place strategies to ensure fair access – legislation should *require* selective schools to prioritise, or set aside places for pupils of lower income in oversubscription criteria."

The Commons select committee took evidence on this issue from a range of academics (three with links to a previous Sutton Trust report), at its November 8 meeting. In what was a fairly comprehensive initial discussion it became clear that while there was little hard evidence that grammar school entry conferred benefits on pupils *not* selected, it was the process of selection itself that was of concern.

The evidence presented showed it was heavily biased towards relatively "advantaged" pupils: those with access to private tutors, or to training in test familiarity at their preparatory school, or both.

This "unequal access" was sharply illuminated in the contrasting data that while some 3,000 pupils from independent schools gained admission to grammars annually, only about 500 pupils officially designated as from



# DAVID JESSON

Professor in the department of education, University of York

## Grammar schools and how to improve them

"disadvantaged" backgrounds, did so.

The second part of the select committee's meeting took evidence from schools minister Nick Gibb.

Committee members pressed him on how this specific inequality in access could be resolved in line with the proposal of ensuring fair access. Gibb's response was that "creating a 'tutor-free' selection process was the 'holy grail' to which the Department for Education was committed".

Committee members remained sceptical, given recent experience with tests claiming to be tutor-free, but which had little or no effect on the recruitment of disadvantaged pupils.

Data analysed for the earlier Sutton Trust report supplemented by that from more recent years shows that amongst the 163 current grammar schools there are 36 where

more than 20 per cent of pupils are recruited annually from independent/preparatory schools. Eight of the schools consistently recruited more than 30 per cent of their pupils from these institutions.

The data also shows that in four of the areas with "isolated" grammars (as opposed to fully implemented selective school systems, such as in Kent and Buckinghamshire) all recruited high proportions of entrants from the same schools.

In the light of the green paper proposals, there is a growing consensus about ensuring fairer access to grammar schools. Since, however, this is unlikely to emerge from pursuing the "holy grail" identified by Gibb, a more proactive approach is required.

At present, testing is the main selection route. In a few instances this has been

moderated by setting a lower "pass-mark" for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

But a more radical approach is required – and this is hinted at in proposal 7 of the paper: Existing selective schools will be *required* to engage in outreach activity, including teacher

## A more radical approach is required

and pupil exchanges with local schools.

The evidence from many of the 36 schools we identified is that, apart from the large cohort of pupils entering from preparatory schools, it is also the case that it is often the same group of state primary schools that regularly provide many of their other entrants.

For reference: their recruitment of independent/preparatory school pupils averaged 25 per cent, while that of pupils eligible for free school meals from their state school feeders was just over 1 per cent.

The green paper's (potentially) radical proposal attempts to address this by requiring existing grammars to be more active in engaging with the primary schools within their community. This should, however, not be limited to "exchanging pupils and teachers", but, more proactively, be designed to help a wider range of potential pupils, their parents/carers and teachers see the benefits and opportunities from attending a grammar school.

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## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

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[www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews)



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

I have read so many brilliant blog posts since I wrote my last column, that this week I intend to take a leaf out of Andrew Old's book and fit in as many recommendations as I can!

### Why take the barriers down?

@StarlightMcKenZ

Using the example of volunteering at a shelter for the homeless at Christmas, this blogger talks about the power of removing barriers and trying to establish trust rather than stepping up tight controls. What she learnt returned to her poignantly when, later in her life, she was called upon to assert the rights of a parent with an autistic child, and face barriers of a different order.

### Leadership is about doing

Steve Keating (@LeadToday)

Steve Keating argues that leaders never stop developing, and what we did yesterday is of far less significance than what we will do tomorrow. I have always felt that successful leadership focused on getting relationships and communication right, but this post made me reflect on the crucial importance, too, of the actions we take.

### The day that buck's fizz tasted better than champagne

@andybuck

The recent report into effective school leadership, and the role our predispositions might play in this, caused quite a stir last month. In this post, Andy Buck explains how elements of the report, specifically the connections between leadership style and subject specialism, have led to his questioning some of his assumptions about how we might focus our energies in the preparation of future school leaders.

