



**A CYBERATTACK
COULD HAPPEN IN
YOUR SCHOOL**



page 8

**MARY MYATT:
WHY I'D WANT TO
BE A MAYFLY**



page 16

**AMJAD ALI:
BE PREPARED
FOR RAMADAN**



page 18

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SCHOOLS?

Pages 10-11



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ELECTION WATCH: CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO PLEDGES

Grammars will go ahead, with 'conditions'

The Conservative Party has confirmed plans to lift the ban on new grammar schools in its manifesto, a move which will guarantee the policy will go ahead if they win the election.

The document also confirms several other proposals from the 'Schools That Work for Everyone' consultation last year, including a requirement that universities wishing to charge £9,000 tuition fees set up free schools and sponsor academies.

At least 100 "leading" independent schools will also "become involved" in academy sponsorship, or founding free schools – the manifesto states.

The party would "keep open" the option of removing the tax status of independent schools "if progress is not made".

Theresa May's commitment on grammar schools was widely expected to be included in the manifesto, given the fierce divide over the policy within the Conservative Party.

As the proposal was not included in the Conservatives' 2015 manifesto, it meant that MPs and Lords in the last parliament were not obliged to support it.

However, if May wins the election on June 8, grammar-sceptic MPs will have to vote to lift the ban, and the House of Lords will not be able to block it.

The Conservatives say the lifting of the ban will be subject to certain conditions, such as "allowing pupils to join at other ages as well as eleven".

The manifesto also highlights "official research" that shows more children from "ordinary, working class families" attend selective schools (as a percentage of the intake) compared to non-selective schools.

However academics have accused the



government of skewing the figure – which is identical to data in a government consultation launched last month and which labelled pupils from families which earn below median income level, but who don't qualify for free school meals, as coming from "ordinary working families".

The figures therefore leave out the impact on pupils from low-income families and who, according to official briefing papers in the House of Commons library, are "much less likely" to attend grammar schools.

The private school plans have been cautiously welcomed. Barnaby Lenon, Independent Schools Council chairman, said private schools are already involved in partnerships with state schools, adding others with the capacity to do so "will be willing to increase support".

But he warned: "It is important to remember that ours is a sector of 1,300 mostly small schools with limited capability in this area."

He said the greatest benefit can be achieved by working together in a "spirit of voluntarism".

There are also concerns over whether private schools can boost standards by sponsoring state schools.

Schools Week revealed last month that half of the academies currently sponsored by grammars were rated as requires improvement or inadequate by Ofsted.

The Conservatives also pledged to "make it a condition" for universities hoping to charge maximum tuition fees to sponsor academies and found free schools.

But a spokesperson for the Russell Group, which represents 24 leading universities, said they believe "ensuring universities maintain the freedom to decide how they work best with schools is the optimal way to ensure the students are supported to succeed".

The manifesto also seemingly confirms plans to lift the cap on faith-based admissions which, it states, "prevent the establishment of new Roman Catholic schools".

Instead faith schools will have to prove that parents of other faiths, and none, would be prepared to send their children to that school.

Cash from scrapped free meals will go to funding loss schools

Conservative plans to pump £4 billion into schools isn't enough to counteract rising costs that are squeezing budgets to breaking point, unions have warned.

The Conservatives have pledged to add £4 billion to the overall schools budget by 2022, which the party claims represents a "more than a real-terms increase for every year of the parliament".

It includes £335 million per year to ensure that no school will lose out under the government's new national funding formula.

But Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said the extra money is "not enough to counteract the rising costs which are hitting schools and will amount to £3 billion a year by 2020".

The Conservative Party will fund most of its pledge by scrapping universal infant free school meals (UIFSM), which they said is "not the best use of public money".

The rest of the savings will be found through "better systems" for the student loans companies (£200 million),

departmental efficiencies (£160 million) and the soft drinks levy (£10 million).

The party has pledged to introduce free breakfast for primary pupils in place of lunches, at a cost of £60 million a year, and claim they have listened to both the Institute for Fiscal Studies and ASCL, both of which have suggested that breakfasts could be a better investment than free lunches.

The cash injection comes in the context of further significant cuts faced by schools due to increased staffing and tax costs.

The amount is also less than that pledged by Labour, which wants to spend an additional £6.3 billion on schools over the next parliament, including plans to extend universal free school lunches to all primary pupils.

Russell Hobby (pictured), general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, welcomed the Conservative Party's "admission" that schools were underfunded.

But warned: "However,

they are short of what is needed for schools to just stand still. Moreover, their remedy to take money away from universal infant free school meals to help plug this gap is disappointing. This is just moving money around inside the system."

Barton also highlighted that many schools had investing money in extending their kitchens and changed catering suppliers to meet the UIFSM requirement – introduced by the coalition government in 2014.

A Conservative spokesperson claimed the party had increased school funding "to the highest level on record" but accepted there was "more we can do". "This extra money means no child will lose out," he said.



The EBacc target is back - but at just 75%

If the Conservative party continue in government then it will only expect 75 per cent of pupils to enter GCSEs for the EBacc subjects by 2022, a reduction from the 90 per cent target by 2020 proposed by ministers last year.

A consultation on the accountability measure, which requires pupils to be entered for GCSEs in English, maths, science, history or geography and a modern foreign language, last year said nine in 10 pupils should be taking the subjects.

However, the manifesto only commits the Conservatives to reaching the 90 per cent target by 2025, five years later than originally planned.

Associations who advocate for subjects outside of the EBacc have pointed to reductions in pupil take-up as a consequence of the policy, and have suggested pupils could face an increasingly narrow curriculum which would affect those with lower prior attainment.

But the latest government data shows there is a long way to go before even the majority of pupils are taking all the qualifications.

In 2016, just 39.6 per cent of pupils were entered for the full slate of EBacc subjects, a rise of just one percentage point on 2015.

A long delay to the government's response to the consultation on the EBacc target prompted speculation that the target

would be abandoned in the face of concerns about the exclusion of arts subjects and some schools cutting creative subject teaching roles.

Mary Bousted (pictured), the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the EBacc target was "part of the skills problem" and that it "gives little consideration to children with special educational needs and abilities" who sometimes struggle with the subjects.

The Edge Foundation, a charity that promotes vocational learning, also warns that the EBacc compels thousands of young people to follow a "narrow and entirely academic curriculum over a century old".

However official government plans for future teacher training courses reveal the Department for Education has also been preparing to train fewer teachers in creative subjects in favour of training those in EBacc subjects. (See story on page 7).

The Conservative manifesto also set out wider plans for a "knowledge-rich curriculum", re-committing to an expectation that every 11-year-old will know their times tables off by heart, and pledging to strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

The party says it wants to improve schools' accountability at key stage 3, prompting speculation that they could consider bringing back SATs for 14-year-



olds and says it will ensure tests at the end of primary school "draw from a rich knowledge base, and reduce teaching to the test".

Mark Lehain, the founder of Bedford Free School and advisory board member of the Parents and Teachers for Excellence campaign, welcomed the curriculum fund proposals and said the government was right to focus on key stage 3, which "too often becomes wasted years as schools become overly focused on GCSEs".

"I hope that other parties will take a similar line, as this is not a politically motivated issue; all candidates, from all parts of the political spectrum, should be able to appreciate the good that a knowledge-rich curriculum can do."

The Conservatives claim that their recent curriculum reforms have been "profound", addressing grade inflation and poor standards and developing a "world-class curriculum".

FULL DETAILS OF PLEDGES ON PAGE 10

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

The Conservative Party has pledged that new teachers would have their student loan repayments forgiven for the whole time they remain in the profession.

In its election manifesto the party says it will offer forgiveness in order to help new teachers "remain in the profession".

The Conservatives will also provide "dedicated support" to help teachers throughout their careers, according to the manifesto, although no further details are provided.

A student loan forgiveness scheme was suggested in 2015 by the right-leaning think-tank Policy Exchange to bring more graduates into the profession.

A report by the Higher Education Policy Institute think-tank, published last month, also suggested introducing 'forgivable fees' to boost teacher numbers.

Under the model provided by HEPI, the fees would be waived each year commensurate to what the teacher would have been required to pay if employed elsewhere.

The manifesto also promises to continue paying bursaries to trainee teachers in some subjects.

But James Noble-Rogers, executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, told *Schools Week* earlier this year that larger bursaries, such as the £25,000 upwards offering to science and maths teachers, were a "dead weight".

"All you're doing is attracting bursary tourists," he said.

However he "absolutely supported" the idea of fee forgiveness.

The government has missed its teacher recruitment targets for the last five years, and in 2016-17, the number of graduates starting initial teacher training fell on the previous year.

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IN-DEPTH: VULNERABLE GROUPS

Surge in looked-after primary children, but not in London

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

An exodus of looked-after children from the capital could be driving down the achievement rates in other parts of the country, a new *Schools Week* analysis has found.

The number of primary-aged children in care nationally has risen 21 per cent since 2011, but during the same period numbers in London dropped by 16 per cent.

Overall, the number of secondary-aged looked-after children has dipped by 3 per cent – largely due to falling numbers of teenagers – but there was a much bigger 13 per cent fall in the capital.

The figures only relate, in all examples, to children in exam year groups – year 3, year 6 and year 11 – as these are the figures released in the government's official statistics.

Areas that appear to be increasing most rapidly in primary include the West Midlands, which has risen by 37 per cent from 510 in 2011 to 700 children in 2016. The southeast (excluding London) has also increased by the same percentage from 430 in 2011 to 590 in 2016.

Wolverhampton was particularly hard hit with a 275 per cent increase in primary-aged children during this time and a 75 per cent hike at secondary.

London was the only region with a decrease in primary-aged looked-after children over the period.

Experts say the drop in London's numbers are the result of fosterers priced out of the capital, councils not being able to fund children's homes in the region, and moves to protect children from gang culture.

They also believe that children in care, who statistically have considerably lower attainment scores than their peers, could be lowering the published outcomes of primary schools in the areas where numbers have dramatically increased.

However, they say that the number of looked-after children moving from London is "too small" to impact on secondary schools with bigger cohorts.

The attainment gap between children in care and their peers has narrowed since 2010, but still remains substantial. In 2010, 12.4 per cent achieved the benchmark of five or more A* to C grades, including English and maths, compared with 52.9 per cent of other pupils – a 40 per cent gap.

That gap decreased a little by 2016, when 13.6 per cent of looked-after children achieved the standard compared with 53 per cent nationally, but the two figures remain stubbornly far apart.

Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, warned that an increase of just two looked-after children in a primary cohort

National changes in the number of looked-after children in year 3 and year 6

+21%

WEST MIDLANDS

**2011: 510 CHILDREN
2016: 700 CHILDREN**

+37%

LONDON

**2011: 550 CHILDREN
2016: 460 CHILDREN**

-16%

SOUTH EAST

**2011: 420 CHILDREN
2016: 590 CHILDREN**

+37%



Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang

of 30 youngsters "can have a big impact on overall results if they are low-achieving" given the pupils will contribute 6 per cent of results.

In secondary schools, however, two pupils in a cohort of 200 "would not influence results" overalls.

Schools Week analysed new government figures on the educational outcomes of children in care for at least 12 months and found that since 2011, the number of children in care in year 3 (age 7) has increased by 15 per cent and the number in care by year 6 (age 11) has increased by 26 per cent, with much of the change due to increased pupil numbers overall.

But in London, the figures went down by 20 per cent for year 3 and down by 14 per cent for year 6.

Meanwhile, the number of looked-after children in year 11 (age 16) dropped by 3 per cent overall – again related to a change

in the overall cohort size. But London had a much bigger drop of 13 per cent.

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, director of The Lighthouse Project, a group that is establishing a new model of children's home in London, said there were "several reasons" why the number of looked-after children in London has fallen, including high living costs.

He told *Schools Week*: "Few potential foster parents can afford a house with a spare room.

"Another factor is the challenge of establishing children's homes in London, which is much more expensive than in other parts of the country. Local authorities with downward pressure on their budgets are more likely to place young people outside the capital."

Chloë Cockett, policy manager at the care leavers' charity, Become, said that children

in the capital might also be moved out "to keep them safe if

they are victims of child sexual exploitation or have been involved in gangs".

London has been lauded as a high-achieving area in recent years, particularly for poorer children.

However, if vulnerable and statistically lower-attaining groups are decreasing in its boroughs while increasing elsewhere, it could be that the shift in demographics in London is boosting results.

Trobe said that while a number of factors contributed to London's success, it was "too difficult" to isolate a single factor such as children leaving the capital.

Akpan-Inwang added that the number of children involved in the care system was "too small for there to be any identifiable impact on school improvement".

NEWS

Alternative MATs must expand to meet rising demand

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

Multi-academy trusts that specialise in alternative provision are being asked to expand and sponsor new schools as local authority-run services are squeezed by greater demand.

The number of alternative provision (AP) academies, which cater for excluded pupils as well as those with emotional, behavioural and medical needs, have increased dramatically in the past four years from six in 2013 to 77 last year.

Pupil numbers in local authority alternative provision – home tuition services and hospital schools – have dropped marginally over the past four years, from 22,205 in 2013 to 22,032 in 2016, according to government figures.

But the numbers attending local authority-run pupil referral units, which tend to deal with excluded pupils, rose 2,000 – with increasing demand putting pressure on the creation of new places.

At present, only a few MATs specialise in alternative provision, but all three who spoke to *Schools Week* said they had been asked to increase their admission numbers, sponsor new schools and open new regional hubs.

Headteachers say the expansion is needed as more pupils move into alternative

provision as a result of cuts, failed home education and increasingly complex emotional needs.

Rob Gasson, chief executive of the Acorn MAT in Cornwall, said three new classrooms have been built across his seven AP academies to cope with an influx of children under the age of seven.

More four to six-year-olds were coming to the trust, which took over seven PRUs in 2013, because increasing austerity and domestic abuse lead to a rise in problems at home, he said.

The local authority had asked him to extend the number of places he offered from 300 to 330, with the actual number of pupils closer to 380 this year.

Failed home education by parents who removed their child from school after threats of prosecution for absenteeism also brought five pupils to the trust.

This year the number of pupils in Cornwall electively home-educated has risen from 350 to about 900 over the past five years, council figures show.

Seamus Oates, chief executive of the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision trust (TBAP)



based in west London, said there also had been rises in the “complexity of younger learners’ needs”, including more substance abuse, as well as pupils from war zones, girls who self-harmed and those in care.

Cuts had increasingly changed local authority-run children’s services into “commissioners” of services “rather than delivery arms”.

He said pupil-referral units (PRUs) might find it hard to academise because they were more enmeshed with the local authority. For instance, some PRU heads were also inclusion leads for their council.

