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Consultation delays total **EIGHT** years

- Government has yet to respond to nine consultations (and it includes implementing the EBacc)
- Waiting: illegal schools (550 days); staffing advice (520); child abuse (323); grammars (214)

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

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NEWS

Academy annual report delayed AGAIN

JOHN DICKENS

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Exclusive

The Department for Education's promised first key transparency report into academy finances will be published three months late, despite department chief Jonathan Slater telling MPs twice that it would be published by the end of June.

The Sector Annual Report and Accounts (SARA) document will not be published until the end of October, according to an unpublished letter sent to the education committee, and seen by *Schools Week* this week.

Slater wrote to the education committee twice last year – amid transparency concerns over academy finances – assuring members that the report would be published last month.

In the latest letter, sent in February, he blames new finance systems for the delay.

The report will reveal key information for the 2015-16 academic year, such as the number of academy chiefs paid more than the prime minister; how much academy staff have been paid in severance deals; and how much academy chains pay to companies linked to their trustees.

It will also include the academy accounts information normally published as part of the Academies Annual Report – which, by law, must be published each year. This includes results of key performance indicators for each regional schools commissioner, a move that follows a

concerted campaign by this paper.

Neil Carmichael (pictured), the former chair of the committee, who pressed the department for more transparency and secured some of the report changes, said the delay was disappointing.

He said it was "vital" the additional months of the delay were "employed to maximum effect" to improve information in the report.

"Certainly, as you might expect, our expectations will be that much greater."

An education select committee spokesperson said that Slater's letter wasn't published on its website – other correspondence regularly is – because of plans for a hearing on the delay.

Carmichael told *Schools Week* the unexpected break for the general election stopped those plans.

In his letter Slater said the key drivers for delaying publication were "technical issues" associated with a new online system to collect academies' financial information.

"For future years, I remain committed to delivering the [report] pre-summer recess, and I am taking steps to ensure that this is feasible".

This included bringing forward the deadline for academies to submit their financial information for the report.

It's the latest in a series of reforms after stinging criticism from the

National Audit Office at the government's failure over several years to provide parliament with a clear view of academy trusts' spending.

In 2013-14, the watchdog discovered a £166 million overspend in the department's accounts, branding mistakes in the financial statements as "both material and pervasive".

The issues stem from the department having to combine the accounts of more than 2,500 organisations – including all academy trusts – across different accounting periods. The consolidation delayed it filing its accounts to parliament last year.

The academies report is touted as one of the solutions to consolidation. Slater has said it will "improve transparency and accountability" of academy expenditure.

A "dry run" of the new sector report was published last year, although various data was missing. Carmichael said at the time he wanted further information, including details of who made large donations to trusts. As yet, all of this data remains unpublished and will not come to light until October at the earliest.



OECD defends PISA tests for 5-year-olds

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Exclusive

Organisers of the new computer-based PISA tests the UK is to pilot for five-year-olds have hotly denied claims they will heap pressure on pupils and burden schools.

Around 20 English schools and nurseries will take part in a field trial of the OECD's international early learning and child wellbeing study, which is to be run by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) between October and December this year.

The pilot will involve around 300 children, and uses games and stories on tablet computers to map pupils' early capabilities – which will then be linked to educational performance at 15 through the international PISA tests given to teenagers across the globe every four years.

The children's minister Robert Goodwill claims the study will "sharpen our understanding of how it can have the most impact", but the OECD has been forced to defend itself from criticism that the tests will force schools to "narrow and standardise" early childhood education.

Andreas Schleicher, head of the OECD's directorate of education and skills, insisted that the tests would give schools and politicians a better idea about the cognitive, social and emotional development of children and would improve early education policy.

He claimed schools would not be held accountable for the outcomes of the study because, as with other PISA tests, school-level data is never published or handed to the government.

English education leaders are unconvinced.

Kevin Courtney, the general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said early-years educators were concerned about the pilot and he criticised the government's decision to take part without consulting teachers and researchers.

The Pre-school Learning Alliance also expressed concerns about "any early assessments that are focused on gathering data, rather than supporting learning".

Neil Leitch, the group's chief executive, said any attempt to place "enormous pressures" that children face as a result of a "growing obsession with gathering data, testing and league tables" onto five-year-olds should be rejected.

Schleicher said the study is not like other tests for young children because it involves "no reading or writing" and is "fun to play with".

"If anything, this study is designed to counter the increasing schoolification that we see in early childhood education," he said.

He said schools in the early years were often left with "very few insights about where their relative strengths and weaknesses are".

The study will show schools those strengths and weaknesses, he added, and data collected from parents, teachers and other stakeholders will give institutions "a really good understanding of that context and how that compares with other schools".