I found this an interesting example of the way in which we respond when research findings do not sit comfortably with our established beliefs.

### Teaching: Leading Learning at #TLT16

@chrishildrew

I was unable to be at #TLT in Southampton this year, but reading this post from one of the contributors, Chris Hildrew, felt like the next best thing. He reflects on his experience as a leader, and the connection between the roles of teacher and leader. The post is full of sound advice and useful references.

### Talking about my generation – schools must work hard to retain millennial generation

@michaelpain of @Forum\_Education

Michael Pain reflects on teacher recruitment and retention, and the strategies that can be used to ensure our schools are full of talented and committed educators. He comments specifically on the expectations of the millennials, the proportion of our current workforce born after 1982, and how, whichever career they embark on, opportunities for leadership development, mentoring and personal/professional balance are likely to be important to them. He goes on to discuss the implications for the education sector, with specific suggestions of strategies that schools can usefully adopt.

### We don't need no innovation

@steveadcock81 via @SchoolsImprove

Steve Adcock contests that our current fixation with marginal gains and trying to do myriad new things a little better may mean that we are losing our sense of what really leads to significant and sustainable growth in schools. Although innovation is appealing, we need to guard against piecemeal, disconnected efforts that do not strengthen and consolidate our education system. He suggests that we need to focus on the basics and invest in the infrastructure that will enable us to support sustainable school improvement.

### Word Up

@sue\_cowley

I shall let this beautifully written piece from Sue Cowley about the power and importance of oracy, fittingly, speak for itself: "Listening to children talk about their take on the world is a great way to remind yourself what education is actually about. Give children something that they're interested in to talk about, and someone who is interested in what they're saying to listen to them."

## BOOK REVIEW

### Liminal Leadership

By Stephen Tierney

Publisher John Catt

ISBN-10 1911382063

ISBN-13 978-1911382065

Reviewer Dave Baker, chief executive, Olympus academy trust



Stephen Tierney introduces *Liminal Leadership* as standing on the threshold of a different kind of education system and describes his role as one of helping to bridge the past and future: this is his view from the bridge. As such, he offers reflections on the different phases of his own life and leadership.

With great honesty about what has worked well – and where he has learned from things that have not worked out so well – he provides templates and frameworks for developing leadership teams and self-evaluation systems in schools. This generosity will be unsurprising for those who are familiar with his @LeadingLearner blog and online sharing of resources.

There is a strong sense here of a personal faith that is a guiding light for leadership behaviours and actions. He issues regular reminders to value staff for who they are, with all the baggage they bring, and describes his own attempts to be ethical and humane as a leader, as well as outlining the policy framework needed to make that happen. In a letter to his 23-year-old self, he provides some golden nuggets of advice that apply at all stages: "Forgiveness is often easier to gain than permission." "People are your greatest asset; this will make more sense as time goes by." How true!

*Liminal Leadership* describes Tierney's 30-year teaching journey, with reflections on the stages of leadership along the way. It covers the full range, from newly-qualified chemistry teacher to chief executive and executive headteacher, alongside chairing the Headteachers' Roundtable.

There is a depth and underlying theme, which seems to be one of wanting to create the best possible conditions for success for staff and students. This involves providing clarity of expectation for new leaders; a relentless focus on doing less but doing it better for greater impact; and the need to avoid short-term gains, looking instead for long-term success by embedding

sustainable improvement. He also offers his reflections on the current move towards a school-led system, and the challenges and opportunities this creates.

The book resonated strongly with me as I discovered that I am the same age as Tierney and, although we have never met and have worked in very different contexts, there are remarkable parallels in our leadership pathways. I found myself drawn in by the personal reflections, enthused by the leadership "think" pieces along

the way and moved to the verge of tears as I read each of the letters he wrote retrospectively at various stages to his younger self – I related to the harsh realities of juggling professional and personal priorities. There were also moments that made me chuckle.