TBAP, whose first school became an academy in 2013, has nine AP academies

and one special needs school. It has been asked by councils to run alternative provision schools in north, west and central London, while a Cambridgeshire headteacher group also asked it to take on a struggling school in its area. It is also set to open a regional hub in the northwest.

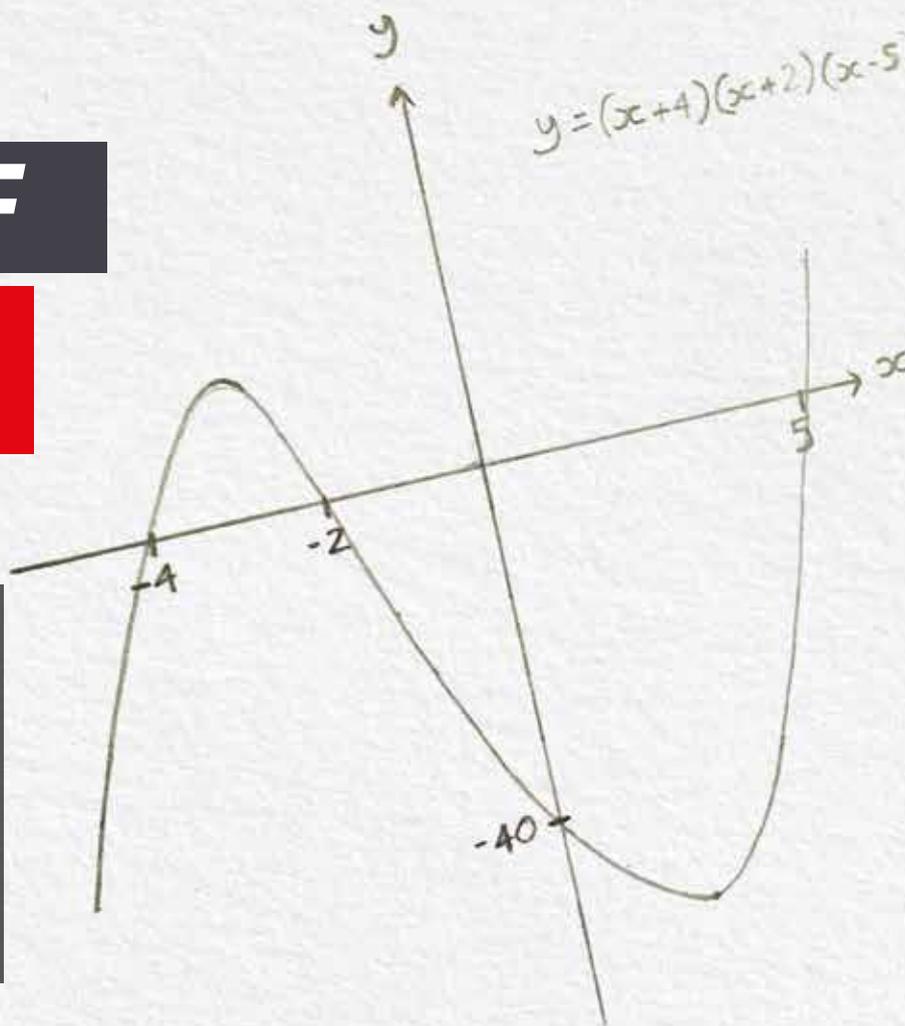
Olive Academies trust, which has AP schools in northeast London and Essex, will take over a PRU in Suffolk this summer. Its Essex academy received an inadequate Ofsted judgment in January this year, while its other school is yet to be inspected.

Sandy Davies, the principal of Education Links, a former independent AP school in east London that became a free school in 2014, said expansion would be considered after it had its first Ofsted inspection.

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NEWS

WEST SUSSEX GOVERNORS 'STRIKE' IN CUTS PROTEST

School governors at more than 20 schools in West Sussex go on "strike" today in what is believed to be the first protest of its kind in England.

Their action follows letters they sent to MPs in February warning that they would stop signing budgets and carrying out supervisory work.

A letter from the board at Upper Beeding Primary called for £20 million emergency funding for the area's schools.

Malcolm Gordon, a spokesperson for the group, said the strike was arranged after a "lack of response" from the government over funding concerns and a delay in implementing the national funding formula.

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association, previously told *Schools Week* the action was a "good PR tactic", but warned there were "moral and practical implications".

Governors are not employees, but they can refuse to carry out their duties, including the oversight of recruitment.

Academy trustees can face dismissal, depending on the rules set by individual trusts. Councils may intervene in local authority-maintained schools if work is not completed.

But organisers of the action in West Sussex said the governors had cleared their diaries for the day to ensure minimal disruption.

It is understood that governors of other schools in West Sussex do not back the strike action.

Struggling UTC opens a feeder school next door

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

A university technical college that has struggled to recruit pupils is opening an 11 to 14 "specialist academy" next door to act as its own feeder school.

The Inspiration Academy@Leigh UTC will open in September on the same plot and directly opposite the Leigh UTC in Kent. It will be run by the Leigh Academies Trust (LAT), which already sponsors 15 schools in Kent, including Leigh UTC.

The school will take 120 pupils a year to study a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) based-curriculum. They will then be given an automatic place at the 14 to 19 UTC.

Leigh UTC has struggled to attract pupils since opening in 2014. It is rated good by Ofsted, but fewer than a third of places are filled and pupil numbers dropped 17 per cent this academic year.

Stephen Leahey, who will lead both the UTC and the academy, said pupil numbers at the UTC "will go up as a result of the new school".

However, Kevin Courtney, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said it "does not make sense" to base a new school around efforts to preserve the UTC.

"The closure of [seven] UTCs up and down the country is evidence that this model of 14 to 19 education has failed. There is a danger here that decisions that will

affect children's education are being made to support structures rather than learning."

The new system will also go ahead without the blessing of the Baker Dearing Trust, responsible for overseeing all UTCs.

A spokesperson for the trust said it would not grant a licence to a school to operate as a UTC if it included pupils at key stage 3 because "children should not be specialising under the age of 14".

This barrier prompted The Inspiration Academy to open as a separate school, rather than LAT creating an 11 to 19 UTC.

The trust sees the new system as a form of 11 to 19 UTC, but with pupils able to enter or exit the pathway at three ages – 11, 14 and 16.

If pupils at 14 do not want to continue at the UTC, they will be offered a place at one of LAT's other secondary schools, which are all rated at least good by Ofsted.

Leahey said that while the new school would have a "specific focus" on STEM subjects, pupils would be taught a "broad and balanced" curriculum that would include art, PE, languages and a "healthy minds" programme.

He told *Schools Week* that children aged



10 and 11 already "have a passion for STEM" and it was a "no-brainer" to build a school that "meets that need".

Leahey said Leigh's recruitment struggles were partly down to being in a selective area. Plus, all other local schools "work hard to keep up and offer a broad choice at key stage 4", which made it "hard to set up initially and attract those interested in STEM careers".

The Baker Dearing spokesperson said although the trust "hopes" many pupils from the key stage 3 feeder would want to move to Leigh UTC, "we would not wish them to feel that they were obliged to do so".

The first cohort of year 7s at the new 11 to 14 academy will initially start in Leigh UTC's building in September, with the new adjacent building due to be ready after Christmas.

We are paying apprenticeship levy, say supply staff

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

One of the country's leading umbrella companies for supply teachers denies it is passing on the costs of the government's new apprenticeship levy to employees.

But *Schools Week* understands that some supply teachers employed by the RACs Group raised concerns after their pay slips included a percentage deduction attributed to the "apprenticeship levy".

Since April companies with a pay bill of more than £3 million have been forced to pay a levy to the government, equating to 0.5 per cent of their payrolls.

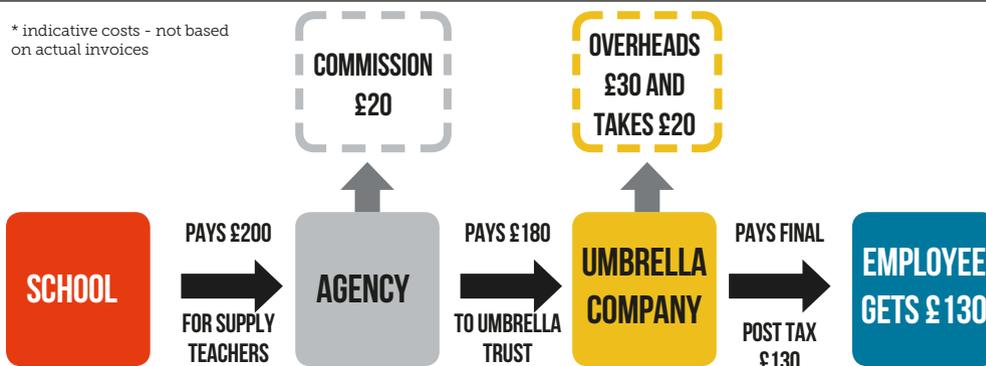
It is unclear what percentage appeared on the supply teachers' pay slips, but rules state companies cannot deduct the levy from the wages of an earner.

RACs says it is following the law and deducts the levy costs as a "business overhead" from the income it earns through agencies that send out supply teachers, rather than employee's earnings.

But some experts say the arrangement means that some of the sector's most vulnerable workers, or the schools that employ agency supply workers, are being hit with an extra charge.

It also poses questions for the government's levy scheme – with recruitment companies seemingly paying the tax, but snubbing apprenticeship training in return.

* indicative costs - not based on actual invoices



Complicated umbrella structures

The confusion over whether the deductions are lawful stems from the complicated structure of umbrella pay arrangements.

Umbrella companies act as an employer to workers who are contracted via agencies – in this case, supply teachers.

The advantage for supply teachers is that if they work across several schools, the umbrella company takes away the hassle of processing multiple pay cheques and completing onerous tax self-assessments.

Usually, supply teachers hired under umbrella arrangements are paid extra by the school, but the umbrella company then makes deductions from the fee.

So, a school pays an agency for a supply teacher. The agency takes its cut, and passes the rest on to the umbrella company. The umbrella company then deducts its business costs – including its margin, employer's national insurance

contributions and, in the case of RACs, the apprenticeship levy.

That leaves a final sum that is passed as gross earnings to the contractor, although this will then include further deductions for PAYE (income) tax.

Colin Cartmell-Browne, a former supply teacher, said that including the apprenticeship levy as part of the business cost deductions meant "already low wages become even lower".

Chris Keates, NASUWT general secretary, also said the arrangement most affected "people who are vulnerable to the vagaries of intermittent employment".

But RACs has denied the levy impacts the gross pay of employees. Mark Clarke, legal and compliance director at the company, said the deduction was made from RACs' invoiced income – that is, the full fee coming into the company from the school – rather than employee earnings. Other firms operated in the same way, he said.

Clarke said the company aimed to be transparent about the deductions made to cover its overheads – something industry experts say is good practice – hence its inclusion on payslips.

Levy not making impact

The arrangement reveals a potential flaw in the government's apprenticeship levy, particularly for recruitment and payroll companies widely used across education.

RACs, for instance, must pay the levy because it has a payroll of more than £3 million. However, most of that goes to contractors – its website says it has 75 internal staff.

Clarke said the company's size meant it was unable to use a "cashback" system that allows companies to claw the levy back to pay for apprenticeship training. The cost therefore becomes an extra tax to the firm.

Adrian Marlowe, chairman of the Association of Recruitment Consultancies, said he had warned the government the levy would disproportionately impact the recruitment sector because of "artificially inflated payrolls".

He said: "Agencies will need to protect their margins and so will either have to pass the costs of the levy on to hirers or to agency workers, yet neither will benefit."

A Department for Education spokesperson said they could not comment because of purdah restrictions.

NEWS

Government plans 'trusted' pool of agencies for temps

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

The government is planning to step in and establish a national pool of 'trusted' supply teacher agencies in a bid to help schools cut down on spiralling agency bills.

The government's buying arm, the Crown Commercial Service (CCS), is developing the pool alongside the Department for Education (DfE) to get a better deal for schools that have to recruit temporary staff.

While the plans are currently out for consultation, it is believed the companies would offer supply staff at a set rate and would have to sign up to a code of conduct.

In a presentation seen by *Schools Week*, the CCS highlighted government figures that show spending on supply staff rose from £918 million in 2011-12 to £1.2 billion in 2014-15.

Amanda Brown, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said schools needed a system to source supply teachers at "reasonable cost and which allows supply teachers to be properly paid for their work". Money should go into education "not shareholders' profits", she said.

Highlighting wide variations in agency fees and dwindling support from local authority supply pools, the CCS suggested



schools were not getting good value for money.

Unions have previously said that agencies are "exploiting" supply teachers. NASUWT annual conference delegates were told last month that some charged up to £10,000 in finders' fees if a school wanted to recruit staff permanently.

CCS officials presented their proposals in March to education recruitment firms that belong to the Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

They told the confederation that schools wanted clear advice on how to engage temporary staff, a mandatory code of conduct for agencies, and "realistic and consistent" fees.

The plans cover all school types and all roles from teaching assistants up to headteacher and executive leader roles, according to documents seen by *Schools Week*. Uber-style teacher supply apps are also being considered.

Frameworks of approved suppliers, developed by the CCS, are more commonly used in the health sector. However, education services currently on offer include IT, insurance and photocopier deals.

Schools minister Nick Gibb, in a letter to a Labour MP last month over funding cuts, urged schools to utilise the deals – such as buying new photocopiers – to meet budget shortfalls.

Tom Hadley, director of policy at the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, said the government was right to explore potential efficiencies.

But he added: "In many instances schools are turning to supply agencies because of the shortage of teachers to fill longer-term vacancies. A new framework will not solve this fundamental problem of low supply and high demand."

Officials are currently consulting with supply teacher providers, before launching a tender this summer.

However, some questions have arisen over the claim that schools spent £1.2 billion in 2014-15. Previous investigations by *Schools Week* into the figure, quoted in the CCS presentation, found inconsistencies with what academies were reported to have spent, and what they did spend.

For instance, the Robert Clack School in Dagenham, east London, was recorded as spending nearly £1 million on supply teachers in 2014-15, a figure that works out at £526 per child – the highest spend in the country.

However, the school told the BBC the figures were "misleading" as they included spend on counsellors, extra-curricular sports staff and continued professional development.

EBacc prompts training place cuts for creative subjects

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

Official government figures show the demand for teachers in EBacc subjects is set to soar, indicating the subjects will become mandatory, despite a consultation response on the policy being withheld from publication.

Almost twice as many trainees in geography, for example, are needed next year, while the demand for new teachers in creative subjects will fall by up to 11 per cent in some cases.

The Department for Education (DfE) last week published its initial teacher training allocations for 2017-18. This follows an unprecedented decision not to release them last September.

Among the data was the government's teacher supply model predictions that reveal how many teachers it presumes should be trained in each subject to meet national demand next year.

These reveal a huge increase in the need for teachers of EBacc subjects, with some estimations nearly doubling.

Associations representing non-EBacc subjects say the figures are "deeply concerning" and criticise the government for "pre-judging" the outcome of the delayed EBacc consultation.

The EBacc is a performance measure based on pupils' grades in five subjects: English, mathematics, history or geography, the sciences (including computing) and a



language.

The DfE launched a consultation in November 2015 on its plans to make 90 per cent of pupils study the EBacc curriculum at GCSE, but the results are still to be published.

The new teacher supply predictions, however, show that ministers are expecting a steep demand for teachers in the five compulsory subjects.

The number of would-be geography teachers has leapt 97 per cent, from 778 in the last academic year to 1,531. History places increased 42 per cent from 816 to 1,160.

Meanwhile, the number of places for trainees in design and technology has fallen

11 per cent from 848 in 2016-17 to 751 next year. Demand for new teachers in food technology is also down 11 per cent from 186 to 166.

Julie Nugent, chief executive of The Design and Technology Association, said the "continued impact" of the EBacc was "reducing the demand for design and technology in schools despite the wider demand for these skills from UK industry".

The number of places for art & design trainees dropped 9 per cent from 633 to 577; music and drama also fell. All the subjects were also affected by a decrease in take-up by pupils.

Last year 39.6 per cent of pupils took the

five EBacc subjects, compared with 23 per cent in 2012.

Meanwhile, the number of pupils taking GCSEs in creative arts and technical subjects last year fell 8 per cent, while the number taking at least one arts-based GCSE fell 1.7 per cent.

The new predictions for initial teacher training also come as school leaders face staff restructures forced by diminishing schools budgets.

Delta Academies Trust, formerly the School Partnership Trust Academies, lost more than 100 staff last year and removed a number of creative subjects from its curriculum to prioritise the more academic subjects found in the EBacc.

The decision was made after the cash-strapped trust expressed fears children were studying too many subjects and schools were "overstaffed".

A spokesperson for the Bacc for the Future campaign said: "The government must act quickly to address this decline by reforming or withdrawing the EBacc and by not pre-judging the outcome of the consultation."

A spokesperson for The Council for Subject Associations said the predicted increase in demand for EBacc subject teachers was "clearly being prioritised even though future policy is yet to be confirmed and the government is still to respond to the EBacc consultation".

Purdah restrictions stopped any DfE comment on the allocations.

NEWS

TEACHERS RAID QUESTION BANKS AS THE EXAM SEASON LOOMS

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Schools are spending thousands of pounds on "question banks" to prepare pupils for exams and to improve assessment outcomes.

The banks, which allow teachers to access different types of questions on a single topic, have grown at a "crazy" rate, say exam boards.

AQA offers a question bank for primary schools called Testbase, which costs £240 for the complete package. Exampro for secondary schools costs up to £100 for separate subjects.

Each includes past exam questions, mark schemes and examiner commentary.

Laura Lassman, managing director of Doublestruck, the assessment technology organisation within AQA that runs Testbase and Exampro, said "growth has gone crazy year-on-year".

On a single day last week, teachers used Exampro 18,000 times, a rise of 5,000 from the highest point last year. Meanwhile, Testbase was used 13,500 times last week, a similar total to the rest of the year.

Each annual licence allows three users per subject, which would equate to schools spending thousands of pounds on Exampro.

However, teachers tend to use the banks more than once, peaking towards exams, said an AQA spokesperson.

Questions are indexed by topic, type and curriculum objectives, and can be used ahead of teaching.

Whereas teachers "used to go through old past papers, cut and paste them on paper and photocopy them", now they could quickly produce topic-based compilations, Lassman said.

Daisy Christodoulou, head of assessment at the multi-academy trust Ark, said the use of question banks was one of a fleet of exciting technology changes in assessment.

Not only could teachers access past questions, but pupils could also help to refine future questions, she told delegates at a May 9 event about assessment held by the Chartered College of Teaching.

Crowdsourcing – teachers sending in questions – could also revolutionise assessments.

Cambridge Assessment is crowdsourcing computer science questions in a joint project with Microsoft. Tim Oates, head of assessment research and development, said the subject, which was added to the EBacc three years ago, "desperately" needed a question bank.

More than 4,000 computing questions have been submitted, and are now available free on the Cambridge Assessment website.

Oates has advised the government to create national question banks "for all subjects across all years" to help to cut back on workload and cost.

Schools need to learn from NHS cyberattack

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Stringent "hack plans" must be developed by schools in the light of a global cyberattack that brought much of the NHS's computer system to its knees last Friday.

Security experts say teachers should not open links or attachments on laptops or phones connected to a school's network in case the message is a fraud.

Ken Corish, online safety director at the education tech charity, South West Grid for Learning, said "more and more schools" had been hit by ransomware viruses that encrypted sensitive data before the hackers demanded payment to get it back.

"Tens of schools" in the southwest had been affected over the past year, with some paying thousands of pounds to hackers, he said.

In one case, a school left the affected computer running for five days without telling the local authority, allowing the virus to spread throughout its computer system.

"It's like a cold virus. It doesn't target schools specifically, it takes the opportunity where defences are weak," Corish said.

At the end of last week, a virus infiltrated the NHS's outdated XP Windows system, leaving many hospitals unable to access patients' medical records. A ransom – to be paid in bitcoins, the internet currency – was demanded.

Steve Proffitt, deputy head of Action Fraud, the national cybercrime reporting centre, told *Schools Week* the hackers

were likely to morph the ransomware and attack again.

"Schools using old Windows systems are incredibly vulnerable.

"If systems are susceptible, the virus could go into your finance details and empty your budget for the year."

Schools Week has previously reported that hackers have demanded up to £8,000 from targeted headteachers for sensitive data to be recovered.

Corish and Proffitt recommend a number of strategies to avoid ransomware threats.

Staff should not open links or attachments in emails, or texts on phones or laptops connected to the school's system, even if they recognise the sender. Unless an email with an attachment or link was expected, "ring the sender and check they sent it".

Schools should have a data protection strategy, with sensitive data backed up daily off-site or in the Cloud, and all other data backed up weekly. This would allow data to be recovered without payment if there were a ransomware attack.

Anti-viral and anti-malware software and all other systems should be up-to-date. Ransomware-specific protection is available as a bolt-on to anti-viral software for as little



Ken Corish



as £4 for each device for a year. School-specific disaster recovery insurance for £25 a year would cover £12,000 of costs.

Staff should be trained to recognise a ransomware attack, they say.

For instance, a computer will become unusable or data disappear. A "splash screen" will also pop up demanding a ransom – often for bitcoins – to have sensitive data returned unencrypted.

A school's "hack plan" should immediately cut off the "infected" machine from the network. The school should then call Action Fraud and the local education authority or central academy trust.

If personal data has been breached, the Information Commissioner's Office should be told. All attacks should be communicated to parents.

Tony Parkin, an education technologist, said smaller schools without a savvy staff member could particularly "overlook" the need to update all their systems. It should be a priority, he said.

DfE 'forces' pupils towards computing GCSE

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Teachers have accused the government of deliberately holding back approval for new ICT qualifications to force more pupils into the harder computing GCSE.

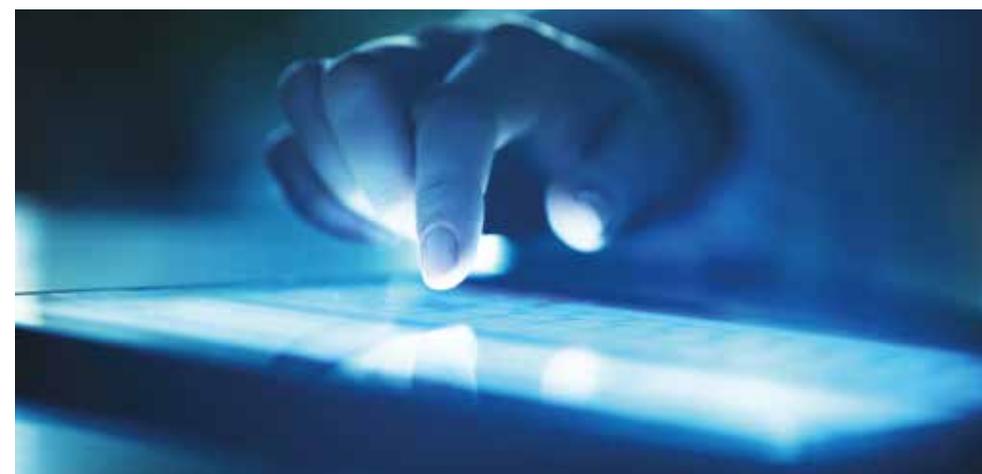
Exam boards are still waiting to hear whether the updated ICT technical qualifications they submitted in March will get the go-ahead for September.

The uncertainty makes it impossible to let pupils know what topics they are studying next year, ICT teachers say.

The only ICT qualification suitable for schools approved by the Department for Education (DfE) in an update released this week is "outdated" and does not have enough focus on cyber security – an aim of the qualification reform, they say.

Kay Sawbridge, an ICT teacher, says schools should have more choice about "what is suitable for the futures of our pupils, and that includes cyber security".

Two options for ICT as a technical qualification have been approved for next year: a City & Guilds level 2 technical award in digital technologies that Sawbridge says is "aimed at further education"; and a Pearson EdExcel level 2 certificate in digital applications, which does not



extensively cover hacking and malware.

The government introduced the approval process this year after schools were found to be "gaming" league tables by entering pupils into the European Computer Driving Licence, which some taught in three days.

The DfE's new ICT specifications say pupils must understand how to use technologies responsibly, including "protecting their online identity and privacy".

But two exam boards that have submitted courses that prioritise these aspects of cybersecurity are still waiting for approval.

TLM told *Schools Week* its level 2 certificate in open platforms and digital skills was submitted in March with

cybersecurity at "its heart".

The firm's managing director, Rosemary Lynch, said the DfE "indicated" these submissions would be included in the updated list published on May 16. But she was told on Monday there was "no date for the publication of the list".

OCR, also submitted its Cambridge national certificate in information technologies in March. A spokesperson says the qualification covers the "legal, moral, ethical, and security issues around data", as well as malware and hacking.

It was told that it would hear back in June – a message that appears to contradict the one given to Lynch.

NEWS

Inspiration shifts its focus to the curriculum

JOHN DICKENS

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Investigates

Inspiration Trust, the academy chain run by Dame Rachel de Souza, is planning to develop its own "knowledge-led" curriculum after admitting it has focused too much on "unsustainable" intervention approaches for turning round schools.

The East Anglia-based trust has revealed plans to open a curriculum centre, based on the site of Hewett Academy in Norwich, where Inspiration's subject specialists will develop a "fact-based curriculum" – an approach championed by the former education secretary Michael Gove.

The group will also host training events for teachers in and outside the trust.

The plans also reveal how the trust will look to monetise its new recruits, described on its website as "some of the country's leading educational thinkers".

Inspiration said the centre would build on "emerging priorities" of the government's opportunity area scheme, after Norwich was chosen as one of 12 areas to share extra cash to boost teaching and leadership capacity.

A spokesperson said the trust had taken on several challenging schools that required an "interventional approach" to quickly boost standards, such as focusing

on English and maths in year 11, or reading, writing and maths in year 6.

But it wants to move away from this approach. Christine Counsell, its director of education, said: "While essential for initial impact, the approach isn't sustainable in the long term. It involves throwing disproportionate resources at years 6 and 11, instead of tackling the deficits in pupils' knowledge and skill throughout key stages 2 and 3.

"This leaves us tackling problems too little, too late."

The trust wants to shift the focus to building knowledge in primary pupils in an initiative that echoes the curriculum development centre established by Future Academies, the trust set up by academies minister Lord Nash, which also employs "knowledge-rich" teaching.

Inspiration hopes eight subject leaders will be based at the centre by September. Five have been announced so far, including Steve Mastin, who advised Gove on curriculum, Anthony Radice and Michael Fordham. They will also teach one day a week at one of Inspiration's 13 schools.

The Harris Federation, which runs 41 schools in London, has a similar set-up. However, its subject leaders focus on delivering targeted intervention in areas where schools are struggling.

Inspiration's subject leaders will lead the shaping of the curriculum, which Counsell said could not be designed "in a vacuum and imposed".

"Curriculum design is an active, hands-on job that involves building and nurturing communities of subject teachers and leaders across the trust, working with our subject specialist leaders."

Continuing professional development (CPD) courses at the centre, which will include curriculum planning, will cost from £15 for members of the Inspiration Teaching School Alliance, to £100 for schools outside the region. The trust has set up "substantial" discounts for schools in the region, but schools from as far as Staffordshire have signed up so far.

Chris Keates, general secretary of the NASUWT, said schools had a "collective responsibility" to enhance pupils' learning and collaboration.

"But we would hope that schools would see the benefits of working collaboratively with one another to share experiences, advice and expertise, rather than commercialising that relationship."

Counsell said a "key reason" strong



subject teachers left the classroom was because they were "not valued for their subject expertise and passion".

"They also leave when they feel that generic pedagogy and assessment systems distort their subject, lower standards and waste time with paperwork of little value."

She said the aim was to develop "excellent and renowned subject communities that such teachers are desperate to join".

Inspiration has also reportedly been keen to open a "pupil premium" grammar school.

A spokesperson added the trust has no firm plans, but said it would not shy away from debating the possible benefits of grammar schools.

Labour sets aside £90m for school counsellors

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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School-based counselling services could be extended to every secondary school in England under a plan in Labour's manifesto, with at least £26,000 per school available to pay for the policy.

Labour has allocated £90 million a year for its plan.

In its manifesto the party said its new policy would benefit between 511 and 1,327 of the 3,401 secondary schools in England, a figure suggested by 2014 evidence to the health select committee that between 61 and 85 per cent of schools already provided access to counselling.

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary (pictured), said that at a time when mental health services "faced severe cuts", Labour's plan would ensure children got the "support they need to fulfil their full potential".

There is little official information about the number of schools that already have a counsellor or contract services from outside.

Hertfordshire County Council documents show it charges schools between £1,590 and £10,047 a year for counselling, depending on the type of school and how many sessions they use each week.

Entrust Associates, a private provider of school-based counsellors, says on its website that it charges £8,000 for two counsellors or coaches who offer about 400

sessions a year.

Research in 2015 by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) found that in Wales, every pupil who had school counselling had an average of five sessions at a total cost of between £170 and £235.