I initially wondered whether *Liminal Leadership* might be for well-established leaders such as me

who share the benefit of experience and the luxury of having 30 years of hindsight. However, the book's personal dimension and the practical nature of some of the tools and stories contained within it, make me think that education professionals at any stage in their careers would get a great deal from it. At just over 150 pages it is neither daunting nor written in an academic tone.

I will leave you with some sound advice Tierney was given as he started headship: "Don't worry that your desk's not empty, it never will be; and go home early on a Friday". This is mirrored by a more recent piece of advice to himself at the end of the book: "You were not called to perfection in leadership... it is sometimes in your errors that you and others will learn the most."

I have been inspired by reading *Liminal Leadership* and have resolved to seek out one of the recommended books to impact my leadership behaviour: *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less* by Greg McKeown.



### Next week

The Thirty Years War  
by Richard Garner

Reviewed by Laura McInerney

In light of Trump's win and growing concerns about an "alt-right" agenda both in the States and here (for "alt-right" some use "neo-Nazi"), people are clamouring for education as a solution.

"What this all shows is that we need more citizenship lessons in school," some say. "If only these people were better educated they wouldn't believe in such views," others say.

If only life were that simple.

As a former citizenship teacher who loved the subject dearly, it pains me to say that its powers are not magical. Things might indeed be better if only we could imbue everyone with a deep sense of critical thinking and empathy. But they wouldn't necessarily stop the tide of right-wing thinking, because there's no evidence to believe that critical and empathic thinkers cannot also be in the alt-right.

Plus, we've pretty good evidence that education alone cannot save the world from wars and unpleasanties.

In 1965, W.O. Lester Smith – a renowned educationist and professor – wrote *Government of Education*.

In one chapter, which looks at "who" should govern education, he discusses how it can "influence so profoundly the thought and character of individuals" that it becomes an important matter for the state.

As a positive example, he writes a paragraph describing how Prussia "provided a dramatic illustration" of bold, state-led education after it suffered heavy

## THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



### EDUCATION WON'T STOP RIGHT-WING THINKING

LAURA MCINERNEY

defeats by Napoleon.

With "the aid of education they could create a national spirit and produce citizens that would be a source of strength in peace and war". Smith describes how their well-organised education system – which was visited by people from all over the world, including the US and the UK – helped to lead a victory in the Franco-Prussian war, the unification of the German states, and the creation of the German empire.

However, Smith does not stop there. He writes: "Although Germany's



expansionist dreams eventually resulted in two tragic world wars and untold human misery, the idea of a state-controlled system that the Prussian leaders developed so

effectively has not lost its attraction."

Just read that again. All that praise for a centralised education system based on bringing a nation together after a tragedy only to be described, in the end, as aiding the country with "two tragic world wars and untold human misery". We must be cautious in believing, therefore, that schooling is

always and forever a solution to a country's political turmoil.

There is also the problem of how one decides what a "citizen" ought to know – and, indeed, what a "good citizen" thinks. Singapore, for example, formally separates its politics curriculum depending on a student's ability level.

Three distinct roles can be identified: (1) elite cosmopolitan leaders; (2) globally oriented but locally rooted mid-level executives and workers; and (3) local 'heartlander' followers. Leaders are taught about how they must be responsible for the next generation; the heartlanders are taught the importance of obedience. We must be careful, therefore, when we say that more education will necessarily help to reduce gaps in knowledge or political empowerment. It is entirely possible to devise systems that widen it.

If one is about to do a 180deg spin and declare that politics and education instead ought to be kept very far apart – I would also caution a warning.

An eighth of Aristotle's *Politics* is devoted to education, and not by accident, but because it is so important to nation-building. Hence, politicians will always want to sell messages about schools, and that's before one admits they have a responsibility to do so given the service is paid for by people's taxes and which sucks in their children six hours a day.

Politics cannot be kept out of education. But shoving it into the classroom is not the silver bullet that people today may expect.



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

SNOOOOOZE.