Anecdotal evidence suggests the prevalence of school-based counselling services is declining.

A joint inquiry by the health and education select committees reported last month that budget cuts mean eight in ten heads said cuts created barriers to adequate support.

Following the report, Andrew Reeves, who chairs BACP, said his organisation remained concerned that a blueprint for counselling in every school had not been progressed by the Department for Education.

"Without further political impetus England's children will continue to remain behind their peers in Wales and Northern Ireland in terms of emotional support," he said.

"We believe that all children and young people of school age across the UK should have

equal access to professional, qualified counselling services in their schools."

Last February, the government set out its "strong expectation" that, over time, "all schools should make counselling services available to their pupils".

However, it has so far only announced plans for mental health "first aid" training for staff in secondary schools and a named point of contact for mental health services in all schools.

The key barrier appears to be lack of funding, with leaders adamant that without additional resources schools cannot be expected to deliver more.

Anne Heavey, policy adviser at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said her union "fully supports

increasing access to counsellors for pupils" as it could provide the "crucial early intervention that can prevent mental health problems reaching crisis point".

But she added that schools and colleges "can't provide this service on their own" and demanded more money from the government.



GREEN PARTY LAUNCHES EDUCATION MANIFESTO

The Green Party launched its education manifesto this week outside a school on the Isle of Wight threatened with closure.

Sandown Bay Academy, operated by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), is facing merger with another school after its pupil numbers halved in five years.

Vix Lowthion, a secondary teacher on the Isle of Wight and the local candidate for the Green party, is critical of the merger with the Ryde Academy, more than six miles away.

She says the drop in pupil numbers follows the opening of The Island Free School in 2014.

"The pupil numbers have not dropped for educational reasons," she told *Schools Week*. "They opened a new free school down the road . . . even though there's a surplus."

The Greens have pledged to end the academies programme, which it claims has taken decisions about schools such as Sandown Bay "out of the hands" of councils and parents.

They have also pledged to pump £7 billion of additional funding into education.

AET told *The Island Echo*, a local newspaper, that its decision for Sandown Bay was "guided by the principles of doing the best both for current and future children"

ELECTION WATCH: A GUIDE TO THE MANIFESTO PLEDGES SO FAR.....

CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO 2017



CONSERVATIVE'S PROMISES: THE NE

MORE GOOD SCHOOL PLACES

1 Build 100 free schools a year

This is a change from the 2015 Conservatives' manifesto which pledged to **open** 500 new free schools over the course of the 2015-22 parliament - a target the government looked set to miss before the election was called.

It is unclear from the language whether the party intends to build **and** open 100 free schools per year, or if laid bricks would be enough.

(We also guess that free schools in buildings that already existed - such as converted offices - will also count).

2 Prohibit councils from creating any new places in schools that have been rated either 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' by Ofsted

This is likely to be unpopular with councils under pressure to create school places to accommodate population growth.

Last year, research by the New Schools Network revealed that 113,000 new school places had been created in schools rated inadequate or requiring improvement in the previous five years.

3 Universities that charge maximum fees must sponsor free schools or academies

Universities sponsoring more schools was one of the policies set out in the government's consultation on selective education last year.

That consultation response has still not been published.

The proposal has not been popular with universities, with some claiming their institutions are not well-placed to look after state schools.

4 New funding to open a specialist maths school in every major city in England

This builds on an announcement from ministers in January that the government wants to create more post-16 specialist free schools across England.

It is part of a bid to address regional imbalances in the proportion of pupils studying maths at A-level.

The government and its supporters have previously spoken of the need to build on the success of institutions like the King's Maths Schools, which saw all its pupils achieve either an A or A* in maths A-level last year.

5 Replace rules preventing establishment of new Roman Catholic schools

Another policy from last year's consultation (which hasn't been published) and relates to the current 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions for over-subscribed free schools.

Theresa May has argued the cap is unfair, and she wants to lift it. The proposal has been criticised by humanists, who claim it will lead to increased segregation.

Faith schools have welcomed the plan, claiming it means they can now meet parental demand for thousands of new places.

6 At least 100 independent schools to sponsor academies or found state schools

Another one from the schools that work for everyone consultation. The Conservatives say they will work with the Independent Schools Council to ensure the involvement of 100+ independent schools.

The party also says it will keep the option of changing the tax status of independent schools if progress is not made.

However, analysis of the improvement records of schools already run by private schools challenges the government's assertion that the institutions boost standards.

7 Lift ban on selective schools – with conditions, such as allowing pupils to join at others than 11

As expected, the pledge is to overturn laws banning new selective schools. By putting it in the manifesto, the Lords will not be able to block it.

The Conservatives say the lifting of the ban will be subject to certain conditions, such as "allowing pupils to join at other ages as well as eleven".

No other conditions are mentioned.

8 Review school admissions policy - but definitely no lotteries

The Conservatives will review admissions to "overcome the unfairness of selection by house price" but says it will never introduce a mandatory lottery-based school admissions policy.

A KNOWLEDGE-RICH CURRICULUM

9 Expect every 11-year-old to know times table off by heart

Plans for new times tables tests were announced by the former education secretary Nicky Morgan in January 2016.

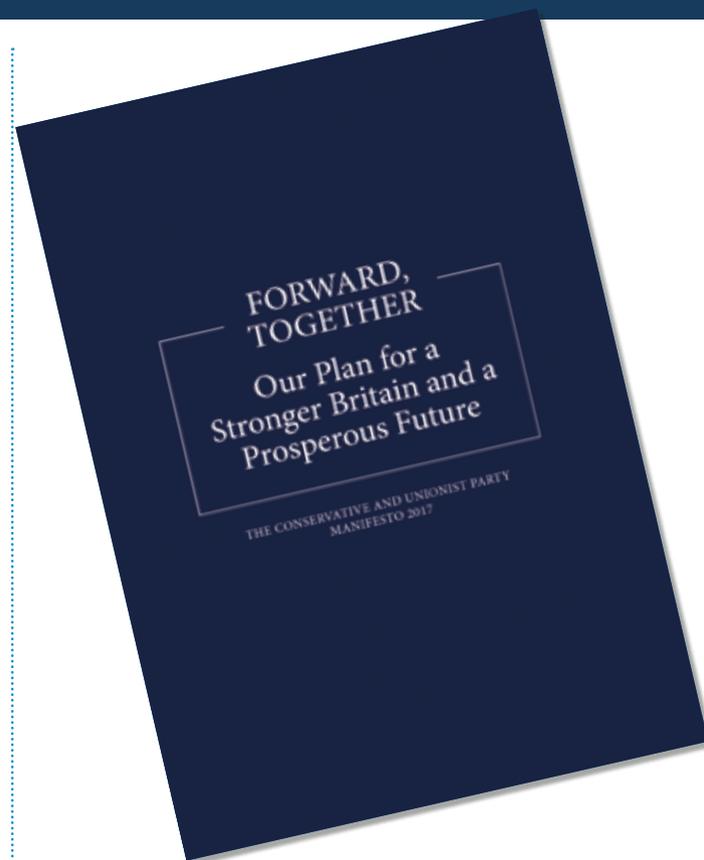
They were initially due to be introduced in May 2017.

However, it was revealed last July that primary schools would not be expected to administer the tests this summer.

There had been speculation the tests would be scrapped; this suggests the Conservatives would like to keep them.

10 Improve schools' accountability at key stage 3

This is a fairly vague point in an otherwise pretty clear set of policies. The Conservatives do not say how they intend to improve schools' accountability at key stage 3, just that they want to do it. The pledge has sparked speculation the Tories may be preparing



to bring back SATs tests for 14-year-olds.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS

11 Expect 75 per cent of pupils to have entered EBacc by end of next parliament, with 90 per cent by 2025

The government consulted 18 months ago on having 90 per cent of children study the EBacc subjects at GCSE.

The response to that consultation has so far not been released.

Sources close to the process say that's because there aren't currently enough teachers in some subjects - particularly modern languages.

Moving to a 75 per cent target means the government has more time to redress the balance of teachers in different subjects.

12 Curriculum fund to encourage leading institutions to develop knowledge-rich materials & make primary tests draw on a "rich knowledge base"

Schools minister Nick Gibb has long espoused a "knowledge-rich" curriculum. Some academies have already started forming their own curriculum (again, this money will enable other groups to join in).

Some academies have already started forming their own curriculum (again, see more in *Schools Week* tomorrow); this money will enable other groups to join in.

One hypothesis on how this links to primary assessment is

RDY DETAILS

that reading and writing tests might start to include knowledge from other subjects, such as history and geography, to avoid a narrowing of the curriculum (which may be what is meant by "teaching to the test").

13 Consider how Ofsted can give parents more information on what their children are being taught

'Consider' is always a slightly strange commitment. This one is especially strange because Ofsted already examine the curriculum taught in schools, and only visit periodically, so are not best placed to give parents more information when curriculums change.

Also - super nerdy detail - the School Information Regulations 2012 state that schools are supposed to put the content of their curriculum for each subject on their website.

A simple way to implement this policy would be getting Ofsted to check that the regulations are being met.

14 Continue bursaries to attract top graduates into teaching

So far £1 billion has been spent on bursaries to get people into teaching.

In shortage subjects like maths and physics they are worth as much as £40,000 per year.

Unfortunately, the government doesn't know if they are effective or not.

15 Forgiveness on student loan repayments while teachers stay in the profession

This policy was mooted by right-wing think-tank Policy Exchange in 2015 - who tried to get it into the last general election manifesto.

The pressing teacher shortage has likely put pressure on the government to include it.

What is not clear is whether the loan forgiveness means a teacher would not need to pay loans off when they are teaching - but would still accrue interest against the total. Or whether the equivalent amount of loan they would have been paying will be wiped off by the government.

16 Create a single jobs portal

The government started exploring this last year but a manifesto commitment is a significant step forward.

School leaders with squeezed budgets have long complained about recruitment agency costs and the high price of advertising jobs in newspapers and online.

The manifesto says the government will seek to replicate the NHS Jobs model.

FAIRER FUNDING

17 Make sure no school has its budget cut as part of new funding formula

This has been a massive bone of contention for Conservative back-benchers, many of whom campaigned for years for fairer funding, only to find their own constituencies' schools would face cuts.

The protection for schools, estimated to cost £335 million per year, effectively raises the floor for losses set out in the original plans (it was set at 3 per cent).

However, *Schools Week* understands the funding formula protection will not account for inflation, so schools will still lose money in real terms.

18 Increase overall schools budget by £4 billion by 2022

In order to do this, the Conservatives must find an additional £1 billion a year.

£650 million will come from scrapping universal infant free school meals, which the party believes is "not the best use of public money"

The rest will be found through "better systems" for the student loans companies (£200 million), departmental efficiencies (£160 million) and the soft drinks levy (£10 million).

19 Continue to protect pupil premium

This extends a commitment outlined by the former chancellor George Osborne in the last spending review in November 2015 to continue to pay out the grants of between £935 and £1,900 for certain pupils, including those from lower-income families and other disadvantaged backgrounds.

20 Scrap universal infant free school meals

The Conservatives estimate the policy costs around £600m a year but, for a tenth of that, could instead provide free breakfasts - which have been found to have an impact on achievement, behaviour and attendance.

21 Primary schools in England will offer a free school breakfast to all pupils

The Conservatives estimate free breakfasts will cost £60 million a year, and claim that they have listened to both the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Association of School and College Leaders, both of which have suggested that breakfasts could be a better investment than free lunches.

RANDOM OTHER PLEDGES

22 Create a new 'schools map' to help parents choose a school that is right for their child - key information about quality of teaching, attainment and curriculum

A number of commercial organisations are already creating maps of information to inform parents about school choice.

The Department for Education is also working on a variety of new digital outputs, which this is likely to link into.

23 Work with schools to make sure those with intakes from one predominant racial, cultural or religious background teach British values

"Work with" - your guess is as good as ours.

24 Funding to help primary schools develop nurseries

25 Introduce presumption all new primary schools should include a nursery

26 Allow maintained nurseries to take on 'academy freedoms', and join multi-academy trusts

This is an extension of a variety of policies that have been ticking over for a few years.

Money has been available for primary schools to build nurseries on their sites for some time.

However, the introduction of a "presumption" suggests that if any local authority or academy chain opens a new primary school then a condition of opening will be a nursery - this is new.

27 Introduce mental health first aid training for teachers in every school

This was announced some time ago by the government.

28 Review support for children in need to understand why their outcomes are so poor

The category "children in needs" covers any child referred to children's services. Their outcomes are often very poor and the reasons are complex.

ELECTION WATCH: A GUIDE TO THE MANIFESTO PLEDGES SO FAR.....

LABOUR MANIFESTO 2017



LABOUR'S PROMISES: THE NERDY DETAILS

1 Reduce class sizes to under 30 for 5, 6 and 7-year-olds

At present schools are not allowed to teach infants in classes of more than 30 pupils, apart from under certain "lawful exceptions".

According to the latest government data, less than 5 per cent of infants were taught in classes of more than 30 as of January 2016, while 43.9 per cent were in classes of exactly 30.

Labour's plan is to reduce class sizes to "under 30" for infants, which means that schools would have to ensure there are no more than 29 pupils in any infant class.

To do this, Labour says it will invest £8 billion to "ensure schools have the number of places they need" and £13 billion to bring school buildings up to standard. This is on top of an additional £4.8 billion in school revenue funding pledged over the course of the next parliament.

2 Introduce free school meals for all primary school children

The party claims this will cost between £700 million and £900 million a year, and will be paid for by removing VAT exemption on private school fees, which officials estimate will raise more than £1 billion.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), Labour's calculations of the cost of the policy are a little shy of reality. Based on how much it cost to implement the coalition government's universal infant free school meals policy, the IFS estimates the extension to juniors will cost more than an extra £950 million a year.

An initial capital spend of more than £250 million would also be needed to improve kitchen and cafeteria facilities in some schools.

However, based on a pilot of universal free meals in Newham and Durham in 2012, the IFS says that other policies, such as free breakfast clubs, "might be a cheaper and more effective way to improve both education and health outcomes".

3 Abandon baseline tests and review SATs

The government is already reviewing SATs, with a view to scrapping the tests for 7-year-olds and implementing a new baseline test for reception pupils instead.

Labour says it would go further, abandoning plans for a baseline test and putting the future of all SATs up for discussion.

It follows a disastrous year for primary testing in 2016, when new, harder tests and a series of blunders created chaos and sparked a nationwide campaign by parents and teachers to put an end to the current "high-stakes" system of testing.

4 End the public sector pay cap, which affects teachers

Pay rises for public sector workers, including teachers, have been capped at 1 per cent since 2012. There is some flexibility within this cap – schools can choose to award some teachers a larger rise based on performance, but these rises come at the expense of others.

Labour says it will end the public sector pay cap, but has not said how much money schools will receive to help them to grant pay rises to their staff.

The School Teachers' Review Body, which advises the



government on teacher pay, has warned in the past that although larger increases are needed to keep the profession competitive, schools do not currently have the money to award these pay boosts.

5 Give teachers "more direct involvement" in the curriculum

Government accountability measures such as the EBacc have been criticised for narrowing the curriculum, with many seen to prioritise more academic subjects at the expenses of creative areas.

Labour says it will give teachers more say, but has not explained how they would be involved or how this would differ between local authority-maintained schools, which have to follow the national curriculum, and academies, which do not.

6 Reduce "monitoring and bureaucracy"

Teacher workload is one of the biggest issues highlighted by unions and other groups, as is the burden of Ofsted inspections and what is seen as an increasing need to provide evidence of certain practices.

Labour wants to tackle what it describes as "rising workloads", by reducing the monitoring and bureaucracy teachers face, although it has not released further details of its plans.

7 Consult on teacher sabbaticals

Sabbaticals are common in other countries, including Australia and New Zealand, and are said to offer teachers the chance to enhance their own learning and effectiveness.

In 2001 Labour launched a pilot of sabbaticals for experienced teachers in challenging schools, but scrapped this in 2004 following problems with low take-up, budget constraints and changing government priorities on teacher development.

Labour now says it wants to consult on introducing sabbaticals for English teachers, but is yet to set out the parameters of such a scheme.

8 Reintroduce national pay settlements for teachers

This is a climb-down on a pledge in the draft manifesto to bring back national pay bargaining.

The use of a more generic term for pay negotiations, rather than a specific method, represents a slight softening of the party's stance.

Under the present system, the School Teachers' Review Body seeks input from a range of stakeholders and advises the education secretary on teacher pay. It is up to the minister to decide whether to implement a rise in pay scales. Maintained schools must follow the scales; academies can choose whether they do or not.

Under a restored pay bargaining system, teachers would negotiate at a national level through their unions.

The proposal also includes the reintroduction of a negotiating body for school support staff.

9 Undo the "nonsensical" requirement for schools to pay the apprenticeship levy

There has been a lot of criticism of the government's decision to include schools in the apprenticeship levy, a 0.5 per cent tax on wage bills of more than £3 million to pay for the training of apprentices.

Much of the anger is because many smaller LA-maintained schools, which would not ordinarily face a bill because of their smaller wage packets, are being made to contribute by the councils that technically employ their staff.

It is unclear if this proposed exemption will also include academy trusts.

10 Extend school-based counselling

Labour says this will cost £90 million, although there are no official figures for how many schools have counselling services at present.

A move to put a counsellor in every school is something the government has said it is considering as part of its efforts to improve pupil mental health.

Theresa May announced earlier this year that every secondary school in England will get free mental health training and improved support from local health services.

11 Deliver a "SEND strategy based on inclusivity" and increase SEND teacher training

Labour says it wants to "embed SEND more substantially into initial teacher training so that staff, children and their parents are properly supported".

This is similar to an idea mooted by the government last May, when ministers highlighted the importance of "ensuring that teachers are properly trained to support young people with special educational needs and specifically autism".

The government's review of initial teacher training, led by Stephen Munday, recommended in July 2016 that ITT providers "should ensure that SEND training is integrated across the ITT programme".

Kiran Gill's view of the manifesto, page 19

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS MANIFESTO 2017

1 Guarantee that all teachers in state-funded schools will be fully qualified or working towards QTS from January 2019

In 2012, the coalition government relaxed school policies to allow academies to hire unqualified teachers NOT on a pathway towards qualification. (Schools have long been able to hire unqualified teachers so long as they then placed them on a course working towards qualified status.)

If elected the Lib Dems would return to the old policy.

There has been a 10 per cent increase in unqualified teachers in schools since the policy change. It is not known how many are working towards qualification.

2 Reform Ofsted inspections so they include a focus on longer-term outcomes and sustainable improvement, as well as teacher workload, sickness and retention

A common criticism of Ofsted is that it is too reliant on snapshot data of a school's performance.

Tim Farron's party wants inspectors to look at a wider set of outcomes.

However, evidence on sickness and retention is also likely to be a snapshot and could fall prey to the same problems as exam data.



Tim Farron

3 Give democratically accountable local authorities clear responsibility for local school places planning and repeal the rule that all new state-funded schools must be free schools or academies

Currently, local authorities are only allowed to open new maintained schools under very specific and rare circumstances.

The Lib Dems want to scrap the laws limiting councils from opening new schools and instead devolve all capital money for new schools places to town halls. This would effectively cancel the free schools programme, currently overseen by central government.

4 Introduce a curriculum entitlement – a “slimmed-down core national curriculum”, including PSHE and age-appropriate SRE, which will be taught in all state-funded schools

Under current rules, only local authority-maintained schools have to follow the national curriculum; academies and free schools do not.

The Lib Dems' new curriculum would be compulsory in all state schools and would include personal, social, health and economics education plus “age-appropriate” sex and relationships education.

The Conservative government has already pledged to make SRE compulsory.

5 Make the curriculum the responsibility of an Educational Standards Authority

The proposed authority would “pilot, phase-in and resource” future policy changes, in consultation with professionals and experts.

The authority would also have responsibility for any new curriculum

6 Extend free school meals to all children in primary education and promote school breakfast clubs

The Lib Dems say extending free school meals to all primary pupils would cost £450 million in 2018-19, rising to £725 million in 2022. They would also allocate £200 million for upgrades to school facilities.

However, this falls short of the estimates from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which claims the extension of free school meals could cost upwards of £950 million a year, with investment in kitchen facilities of about £270 million potentially needed.



All the other Lib Dem schools pledges...

STOP THE EDUCATION CUTS – FAIR FUNDING FOR ALL SCHOOLS

Reverse cuts to frontline school budgets, protecting per pupil funding in real terms

Introduce a fairer national funding system with protection for all schools

Protect the pupil premium

TEACHERS – OUR BIGGEST ASSET IN EDUCATION

End the 1 per cent cap on teachers' pay rises

Introduce an entitlement to 25 hours a year of “high quality professional development” for all teachers by 2020, rising to 50 hours by 2025

Support “proper long-term planning of initial teacher training places”

Establish an independent “Education Standards Authority” to pilot, phase-in and resource future policy changes

Reform Ofsted inspections so they focus on longer-term outcomes and sustainable improvement as well as teacher workload, sickness and retention

Support the establishment of a new, independent Foundation for Leadership in Education, under the Chartered College of Teaching

Continue to work with the Education Endowment Foundation

DRIVING UP SCHOOL STANDARDS

Scrap the planned expansion of grammar schools and devolve all capital money for new school spaces to local authorities

Allow Ofsted to inspect councils and academy chains

Rule out state-funded profit-making schools

Ensure new schools are in areas with a need for places

Ensure identification and support for SEND takes place “as early as possible”

CURRICULUM AND QUALIFICATIONS

Prioritise primary progress measures instead of floor thresholds

Work with the profession to reform tests at 11

Protect the availability of arts and creative subjects in the curriculum

Improve links between employers and schools

Challenge gender stereotyping and early sexualisation

GETTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES READY TO LEARN

Ensure all teaching staff have training to identify mental health issues

Schools to provide immediate access for pupil support and counselling

Make promoting wellbeing a statutory duty of a school and include in Ofsted framework

Ensure collaboration between education and family organisations

Tackle bullying in schools

NEWS



These little shoots of joy you're experiencing.... They're half-heard compliments from your colleagues in the staff room. You should go in there more often.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Shards of light in the gloom (and yes, netball on telly is up there)

As education author Mary Myatt reminds us in the profile interview this week, even when everything is falling apart, it is always a privilege to be alive. The world is exciting. And if we look hard among the depressing politics and daily grind, we can still find little shoots of joy.

One this week came from nowhere. Jo Payne, a primary school teacher, shared on Twitter her joy at Sky Sports now regularly broadcasting women's netball. It's a tiny thing, but for the thousands of teachers who spend their time coaching girls' teams after school, and the millions of children who play the sport each year, it's a step forward for equality.

Likewise, I was overjoyed last Friday when twice in one day Radio 4 discussed the importance of schooling for children with special educational needs. First, a report by Sanchia Berg on the Today programme explored why more pupils are moving into specialist schools, using figures first revealed in *Schools Week* about the cost of moving pupils into private provision as state special schools are full to the brim.

The second occasion was during Any Questions – the radio equivalent of Question Time – in which an audience member highlighted how children with disabilities are neglected in political discussions. As Jarlath O'Brien, head of Carwaden House Community School, has said so many times, the focus on grammars is the wrong one. If we are going to look at a small group of children whose outcomes are bad, then it should be those with special educational needs and not those already bossing their exams.

So it was heartening to see the Labour party put special needs education into its manifesto. Yes, it's a tiny sentence. And "embedding" inclusion into teacher training is a bit of a sop. But still, it is progress that SEND is in there at all.

Outcomes are also improving, albeit grindingly slowly, for looked-after children. As Billy Camden's investigation on page 3 this week shows, children taken into care still have significantly lower achievement in their GCSEs than the national average. But the needle is moving in

the right direction. We've gone from roughly 1 in 16 children in care in 2006 gaining 5 GCSEs, including English and maths, to 1 in 7 now. That is a huge difference. (Yes, the national average also climbed in this time, but it hasn't moved at anything like the same rate).

It was therefore pleasing also to see the Conservative manifesto mention 'children in need' – the name for children referred to social services. The party hasn't made a firm commitment, but does at least want to review their outcomes.

Another group not highlighted enough are the children who fall into other complicated boxes – those in hospital schools, or home educated. Which is why reporter Jess Staufenberg has highlighted what is going on in this sector on page 4. What is happening within those schools looks to be a quiet revolution.

Myatt also reminded me of another positive. Her book, *High Challenge, Low Threat*, talks of the importance of emotional relationships in schools. During my interview I asked

how schools have changed in terms of their emotional literacy. I fully expected her to say things are worse. Instead, she noted that schools now have better language for talking about emotions; leaders are more aware of how people feel, and most try to consciously tread a line of firm but fair. Given the focus on mental health by both Labour and Conservatives, it certainly seems our emotional lives and relationships are coming to the fore.

There was one final green shoot this week. The Labour manifesto was largely quiet on academies and free schools. The party will oppose forced academies, but otherwise it seems to have given up the fight. With teacher recruitment, class sizes, new curriculum and budget pressures rising, this is eminently sensible.

So, politics may not be pleasant, exam season may be exhausting. But there is always reason to smile. And, as Myatt says, it is always exciting to be alive.



The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust

Chief Executive Officer

Salary: £70-80,000 (depending upon experience)

Location: Diocese of Worcester



The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust is looking for a Chief Executive Officer to lead it through the next stage of its development. Our vision is to create and sustain a family of academies which provide children of all faiths and none with excellent educational provision within a distinctively caring and supportive Christian ethos.

This is an exciting opportunity to grow your role within an expanding and exciting, diverse Christian school family. We are currently eight schools with a growth strategy in place, which will build upon the current effective practice within the Diocese. Our collegiate approach is to develop excellent learning communities.

If you are looking to develop your career as an inspirational and passionate leader, then you can help to shape our strategic direction of this dynamic MAT. This is a fascinating opportunity to lead church schools and develop their influence across the region. You will work with the board of directors to deliver the Trust's vision of excellent learning and outcomes achieved through strong leadership, professional collaboration and innovation in teaching and learning.

This role requires an enhanced DBS check.

The start date for this role will be agreed with the successful candidate. If you would like to discuss this role and our work at the Diocese of Worcester MAT, then please contact **Karen Surrall** at: karen.surrall@dowmat.education

How to Apply

Please send a completed application form and covering letter, with a supporting CV if you wish, to recruitment@dowmat.education

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on 2nd June 2017

Interviews

Applicants will be contacted week commencing **12th June 2017** with the outcome of their application.

Interviews will take place at Worcester Old Palace on **Friday 30th June 2017**. Please ensure you are available on this date.

References and eligibility

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, eligibility to work in the UK and a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.

HEAD OF MATHS

Salary: UPR + TLR



Are you looking for your next challenge?

Do you relish the chance to lead colleagues to make rapid sustained school improvement?

We are seeking to appoint a dynamic, highly motivated and ambitious practitioner who has the drive, energy and capacity to become an outstanding leader.

The successful applicant will:

- Be a talented teacher with a proven track record of securing successful student outcomes across all key stages. You will possess the key qualities necessary to line manage the teachers of Mathematics.
- Have the experience of improving teaching and learning and the ability to embed different approaches to mathematics within the curriculum.
- Be an outstanding teacher with the drive and capacity to make a significant difference, with ambition.
- Be inspirational and forward thinking and have the ability to work closely with NQT's as well as Senior Leadership Team.

In return we will offer you a range of wonderful opportunities to enrich your learning and development including:

- Membership of the AET national mathematics teacher network including national conferences and three regional meetings each year
- Personal support and coaching from the AET mathematics regional leader
- Visits to other Mathematics Departments within our community to observe and share best practice as

well as to coach and develop colleagues

- Invitation to be a member of the national AET Mathematics Innovation Team to work on international and national mathematics projects.
- Opportunities to collaborate with academies within our cluster on joint projects such as Numeracy across the Curriculum, Academy-to-Academy Competitions using video technology and Curriculum Development.
- Free access to a range of national training opportunities from the central AET Mathematics team delivered by colleagues such as the author of Method Maths and Mr Barton Maths.

This position is required to commence 1 September 2017

Closing date: Wednesday 31 May 2017

Interviews are available on Wednesday 24 May 2017 so we would welcome early applications. Interviews will also be available after the closing date.

In line with our safeguarding practices we are unable to accept CV's. For further information on this position and to make an application please visit: www.richmondparkacademy.org/vacancies

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts.

This post will be subject to enhanced checks as part of our Prevent Duty.

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INSPIRATION
★ TRUST



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Classroom teacher

Apply by May 20, 2017



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Second in maths

Apply by May 23, 2017

Teacher of music

Apply by May 22, 2017

Teacher of history

Maternity cover. Apply by May 19, 2017

Teacher of geography

Apply by May 22, 2017



Thetford Academy was one of the first academies in Norfolk, and remains one of the county's largest secondary schools. Based in a growing town at the nexus of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire it offers fantastic opportunities for students on a modern purpose-built campus.