## FRIDAY:

Still smarting from the government's decision to ignore his committee's advice over the appointment of the new Ofsted boss Amanda Spielman, Neil Carmichael, chair of the education select committee, is now seeking to boost his powers.

At present, select committees can give their opinion on candidates for high-profile posts, but Carmichael told Civil Service World that he wants the ability to "blackball" them.

Week in Westminster suspects this move will be welcomed in some quarters, although not by anyone who gawped at the committee's strange line of questioning during Spielman's original grilling.

## SATURDAY:

The NGA is reborn...as the NGA.

In typical governors' fashion, the organisation formerly known as the National Governors' Association has managed to change its name without spending a penny on replacement souvenir pens, t-shirts and posters. They will still be bang up to date with the NGA hallmark after the association settled on the National Governance Association as its new name.

There is a good reason for the change – it recognises that academy board members are "trustees" rather than "governors" – and Week in Westminster salutes the ruthless pedantry of the governing community in reflecting this.

Schools in Stoke-on-Trent also got a bit of good news at the NGA conference in Manchester when Sir David Carter gave away his plan to avoid the city after a forced diversion because of traffic chaos on the M6.

The national schools commissioner said he had "absolutely nothing against the place, but I don't want to see it for a while".

Schools in Stoke: rest easy. For now.

## TUESDAY:

Theresa May and Co scraped a victory in their first parliamentary test of her grammar school plans. The government successfully challenged a Labour motion condemning its plans to expand selection by 310 votes to the opposition's 263, though it failed to get support from 27 of its own MPs, including former education secretary Nicky Morgan and "blackballer" Neil Carmichael. The motion related only to the consultation itself, so some grammar sceptics on the Conservative side still felt confident voting with it.

The numbers are in favour of grammar schools getting through a parliamentary vote, but it will be close – especially if the opposition convinces the sceptics and brings their own full fleet of 300 votes.

The government was facing a battle of numbers elsewhere too.

The embattled Standards and Testing Agency, already under close scrutiny following the leak of a certain spelling and punctuation test earlier this year,

was forced to amend its guidance on preparation for key stages 1 and 2 maths tests after the Department for Education was berated on Twitter for a mathematical error.

Teacher and writer Sue Cowley and others were quick to point out that the guidance said that  $936 + 285 = 1,121$ , when the answer is 1,221.

Then again, it's probably not important. It's not like the government is placing more and more weight on pupils' attainment in English and maths.

After the division of the grammar vote, it was lovely to see Justine Greening, Nick Gibb and Nicky Morgan mingling at the London Leadership Strategy event at the Speaker's House. Just keep pretending this grammar school thing isn't happening, folks. It's how we're all sleeping at night.

## WEDNESDAY:

Budget. Budget. Budget. Uhoh. Damp Squib.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

# School Bulletin *with Sam King*



Pupils sing the national anthem at London's Olympic Park

## Pupils kick off rugby encounter

More than 400 pupils from schools across London and the southeast sang the national anthem to kick off a Four Nations England vs Australia rugby league match.

The Remembrance Day fixture took place at London's Olympic Park.

The pupils aged between 9 and 18 came from 11 schools belonging to academy trust United Learning, and included Ashford and Wye schools in Kent; Dunottar school in Surrey; Walthamstow academy, north London, and Wilberforce primary in west London.

Pupils rehearsed at their schools where they held workshops with professional opera

singers. They also learned a Britpop medley, as well as techniques to help to build their confidence in performing in front of a large audience.

Emma Skae, principal of Walthamstow academy, said: "I was thrilled to watch our students perform. It was a wonderful opportunity for them, and they sang brilliantly. It was a great start to the match."

Eleven-year-old Annabel from Dunottar school added: "The best moment for me was when we were singing on the pitch because it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

And for those who don't know the result, Australia won and then went on to win the competition, beating New Zealand in the final.



Felt workshop: Pupils worked with merino wool. Inset: A proud pupil with her finished artwork

## How to get that fuzzy feeling

Nottingham primary school has won a free felt workshop after pupils won an art competition.

The half-day workshop was delivered to year 6 pupils at Eskdale junior school as a prize for winning the Dazzling Displays art competition in the summer term, which encouraged primary teachers to share their pupils' artwork.

Children in the workshop followed a landscape theme, using merino wool to build up a picture before "felting" it by pouring warm water over their designs, pressing them flat with bubble wrap and rubbing them with soap and water.

To complete the process, the designs were then rolled around a tube to shrink and felt the wool together, creating the final piece of artwork.

The session was delivered by Yorkshire-based textile artist and former teacher, Jo Hunter, who regularly exhibits her work at galleries and exhibitions across the UK.

Katherine Playford, a teacher at Eskdale, said: "The children had great fun and loved learning how the different parts came together to create their pictures. They were thrilled with their final designs and many of our parents and teachers have stopped to admire their artwork."

## Pupils prepare to go the extra mile

FEATURED

Pupils at a Nottinghamshire primary are being encouraged to walk a mile every day following the installation of a new, purpose-built path.

The £14,000 path at Gotham primary was officially opened by Paralympian and bronze medallist Alison Patrick in October. She then led pupils on their first lap.

Pupils are encouraged to either walk or run their way around the metre-wide path, with eight laps totalling one mile.

Inspired by Scottish schools, headteacher Sue Lymn-Brewin decided to implement a daily mile in her own school, successfully pitching the idea to governors.

"The idea came from an article I read about schools in Scotland who have a daily mile. You can do it at whatever speed you like, so you can be a walker or a runner. If you're a runner run, if you're a walker, come with me because I'm walking."

Lymn-Brewin is leading by example, swapping her heels for walking boots, which she keeps in the office ready for whenever she has a moment to walk a lap.

Pupils are taken out periodically for up to 15 minutes, allowing them to do as many laps as they can before they go back to class.

The new path encourages pupils to exercise outside of PE lessons, without



Pupils and staff led by Alison Patrick embark on their first lap

having to leave the school premises.

Lymn-Brewin said: "I wanted to create a space without leaving the school site. That was really important to me, because if you take children off site you have to get special permission, you have to look at your ratios of adults to children, you have to take your first aid kit... it becomes a big thing. We've



Alison Patrick shows off her bronze medal

got a lovely big field so I said surely we can have a path that does a mile."

## ON THE HUNT FOR GOVERNORS

A new online service aims to connect schools and colleges with would-be governors and trustees.

Funded by the Department for Education until 2020, the free matchmaking service Inspiring Governance allows individuals to register their skills, and boards to look for governors.

It also provides advice and support for volunteers and governing boards, as well as for employers wanting to run governance volunteering programmes for their staff. It follows a survey by the National Governors' Association (NGA) and TES that found 61 per cent of governing boards had difficulty attracting members.

More than 3,000 volunteers have already signed up to the service, which is run by charity Education and Employers, in partnership with the NGA.

Lord Nash, academies minister, said: "It's more important than ever to give our young people the opportunities they deserve. This means building and supporting better school governing boards across England.

"It's essential that we do more to attract talented and committed volunteers."

[inspiringgovernance.org](http://inspiringgovernance.org)

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**Paul Smith** has been appointed chairman of the Choir Schools Association (CSA). The association represents 44 schools attached to cathedrals, churches and college chapels across the UK and Ireland. Established in 1918, it will celebrate its centenary in 2018, which Smith will oversee during his two-year chairmanship.

Smith, headmaster of Hereford Cathedral school and a biologist, will be the first scientist to lead the association. He has published a number of scientific papers, most notably on the black rat.

"I'm not a musician, so when I was asked to join the committee I said I'd happily serve, but I hope they weren't expecting me to sing a solo at any point because they'd be very disappointed."

Before his Hereford appointment – where he has been for 12 years – Smith taught biology across a number of schools, including King Edward's school in Birmingham and Portsmouth grammar.

As a head and chair of the CSA, he plans to develop safeguarding procedures between schools and cathedrals to protect choristers who often perform with adults. "I want to make sure we're all singing from the same hymn sheet."