Design technology technician

Apply by May 22, 2017



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HEAD OF SCHOOL



THE SHARED LEARNING TRUST

Salary: L14-18 (£53,712 - £59,264)

Full time - Permanent - September 2017 start

The Linden Academy currently have a fantastic opportunity to recruit a student-focused Head of School to join our successful and innovative Multi-Academy Trust. We are seeking to appoint a driven and ambitious leader who will maintain and build upon the good work that is already taking place at The Linden Academy.

Visits to the Academy are warmly welcomed, please contact **Linda Ludlow** on **01582 211 441** to arrange a convenient time.

'We believe in the safeguarding and welfare of children and expect all staff to share this view.'

Closing Date: Tuesday 23rd May 2017 **Interviews:** Friday 26th May 2017

Please address your application to **Hannah James**, Recruitment Officer at The Shared Learning Trust and email your covering letter to: academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk - with the subject line **'Head of School.'**

The Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. We are an equal opportunities employer.

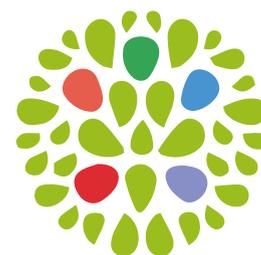
The successful candidate will:

- Have a real love of teaching and knowledgeable about what high quality teaching and learning looks like
- Have substantial leadership experiences as a Head of School or Deputy and a track record of improvement and impact with measurable outcomes
- Have successful experience of positive behaviour management strategies and lead from the front
- Have successful experience of curriculum development along with an understanding of the issues associated with choice and flexibility to meet the needs of all learners
- Be able to develop effective and purposeful relationships with staff and students alike and be available for duties during the school day to interact with staff and students at this time
- Have sound business acumen, problem solving abilities, strong passion and resilience
- Be visible to the school community and be concerned about rewards

Why work for The Linden Academy:

- Linden Academy was previously an independent school under the name Moorlands, since converting to 'The Linden Academy' the school has very much kept their traditional values but applied them into a modern context and is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school
- Small class sizes (18-24 maximum per class)
- You'll be working in a brand new state of the art building from September 2016
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HEAD OF HISTORY



THE SHARED LEARNING TRUST

Salary: MPS/UPS + TLR 2b (£4,399)

Full time - Permanent - September 2017 start

The Stockwood Park Academy have a great opportunity for a Head of History to join our Humanities department in our successful and thriving Academy. We are looking for someone to play an active role in the development of the History curriculum providing specific expertise and guidance on the key aspects of the subject.

Want to know what our teachers have to say about working at Stockwood Park Academy? **Watch our video by visiting:** <https://youtu.be/48wDntGQKzU>

Visits to the Academy are warmly welcomed, please contact **Sandra Burgoyne-Murray** on **01582 811 515** to arrange a convenient time.

'We believe in the safeguarding and welfare of children and expect all staff to share this view.'

Closing Date: Tuesday 23rd May **Interviews:** Thursday 25th or Friday 26th May

Please address your application to **Hannah James**, Recruitment Officer at The Shared Learning Trust and email your covering letter: academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk with the subject line **'Head of History.'**

The Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. We are an equal opportunities employer.

The successful candidate will:

- Have a demonstrable impact on raising achievement
- Have some experience of managing the work of others
- Have the experience of using performance data to inform target setting and planning
- Be confident to lead, coach and mentor others and help maintain and build upon the success in the department

Why work for Stockwood Park Academy:

- £30 million state of the art modern facilities
- All teaching staff receive a laptop
- Fantastic support from your line managers and SLT
- Brilliant CPD opportunities with cross trust and national development programs and bespoke opportunities to support your development
- Excellent opportunities for career progression in a successful and expanding Academy
- To be part of an 11-18 provision with opportunities to teach in the sixth form in for many subject areas
- You'll be joining a genuinely welcoming and friendly department who work together well
- Local subsidised gym membership

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Competitive Salary Offered

This is an exciting opportunity to join the UK's leading study skills company, Learning Performance, as they develop a whole - school, holistic approach to raising achievement and inspiring a love of learning.

As a teacher - led and family - run business, Learning Performance, prides itself on providing high quality support to schools by focusing on three areas:

- Metacognition
- Self - Regulation and Resilience
- The Whole Child

Learning Performance is now looking for a proactive, dynamic and diverse candidate for a 12-month contract for the varied role of Curriculum and Education Lead.

The position will be **full time 8.30am - 5.00pm, Monday - Friday**, at the company's headquarters in the vibrant town of Arundel, West Sussex. Travel across the UK is expected as Learning Performance works with schools across the country and some weekend work is required due to presenter training. Time off in lieu is given and will be agreed between yourself and the Managing Director. The **salary** is between **£23,000 - 25,000** on a one-year temporary contract, with the possibility of becoming permanent. The position is to start as soon as possible. **NQT's are welcome to apply.**

The deadline for applications is **Friday 2nd June 2017** and interviews will be held week commencing **5th June 2017**.

To apply please send your CV and short covering letter about your best and worst experience of school to: carrie@learningperformance.com

For more information about Learning Performance please visit: www.learningperformance.com



Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Develop practical workshop and programme content on a range of topics including, learning strategies, mindset, and well - being.
- Create supportive material for teachers for our Partner Schools online area, the One Hub. This can range from podcasts, webinars, videos and PowerPoint presentations.
- Train and develop our presenter team in new material through conferences and our online platform.
- Visit schools to advocate our work, Partnership model and create bespoke proposals for schools.
- Support the Managing Director with current Partner schools and proactively engage schools in becoming partners.
- Liaise with lead presenters who work with Partner Schools to ensure quality and successful relationships are maintained.
- Represent Learning Performance at events such as, TeachMeets.
- During busy periods run motivational study skills workshops for students in schools across the UK.
- Assist the operations and sales team with the smooth running of LP Headquarters during busy times.
- Support the Managing Director to search out funding and assist with writing bids.

The successful candidate will have:

- Up-to-date and comprehensive knowledge of the current education climate, the barriers school face, and the new curriculum.
- Teaching experience, ideally in a secondary school setting.
- An unwavering passion for improving children's' life chances through a holistic approach.
- A curiosity and a keenness to develop their own learning and knowledge.
- An interest in research and an evidence informed approach to teaching and learning.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability and willingness to travel across the UK.



SCHOOLS WEEK

Wallace is your go-to person for everything jobs-related.

He will advise you on the best formats and channels to get your recruitment opportunities seen by people working in schools and the wider education sector.

Wallace joined the team in January 2016, having worked as a sales and marketing executive for leisure and hospitality company, Eclectic PLC.

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Searching for the right candidate with the right calibre, can be both challenging and time consuming, alongside trying to work towards a budget.

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Email: wallace.williams@schoolsweek.co.uk

**I'm here to make
recruitment that bit easier**

READERS' REPLY



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TWEET



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

Tory areas fare badly under new funding plan

**@leoniedelt**

My kids' schools are in Andrew Mitchell's [Conservative] constituency and are being hammered by the new funding formula. One is shaving 25 minutes off its day!

Pregnant pupils shifted to PRUs as cuts bite

**@ms_peaceweaver**

Supporting pregnant pupils properly is a basic part of our function as people in education.

Top earning primary head suspended

**Ian Taylor, Bristol**

How the hell have we got to the position where someone is paid a third of a million per year for running some primary schools?

The chair of governors says it will make no difference to the children's education whilst Sir Craig Tunstall is suspended! What are they paying this guy for if it makes no difference whether he is there or not?

With school budgets under the most severe pressure, would you rather have one "superhead" whose absence is not noticed, or 15 teachers?

Trusts miss EFA's accounts deadline

**Rachel Brindle, address supplied**

Fascinating reading! What a myriad of marvellous excuses these trusts give. I would use one word – incompetence.

**@DoraStar1**

Might it depend very much on the chain and whether you joined because you wanted to or had to?

@SBates2011

I always had freedom as a maintained head to lead as I wanted, with the safety net of my LA to guide and support me. Thank you Notts!

Let's fix headteacher boards – just like Gove fixed GCSEs

**@HelenSalmon2**

Many heads will agree. The individuals are not corrupt but the system is. Most heads are barred from these boards. Hardly democratic.

The false freedoms of becoming an academy

**@arrunsworth**

Not all trusts operate this way, but suspect command and control may be more the norm than we realise.

First they came for the teaching assistants...

**@vgoode25**

So sad. All politicians should take note of the effect the new funding formula will have on our children's education.

Reform of summer-born lottery delayed

**Svea Poster**

Many local authorities that acted in good faith on the letter Nick Gibb published in September 2015 are starting to revise their decisions on reception starts at compulsory school age (CSA) for summer-borns. Nothing has changed in the code other than the interpretation used by various admissions authorities. It just needs to be clarified, once and for all.

Sarah Say

I'm so disappointed with how long this is taking. Luckily we have secured a CSA with reception start but it took six months to get a decision. To say this affected my mental health is an understatement; my anxiety levels were through the roof. I am one of the lucky ones to get a positive outcome for my child. He is not ready, nor will he be ready, to start school this year. With all the new curriculum targets, he would be set to fail before he even started.

Why shouldn't I call my friend a c***?

REPLY OF THE WEEK



Mark Watson, Gloucestershire

Excellent and thought-provoking article. Completely agree with the premise of teaching philosophy and its wider benefits – I wish I'd been exposed to it when I was younger. Unfortunately, the difficulty in getting schools to buy in, given the overwhelming pressure on results and funding issues, has probably been underplayed. Also I'm left with a sense of disappointment that the author, who seems to have some really interesting ideas, has left the profession and joined the sometimes murky world of "think tanks".

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



Contact the team

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

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

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PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_McINERNEY

Mary Myatt, educational consultant, speaker and author

There's something about Mary Myatt that rings of a Hollywood star. Perhaps it's her exquisite style. She is bedecked in beautiful materials and natty jewellery. Or perhaps it's the rebellious glint in her eye, reminiscent of Katharine Hepburn who once said, "I never lose sight of the fact that just being is fun" – a sentiment Myatt gets behind.

Or maybe, it's deeper than that. Maybe, like many people in Hollywood, Myatt believes her glory days could end at any moment.

Myatt's book, *High Challenge, Low Threat*, published last year just before her 60th birthday, has become a cult must-have among education professionals. It makes the fairly obvious case that leadership in schools is largely about relationships, but it does so by mixing anecdote and research in a way that makes fans not just read her messages, but imbibe it.

Myatt's mystique also adds to the clamour of people wanting to hear her speak. Her sessions on the education conference circuit are packed with teachers waiting to catch a snippet of her wisdom.

But who is she? Finding information about her online is almost impossible. There are no interviews. Her own website merely says she has spent "20 years" in schools.

"The reason you don't know about me is because I don't promote myself," Myatt says, as we sip tea at the Delaunay restaurant in central London. "I promote my ideas."

Myatt, who studied classics at Royal Holloway, believes the ideas in her books and talks are "ancient truths", such as simplicity, honesty and kindness – truths that people recognise but sometimes need reflected back to them.

"I have also been quite careful to triangulate my views with wider literature. I am very aware that I am a statistic of one. It could just be me and my distorted view of the word. So I strip that out. I consider if an idea actually has merit, is there something to counter it, and I give it a bit of extra depth."

Myatt didn't start teaching until her thirties. Before that she worked in PR, which she loved, although she grimaces as she says so as her parents, who were both school leaders, felt it a bit below her. (Three of her five siblings also became teachers.)

"I really enjoyed PR and marketing. I always thought it was telling the honest story of what was happening."

She worked for department stores across London, but moved at 24 with her husband to a farm in Yorkshire and then to Suffolk. Working as an independent PR consultant she continued working after having her first child when she was 26, and the next at 28.

However, the farm in Sussex, just outside Bury St Edmunds, became embroiled in an issue with milk quotas that meant the business ended up with a glut.

Myatt looks gleeful. "So, Mary with her marketing background and two tiny children thought: I can do something with milk! So I looked at yoghurt. And I looked at cheese. And then I started an ice-cream business."

While the figures worked for the business, the distributors fell through. So Myatt set up her own delivery van network. "I had to get up, go out and get on the roads."

"I've done everything from making the bloody

"TEACHING IS AN ABSURD JOB, BUT IT IS A JOY"

stuff to going to Italy to source the flavours – that was fabulous. The one that was voted top, and still is, was the chocolate – we sourced the cocoa from Holland.

"But I do believe that you should be prepared to do things yourself if you want other people to do them too."

After five years, and a flourishing ice-cream business that is still going today, the family sold the farm and Myatt found herself at a crossroads. She contemplated law, but decided that being a "country solicitor" would be dull.

So, at 34, she took her first classroom job teaching religious education at St Aloysius, a boys' school in north London.

"I looked at them and they looked at me and I have no idea what they thought – probably 'who is this mad woman?' But I did think 'yes, this is what I am meant to be doing'. It was the sweetest of feelings."

She spent the next ten years teaching in Ipswich and loving it: helping students to understand that her classroom was a place of "thought, talk, and hard work that was sometimes amusing", but which came from a place of wanting the pupils to learn, always.

She then left the classroom for a position at the local authority, but found the move wrenching.

"It was almost like grief for the first year," she says, "and I do know grief. It's that deep sense of missing and longing."

At Suffolk local authority she worked on gifted and talented projects and developing RE across schools. She loved the schools work, but struggled with a culture of meetings and would refuse to attend if she couldn't see a thread between the gathering and outcomes for children.

Perhaps this is because of her intense focus on time. "I am conscious of time, really conscious of time, we only have so much time on this Earth..." she says at one point.

A simple conclusion is that her attitude comes from the death of her father 30 years ago, and of her partner Raffles Hughes-Lewis, whom she met after she separated from her husband. He died eight years ago after a short illness – a devastating loss.

But she says the focus is more than that. Raised in a strict Catholic home, she always felt "life incredibly intensely" and felt it a sin to waste it. She also discovered the joy of "deep work" in her last few months at university when a boyfriend dumped her and she used learning as an escape. That boyfriend got back in touch via Facebook in recent years and the two are now walking companions. So even that relationship wasn't wasted.

She smiles, with that rebellious glint. "As we are only here for a short while, what I would like, without being morbid, is to think that I have used everything up by the time I die." It is clear she intends to enjoy herself as much as possible.

Her next endeavour is to create an online professional development course for teachers as she is concerned

budget cuts have made training less accessible. She is also helping to set up a multi-academy trust.

And if she were in charge of education? She has three things she'd like to change: increase the focus on oracy, make the curriculum more robust, and ban the use of the phrase "ability" in favour of "attaining".

On the latter, she is particularly passionate: "All we can say on attainment is about the past. The use of 'ability' breaks my heart. We can't say what someone can do in the future."