Paul Smith



Peter Fidler CBE



Dr Anthony Radice

**Peter Fidler CBE** is the first chair of governors at the new Beacon of Light school in Sunderland.

The alternative provision school will cater for students aged between 13-16 who have struggled in mainstream education, and will provide placements of 12 weeks and upwards that will include sports-based activities alongside classroom learning.

Classes are currently run at the Stadium of Light, home of Sunderland football club, until work is completed on a £16 million purpose-built education, training and sports facility.

In his new role, Fidler will oversee the appointment of governors, as well as the direction of the school as it grows.

"For different reasons, our young people will not have been as successful in the traditional school environment as they would have liked. Using new and innovative ways to engage and inspire them, we think we can reignite their school careers."

Before joining Beacon of Light, Fidler

led the University of Sunderland as chief executive and vice-chancellor, before becoming president in 2014.

**Dr Anthony Radice** has been appointed one of the first specialist subject leaders at the Inspiration Trust.

The trust is made up of 13 schools across East Anglia and was recently named as the top schools group in the UK for progress at secondary level.

He will be one of two specialists leading the development of the English curriculum within the trust, working closely with the director of education as the trust establishes its new teaching school and training centre.

Radice has worked in the state and independent sector, and is currently head of English at an independent school in London. He will move to Norfolk to begin his new job in September next year.

"I'm very excited by the opportunity to work with English teachers across the trust, and look forward to building a scholarly community of subject experts dedicated to sharing the riches of English language and literature with the next generation," he said.

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

## A new primary school website - for the price of your old one?

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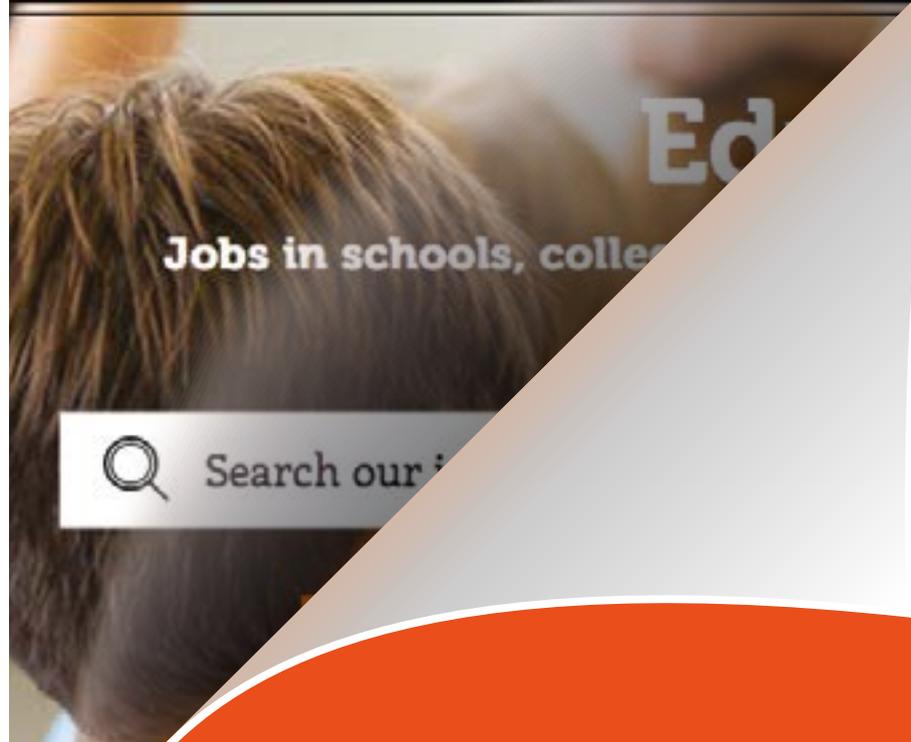
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### SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

### Spot the difference to WIN a *Schools Week* mug



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

Difficulty: **EASY**

#### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week



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