As for the side of the curriculum wars she comes down on – traditionalist versus progressive – she is flippant. "Pfft. I'll nick whatever works!"

What she does believe is that student voice has been lost in the past seven years or so, and that young people's views on the curriculum should matter more.



MARY



"My marketing background taught me that you don't step out the door without knowing what the client wants. It's not about whether a student likes me or my socks or whatever, it is about what is the quality of what is going on? They produce such interesting insights."

She sighs. "Teaching is such an absurd job, but it is a joy to be involved in it in anyway."

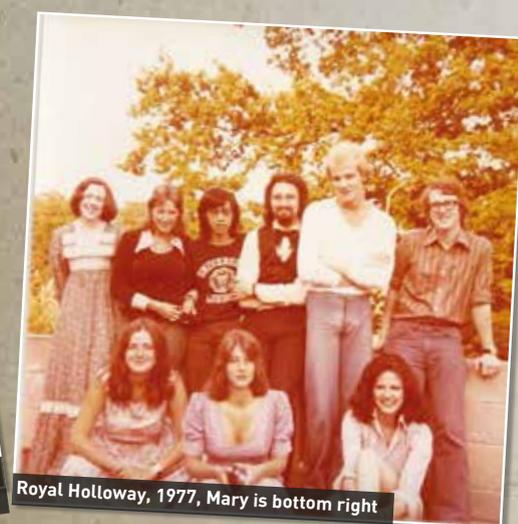
One gets the sense she'd like to be involved in it forever.



Chester Uni Learning First



Customised map received as gift in 2015 to show her love of mountains



Royal Holloway, 1977, Mary is bottom right

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

Which animal would you be?

A mayfly. It emerges from water – I'm passionate about being near water – and then gets a helicopter view, which I like. It lives for a day, sees all the things, has great sex and then dies. Imagine the intensity!

What would you do if you were invisible for a day?

Hang around the DfE. It would be interesting to see the little fragments of evidence about children's lives that are playing into their thinking.

What do you eat for breakfast?

Porridge, with brown sugar or maple syrup, and then some weird gunk on top. Flax? Seeds? It says it's good for you on the tin, so I throw it on.

Which achievement are you most proud of?

The results of the pupils when I was at school. Some really tricky customers thrived in my classrooms. We didn't win them all, but when you saw those kids do well, it made a difference. I'm proud of my kids, too, if that's not too cheesy.

Most important advice you have been given?

As a child, maybe 6 or 7, I had two amazing aunts who lived not far away and one would always say "gosh, isn't this exciting!" and it has never left me. It's that idea that you should be thrilled, whatever garbage is going on in the world or our personal lives, because the world is a marvellous place to be. I've also been given a lot of bad advice. But we won't put that in the paper!



AMJAD ALI

Teacher, leader, trainer

How schools can support students during Ramadan

Ramadan starts around May 27 for a month. Schools need to be prepared and aware that some students (and staff) will be fasting, says Amjad Ali

Ramadan will again fall in summer this year, which means fasts will last 19-20 hours.

Muslims will be expected to wake up before sunrise, eat, drink, pray and then potentially return to bed.

Some of them may be your students. They will travel to school and be expected to participate in strenuous activities, watch their peers eat and drink and get on with their normal lives. They will then go home to do their homework and chores, but will need to wait until almost 10pm to eat and drink. (When fasting you can't even drink water.)

After their fasts are broken, they may also need to attend mosque, which could go on until midnight.

This undoubtedly will take a toll. However, for many it is the most blessed month of the year, where self restraint, commitment and faith are displayed. Many regard it as a character-building month, where Muslims can find themselves again and bring themselves closer to God.

There are some important things every school leader and teacher should know:

- Muslims should only fast when they are physically and emotionally mature – ie, undergone puberty.
- They should not do anything that will intentionally damage their health.
- They are expected to uphold their education and try their utmost in school. If they have an exam, they may be able to miss the fast and make up for it at another date.
- Young children may fast for part of the day to help them to practise or to build tolerance to the experience. Primary pupils are not expected to fast, but it is up to the parents to make this call. It is not for a school to decide on whether or not a child should fast, unless, as per Department for Education guidance, it is having a significant damaging effect on the child.
- Parents and carers should try not to keep their children up late during school nights and should encourage weekend prayers if need be.

Fasting will affect pupils' concentration (and it is during the exam season). So what can schools do?

- Show the students you understand about their faith and about this obligatory pillar of Islam.
- Make alternative arrangements for them (ie, dedicated spaces away from other students who are eating) during lunches and break times.
- Provide information to all students about Ramadan.
- Encourage students to break their fast only if it is a risk to their health and wellbeing, not merely because you feel badly for them.
- Share Ramadan with them! Try to keep a fast and share your experiences with your students. Saying *Ramadan Mubarak* or *Ramadan Kareem* wishes the recipient a blessed or generous Ramadan.
- Ask students to talk to their parents or carers if they feel their education is being affected.
- Think ahead to special events in school and plan them around Ramadan – ie, when is your school planning to hold its attendance rewards lunch or sports day?
- Make sure rooms are at the right temperature and shaded, especially exam halls.

“ Show that you understand about this obligatory pillar of Islam

Ramadan is a holy month and for many Muslims it is 30 days that can bring about a lifetime change.

As concerned as we may be as teachers and as rigorous as we can be in terms of safeguarding, health and well-being, the practice of fasting has been around for a long time. Parents also care about their children's well-being. So let's not judge when our students can and can't fast. Let them uphold their faith and allow them to flourish both spiritually and academically.

If you are concerned about how Ramadan is affecting a pupil, a conversation with the students and parents often goes a long way.

And don't forget when you are planning those school events, that some of your teachers may be fasting too!



BEN WHITE

Psychology and sociology teacher, director of research for Ashford Teaching Alliance, member of CEBE research engagement steering committee

Is workload merely a matter of perception?

Teachers face two types of demand that affect how they perceive their workload, says Ben White – which is why senior leaders must keep an eye on how staff feel about significant job changes

When Justine Greening told a recent Department for Education event that excessive workload is mainly a product of inefficient working practices, no one seemed to disagree.

The ongoing conversation around workload seems to focus primarily upon this truism. But, while there is clearly merit in this approach, research suggests that the equation is more complicated.

The demands/resources model is popular because of its simplicity and because it can fairly consistently predict a number of relationships:

- Decreased resources → increased levels of burnout
- Increased resources → increased levels of engagement
- Increased demands → increased levels of burnout

One relationship that is not clear using this simple model is how demands affect engagement. In some research, increased demands lead to lower engagement; in others, it's the opposite.

Crawford *et al* (2010) differentiate between two types of demand: *challenge* demands, which “have the potential to promote mastery, personal growth or future gains”; and *hindrance* demands, which “have the potential to thwart personal growth, learning and goal attainment”.

Within reason, teachers are likely to respond positively to challenge demands.

For example: this year I have been asked to take on teaching A-level psychology. This has taken up considerable time as I first had to read, plan, consult experts (and watch documentaries). However, while objectively I'm working more than at the same time last year, I feel more engaged about my job.

On the other hand, teachers are likely to respond badly to “hindrance” demands. As these demands increase, not only am I likely to feel less engaged in my job, but I'm more likely to report symptoms of burnout.

To give a concrete example: at times I am asked to predict pupil results. I don't feel I can, and worry the label students are given could hold back their progress. Being a bit of a research junkie, I did explore the area and found a report that suggests that the best predictions are only about 60 per

cent accurate, even immediately before an exam. However, needs must and this week I completed a set of predicted results, giving one student a B3.

She came to see me, demoralised by my prediction: in her world where teachers possess a magical knowledge of objective grades and future performance, this little letter was a big deal.

So while “reporting” is not very significant from a simple workload perspective – it took me 20 minutes to enter, check and upload my “interim” reports – it could have a disproportionate effect on my engagement and susceptibility to burnout because I see the demand as at best futile, at worst counter-productive.

“ High demands with high resources are generally sustainable

As a classroom teacher, I could be wrong. Or, more accurately, unaware that a demand that appears a barrier to successful teaching is actually crucial for the wider success of the school as a whole.

This is why senior leaders must find ways to monitor how staff perceive significant job demands. If they see a specific demand to be a hindrance, they need to reflect because either:

- 1 It actually is – in which case it can be removed (the Ofsted memo and marking review point out numerous examples of these sorts of demands); or
- 2 It actually isn't – in which case there is probably a communication or training issue.

The research concludes that workload is not inherently bad – but it is important to monitor the demands made of and resources made available to teachers. In short:

- High demands matched with high resources are generally sustainable.
- High demands with low resources are not. Neither is a situation in which demands are generally deemed to be hindrances rather than challenges.

It seems important to create a “high resource” working environment and to protect staff from demands that appear either nonsensical, impossible, ill-defined or likely to prove a hindrance to the core purposes of the school.



KIRAN GILL

Policy consultant, founder of
The Difference

Marking Labour's education manifesto: could do better...

Labour's manifesto shows that it wants to do an awful lot in education. But look for specifics and you'll struggle, says Kiran Gill

If the polls are to be believed (even if they are not to be believed) the Labour manifesto is unlikely to be implemented next parliament. So I assessed it against some different marking criteria:

- 1 Challenging the government** One of the Opposition's roles is to scrutinise legislation put forward by the government. Test no 1: does Labour's manifesto point out gaps in the education agenda of Theresa May's government?
- 2 Shifting the narrative** The policy agenda is shaped by political narratives that become commonly accepted. Normally these narratives have to "fit" with current events as people perceive them. For instance, the policy of austerity was underpinned by a Conservative narrative that Labour had crashed the economy and a reduction of spending was required. This became accepted because it fitted with personal experiences of having to tighten belts. Test no 2: does the Labour manifesto develop narratives about education that fit with current experiences?
- 3 Planting good policy** Sometimes the contribution of parties not in government is to think through the solution to problems facing the country, then have those policies nicked by the party that is in government. Think: New Labour's taxing of non-doms, originally a Lib Dem idea, or,

more recently, Ed Miliband's energy price-freeze policy pinched by May. Test no 3: are there any good specific policy ideas that ought to be stolen?

Challenging the government

The most pressing problem in education is funding. School standards cannot be maintained, with cuts already having an impact on the curriculum offer, class sizes and the education of the most vulnerable students in many schools.

Labour's manifesto highlights school funding. But as I told my year 11s many times in revision season: "If you highlight everything, you highlight nothing." Which leads to our second measurement...

Shifting the narrative

To shift a narrative, you need a clear message. I counted 41 separate issues in the education section (compared with 12 in Miliband's 2015 manifesto). The clearest message I can

make out from this shopping list of policies is that Labour wants to do an awful lot – and it doesn't mind spending the money to do it.

And that's tricky territory. Remember our test for a narrative? It fits with public perceptions. The prevailing narrative around the Labour party was that it spends too much; Miliband's 2015 loss was attributed to low public trust on the economy. So it is a shame that the very real and imminent danger of a decline in school standards is getting lost amongst Labour's long wishlist; and little wonder that their education policy is being characterised as a "splurge" by tabloids such as the *Daily Mail*.

Planting good policy

The 2015 Labour manifesto contained many policies that were later implemented under the Conservatives. The proposed Technical Baccalaureate and the pledge for all students to study maths and English to 18 resembled the new "technical routes" announced last

year. Age-appropriate relationships and sex education promised by Miliband was made a reality by Justine Greening this spring.

So does any of Jeremy Corbyn's manifesto capture the current mood in education and advocate a neat solution to a pressing problem?

“**Pithy policy solutions are hard to come by**

On the first part, yes. The need for specialist training in SEND, more mental health support in schools, the challenge of teacher retention and the imperative for better access to adult education are all mentioned. Sadly, pithy policy solutions are harder to come by. The clearest recommendations – resurrecting the education maintenance allowance, expanding free school meals and scrapping tuition fees – have not had enough of a case made for them over the past few years, which means that voters (and educationists) are not demanding them. There are few other specifics for raising standards beyond more cash.

Overall, the marks don't look good. But we teachers know it's formative feedback, not summative judgment, that is important. Here's hoping Labour learns from this manifesto and produces its best work next time.

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REVIEWS

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Our blog reviewer of the week is Debra Kidd, author and former teacher

Working collaboratively in the classroom

By @imagineinquiry

Group work has come in for a bit of a bashing in recent years and it's easy to see why. We've all experienced the impact of poorly constructed and ill-conceived group activities and it can put new and inexperienced teachers off quite quickly (not to mention some pupils). But Tim Taylor is one of the most thoughtful and rigorous teachers of group inquiry and in this blog post he offers a useful and intelligent exploration of the importance of collaboration, as well as tackling some of the misconceptions surrounding the pedagogy of his book, *Mantle of the Expert*.

He takes us through the benefits of collaborative inquiry in the classroom and the life-long skills that children develop when they work in this way. It's hard to see how anyone could argue about the importance of honing these vital interpersonal and critical thinking skills.

White knights and imaginary dragons

By @suzyg001

I was alarmed to read Tom Bennett's article in *The TES* last week describing dyslexia and ADHD as "crypto-pathologies". In this well-written post, Sue Gerrard deconstructs the argument, acknowledging many of Bennett's concerns while outlining the difficulties in overstating his case. It's a balanced and thoughtful response to a very provocative article.

Making mistakes

By @BLC_Head

It's been a feisty few weeks on Twitter. I've found myself growing vegetables in an attempt to get away from the bickering. So Keziah Featherstone's post is timely. She makes the case for us accepting that we all make mistakes, sharing a few of her own along the way. And she ends with a message that we all need to bear in mind – a plea for kindness.

SEND, parents and the word "SOME"

By @Claireyr123

Meanwhile, @Claireyr123 reminds us of the importance of using language to include and not alienate parents of SEND children with the simple inclusion of the word "some". She lists common statements she hears about parents that she feels drive a wedge between them and the professionals, when we should be working together with the child's needs in mind. It reminds us that behind every SEND child is a family, battling to do their best for their child – and that the best outcomes are secured in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation.

“**This post reminds us that behind every SEND child is a family battling to do their best**”

Context is king

By @teacherhead

In this short but punchy blog, Tom Sherrington writes of the importance of context when applying sweeping generalisations to the school system. Looking back on how his own contexts have shaped his perceptions of possibilities and expectations, he urges caution on generalising and reminds us that some contexts are easier than others. In a week in which Ofsted has begun to acknowledge that it is harder to achieve high outcomes in areas of social deprivation (while paradoxically refusing to accept that expectations should be lowered), this is a timely blog post for us all.

Debra Kidd is standing in for Emma Hardy who is a candidate in the general election.



Requires Improvement

By Paul Jenkins

Published by Paul Jenkins

Reviewed by Cath Murray



Jim is a drama teacher ("any resemblances [sic] to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental"...), tormented that the academic obsessions of "central government" have relegated his subject to third class.

He's also a tormented genius, who – despite losing his father when he was ten and dropping out of school to support his mother through rehab – somehow "aced the very exams his school friends had sweated and struggled over just the year before".

The protagonist of this self-published novel, by real-life former head of drama Paul Jenkins, then signed up for a BTEC in performing arts, where he "performed by day and worked takeaway shifts to bring in the pennies, and used his down time to get (and later keep) his mother on the straight and narrow".

This character, ladies and gentlemen, is a saint. Yet he's a saint with a short temper and many, many axes to grind. In fact, Jim

is the patron saint of woodcutters, with a stack of axes piled up (and if you think I am over-egging the metaphors, think again, dear reader – these are nothing compared with the positively Tom Cruise-like metaphor-mixing talents in this book) against teachers of other subjects (such as maths and science, which unreasonably take priority over his); against anyone who parks their car in "his" space in the school car park; and of course, the perennial enemy: the senior leadership team. SLT are – apparently – three letters generally "spat out rather than said".

Jim knows how to fix it, though; he would like to promote a student from the pupil referral unit to the SLT, recognising what the school leadership fails to see: that despite two years of poor GCSE results in drama, the students NEED to be doing plays!

This book is especially painful if you're a lover of good writing. Jenkins fails to

understand how an omniscient narrator works and flips between perspectives like a dog chasing a fly (again, my talent for similes pales in comparison). The narrator is able to jump inside the head of many characters: Jim the tortured drama teacher, Janet the unflinching SLT member, Steph the unappreciated support assistant and occasionally the odd student – yet every character is narrated with the same whiny drone. You have to keep on track or you will have no idea which perspective the narrator is attempting to take.

There are a few, rare moments that could have been poignant, were the scenario not so clichéd and the writing not so heavy-handed. Such as when Ethan, the bright kid whose mother is in jail, gives a dazzling explanation of Shakespeare, but manages

to swear and insult classmates in the process – all during an observation – thus requiring Jim to immediately send him into the corridor rather than try to tame his hidden genius.

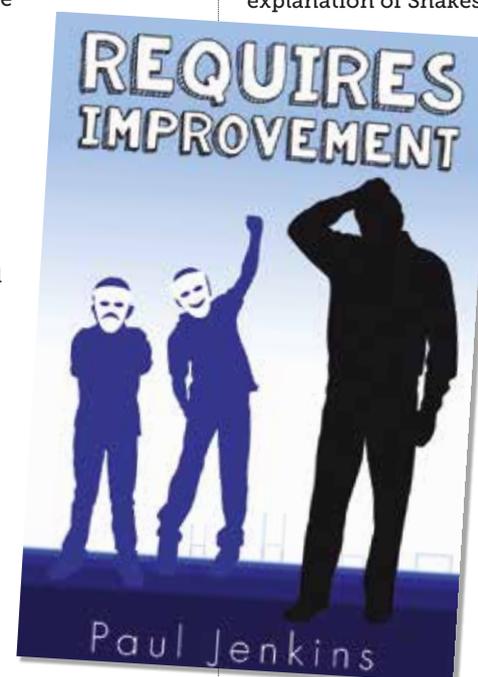
Or when Debbie, the special educational needs co-ordinator, stands up to her SLT colleagues over the marginalisation

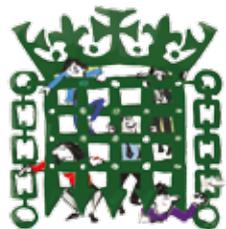
of the "thickie kids doing soft subjects" – that is, those not taking the Ebacc. There is a momentary tacit understanding that while they would all love to empathise, the pressures from the DfE and the academy trust they have recently joined simply do not allow them to prioritise pastoral concerns over attainment. The author manages to convey this *despite* his writing, rather than through it.

The book's finale is an excruciating stick-it-to-the-man cliché, which I won't spoil, but more for the sake of convention than because you will make it that far.

Theoretically, a book like this might make a good gift for a teacher in their NQT year, to reassure them they're not alone in feeling hopeless. Sadly, it ends up being one long, bitter rant.

We need more books that show new teachers it's OK to feel like you're drowning. This is not it.





A week in Westminster

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

FRIDAY:

There is still an election on.

While most schools try their best to be apolitical, Bedford Free School has other ideas.

Education secretary Justine Greening was all smiles when she visited with the local Tory candidate Richard Fuller. School founder and principal Mark Lehain – who is also an associate of Policy Exchange, the think tank started by Michael Gove – gave gushing quotes to the local press about their visit.

He's lucky he works in an academy (yes, free schools are academies, don't start) as they are not under the same legal obligations as maintained schools. They must ban candidates in the



name of impartiality – or, at least, allow them ALL in. We know this because these rules kept Tristram Hunt (pictured; God rest his political career) out of an east London school in 2015.

Week in Westminster wonders whether free schools such as Bedford and leaders such as Lehain would welcome Labour's Angie Rayner if she came knocking. Mind you, Labour would have to be organised enough to find it first... (ouch).

MONDAY:

Another day, another Tory manifesto false start. It was supposed to be out and then it wasn't.

At the time of going to print, WiW had hopes for a Thursday release, but we wouldn't put it past the party to hold back until the election is over.

Elsewhere, that well-known hardcore Tory rebel, the children's minister Edward Timpson – he is sometimes so daring that he wears a

GREEN tie with his very-neat always-blue suits – has prompted criticism from his Labour opponents in Crewe and Nantwich after claiming he is "fighting" cuts to school budgets.

According to government figures, schools in Cheshire East face losing funding equivalent to £547 a pupil as a result of unfunded cost pressures.

Writing in a local newspaper, Timpson claims to have complained to the prime minister, no less: "There really isn't more a constituency MP can do, so I hope my actions result in some positive change for our area."

Wave your crazy colour combinations at them Teddy. That's bound to bamboozle May into a change.

TUESDAY:

Labour's official launch of its manifesto. After a fuff about getting it to journalists (apparently Labour is only good at leaking when it's accidental), it became obvious that three of the most controversial proposals from the leaked draft – councils

being allowed to run new schools, pay bargaining for teachers and free travel for apprentices – had been shelved.

Could it be that a Schools Week's analysis pointing out that these plans would cost a fortune (and be a bit weird) stopped them?

WEDNESDAY:

Determined not to be forgotten, the Liberal Democrats have a unique headline-grabbing schools policy: it wants to extend free school meals to all primary children.

If that sounds familiar, it's because the Lib Dems put it in their 2015 manifesto. And then Labour announced it as a policy last month.

Unfortunately, the Lib Dems' announcement delay makes it look like they simply nabbed the idea from Corbyn – although the party has pledged less to pay for it.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Rebecca Piper

Age 41

Occupation Design and technology teacher

Location Buckinghamshire

Subscriber since May 2017

Welcome to Fly on the Wall – a chance for you, the subscriber, to tell us what you love (and hate) about *Schools Week*, who you'd like to spy on and, of course, what the world of education would look like if you were in charge...



FLY ON THE WALL

Where do you read your copy of *Schools Week*?

At home, online.

Which section do you enjoy the most?

The jobs.

If you could wave a magic wand and change one education policy, which would it be?

To ban grammars and focus on communities. When people work together on a voluntary basis, they must save a whole heap of money!

Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

Hmmm. Can I suggest who would be good? I think Peter Kay would do an excellent job.

What is your favourite story or investigation reported in *Schools Week*?

Anything about grammars.

What do you do with your copy once you've read it?

Close it.

What would you do if you were editor for a day?

I'd choose a word of the week (maybe even a made-up word) and make sure it appeared in every article :)

Favourite memory of your school years?

We had compulsory silent homework time ("prep") after school, so coming out of normal prep to do art prep was my favourite – I was comfortable and allowed to talk!

If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing?

Designing marketing materials.

Favourite book on education?

The Lazy Teacher's Handbook by Jim Smith.

What new things would you like to see in *Schools Week*?

Quick quiz; funny crossword.

If you could be a fly on the wall in anyone's office, whose would it be?

Not education-related, but... Boris Johnson, definitely.



Peter Kay

School Bulletin *with Sam King*

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in the school bulletin, email samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk



Pupils take on the pebble-pinchers

FEATURED

PROJECT ON HOW TO BEST USE YOUR TAs

A new project that is determined to harness the power of teaching assistants has been launched in England.

Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA) aims to improve how primary schools use their teaching assistants (TAs) to ensure they make a valuable contribution to learning.

The scheme will enable schools in and around the West Midlands, London and Hampshire to work with national leaders of education and to access research about effective staff deployment and continuing professional development for TAs.

The project, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation, is a collaboration between the Institute of Education, the University of East London and the London Leadership Strategy.

Rob Webster, the project's director, said: "Schools don't tend to make the best use of TAs in the classroom.

"There are existential threats to TA jobs; schools are facing some difficult decisions about staffing. Our project is emphatically not about staff rationalisation or how to get rid of people, it's helping school leaders to make better and more informed decisions about their support staff."

If you would like your school to be involved, go to: <http://maximisingtas.co.uk/projects/mita-eef-project.php> and submit an expression of interest form. Schools must sign up by May 28.

Pupils at Manor Beach Primary School in Lancashire have joined a campaign to stop people stealing pebbles from their local beach.

The youngsters, with the Rossall Beach Residents and Community Group, are tackling thieves who take pebbles from the beach to use as features in their gardens.

As part of the campaign, the pupils appear in a video to show the importance of leaving the pebbles where they are, using buckets of water to illustrate how wave energy is dissipated when they hit the stones.

A number of pebbles on the beach, which is less than a mile from the school, have also been painted with colourful messages such as "leave me here" and "we stop flooding".

Jane Mason, Manor Beach's head, said: "The children use the local beach on a regular basis and have a vested interest in protecting it. We also use the beach within our curriculum as a stimulus for English work, geography, history and environmental education."

Jane Littlewood, chair of the residents and community group, who invited the children to help with the campaign said: "This [people taking pebbles] is a long-standing problem because they don't know why the pebbles are important and why they should be left there.

"We hope that because the children



Manor Beach pupils film the campaign video



Manor Beach primary pupils with volunteers from the Rossall Beach Residents and Community Group



Painted pebbles (courtesy of Blackpool Gazette)

are educating adults and asking people to think twice, that the public will take more notice and heed their words – it's certainly made the campaign novel and helped to spread the word.

"If everyone who came to this popular spot filled their car boot there would just be no pebbles left and a lot of homes could be put at risk."

Young sweet designers win TV tour



Alfie in the tv studio gallery

Two pupils who won a national competition to design Willy Wonka-inspired sweets went behind the scenes at the Discovery Channel as part of their prize.

Alfie Richards, 9, a pupil at Irthlingborough Junior School in Northamptonshire, and Raiya Mann, 7, from Glendower Prep School in west London, won the Sweet Inventions competition, which attracted 2,600 entries from primary pupils across the UK.

The two pupils and their classmates were then invited to go behind the scenes of the TV channel, home of programmes such as *MythBusters* and *Deadliest Catch*.

The youngsters learned how programmes



Pupils make Roald Dahl-themed doughnuts

are broadcast, tried out continuity announcing and took part in Roald Dahl-themed activities, including decorating sweet wrappers.

The pair's designs – a regenerating chocolate bar from Alfie and a boiled sweet that makes you change size from Raiya – will also feature in an exhibition at the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre in Buckinghamshire later this year.



The National's Romeo and Juliet

Shakespeare for primary schools

A free online theatre resource is offering a primary school-friendly version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

The National Theatre's *On Demand in Schools* has released a version of the play suitable for 8 to 12-year-olds, using modern language and set in an urban environment.

It includes a video of the play to stream online – recorded live during its run at the National Theatre earlier this year – with accompanying lesson plans and worksheets.

On Demand in Schools was set up in 2015 to enable schoolchildren to have access to curriculum-linked productions free, and caters for key stages 2 and 3.

Alongside the newest addition, available

plays include *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Othello* and *Treasure Island*.

Alice King-Farlow, director of National Theatre Learning said: "We're thrilled to bring the National's production of *Romeo and Juliet* to primary schools. The show was a huge hit with children and adults, and really brings Shakespeare's masterpiece to life for a new generation.

"We're hopeful that in the future every primary and secondary school in the UK will be able to access world-class theatre through this service."

About 350 primary schools and 1,900 state secondary schools have joined the service. To sign up for a free account, visit: <https://schools.nationaltheatre.org.uk/app/os#!/home>

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Mark Barrow has been appointed headteacher of Ixworth Free School in Suffolk.

The school, which opened in September 2014, is a member of the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust, established to help communities in Suffolk to set up and run free schools.

Barrow joins Ixworth from Haileybury Turnford School in Hertfordshire where he is vice-principal.

He was head of sixth form at Bishop's Stortford High School, where he taught politics, critical thinking and French. He then became deputy head at King Edward VI Grammar School in Essex.

"I am very much looking forward to joining Ixworth to drive forward the next stage of the school and continue its growth to become a flagship for teaching and learning," he said.

Graham Watson, director of the Seckford foundation, added: "Mark's enthusiasm for the school and his wealth of experience were the defining elements of his application and we are truly delighted to have appointed him."

Sally Apps is the new executive principal of the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF).



Mark Barrow



Sally Apps



Rachel Kitley

The academy trust, based in the southwest of England, has 15 primary and secondary academies with 8,000 students aged 3 to 19 on roll.

Apps was principal of Bristol Metropolitan Academy, one of the trust's schools.

Her new role will involve overseeing a cluster of schools and leading on school improvement.

"It is an honour to lead in the CLF, and

to be able to contribute in this way to the education of our 8,000 students," she said.

"I am passionate about equity and ambition and will ensure that these qualities underpin all that I do in the coming years."

Rachel Kitley has been announced as the

new principal of Cowes Enterprise College on the Isle of Wight, a member of the Ormiston Academies Trust.

She takes up the position from her previous role as co-headteacher at Kingsbury High School in north London, and will move to the Isle of Wight with her husband and two children.

She said she was thrilled to be joining the college and the Ormiston "family".

"It is a privilege and an honour to be appointed as principal, to build on the amazing work that John Peckham has overseen at the academy in recent years.

"I believe in the power of education to transform lives for all and I will do everything I can to enable students at Cowes to achieve excellent outcomes at school."

She will replace Peckham in September.

He said: "I am proud of the solid foundations that have been put in place for sustained improvement at the academy, and I look forward to watching the academy continue to go from strength to strength each year."

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

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
 Next week

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

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN a Schools Week mug



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