Schools will also be able to see how different groups of children compare to similar groups in other schools.

He accepted the pilot would be a big commitment for schools, but was adamant it was worth the time investment.

"Institutions have to schedule three or four hours to administer it. I do recognise that is an additional burden, but I do think the value of knowing better about where your strengths and weaknesses are and how you can improve is so much greater."

NEWS

Revealed: Trust bosses take control of funds

JOHN DICKENS
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Exclusive

Multi-academy trusts are increasingly using new freedoms to pool their schools' budgets into one central pot before dishing out funds to academies they think need the cash most.

A *Schools Week* investigation has uncovered that more trusts are using, or eyeing-up, this controversial budgeting method known as general annual grant (GAG) pooling.

It's a major departure from the method used by most trusts, in which funding goes directly to schools first before the trust top-slices a percentage to fund its central operations.

Now, trusts are taking tighter control of schools' purse strings, with funding going directly to the central team.

Trust leaders say pooling the cash means they can iron out funding inequalities by shifting money from richer schools into those that need it most.

However, heads are uneasy about the loss of autonomy over their budgets, with one source telling *Schools Week* they now have to beg the trust for funding.

Valentine Mulholland, head of policy at the National Association of Head Teachers, said heads in trusts that pool cash were concerned their school was being "prejudiced" in terms

of "getting their fair share of funding".

"It's not very palatable as a head to know they are giving funding to a neighbouring school, particularly at a time of a funding crisis."

Of 52 trusts that responded to freedom of information requests, five had some sort of pooling arrangement or were considering one.

E-ACT switched this year to pooling all general cash given to its schools, apart from student bursaries. It then redistributes the money based on "education priorities".

The cash is handed out to schools based on a "zero-base budget", which requires heads to justify all their planned expenditures.

E-ACT said the "comprehensive transformation" would "align budgeting closely with curriculum planning to address the education needs of each academy".

The CfBT Schools Trust, which runs 16 schools, pools any budget surplus posted by its academies at the end of the year into a central pot.

This is then redistributed to support schools "in times of need", with a proportion held back as a contingency for "unforeseen events".

Plymouth Cast, which runs 35 schools, said it was also looking into pooling school budgets.

David Morris, chief executive of the Diocese of Coventry multi-academy trust, said it



would also have to move to pooling because it was the "only way we can sustain small schools".

A study by think tank Reform last year, *Academy Chains Unlocked*, found 13 of 65 trusts surveyed (20 per cent) said they pooled their funding.

However, nearly a third that didn't pool cash said they would like to. Many have held off because of resistance from heads and governors.

Ben Dobson, the author of the Reform report, said trust chief executives saw "many useful ends" from pooling funding – including moving cash to poorer schools and paying for building work.

But while many trusts had an overall surplus, the additional cash sat mostly at school level so the trusts did not "feel empowered to use this to improve other schools in the chain".

"This seems to me inconsistent with the

aim of creating a collaborative structure that helps to drive school improvement."

The think tank called for funding for all academies to be handed straight to the central trust team.

Mulholland, however, said this would be a "step in the wrong direction" and against the new national funding formula, due to be introduced next year and designed to bring greater equality to the cash going directly into schools. "If we want to create equity of funding based on pupil characteristics, then more room for flexibility puts that at risk."

Pooling also undermines the government pledge that no school will have their budget cut under the new funding plans as trust bosses will have the final say on how much any school gets.

Trusts have been allowed to pool funding since 2013 on the condition they first get government approval. However, rules state those trusts must give "individual consideration" to the funding needs of each constituent academy. An appeals mechanism must also be in place for heads that feel they have been unfairly treated. If this is not resolved by the trust, it can be escalated to the secretary of state who will make a final decision – and can overrule the trust.

The Department for Education said it had not been asked to intervene in a dispute in the 2016-17 financial year, but could not provide figures for earlier years.

Halfon is new head of education committee

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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Robert Halfon, a former education minister and staunch critic of the prime minister, has been elected as chair of the House of Commons education committee.

Halfon beat Nick Boles, Tim Loughton, Rehman Chishti, Stephen Metcalfe and Dan Poulter to the top job in a vote of MPs on Wednesday.

The MP for Harlow in Essex served as skills and apprenticeships minister for much of the past year until he was sacked by Theresa May following last month's election.

According to his pitch for the job on the parliamentary website, his priorities for schools include examining the new schools funding formula and "working for a fair allocation of available resources".

He also wants to look at improving standards, "particularly in literacy and numeracy".

"As a former education minister, I bring recent experience of the policy and challenges the committee will face in the year ahead," he wrote.

"But, to those who need reassurance, I am not establishment man. I will not be afraid to challenge ministers, leaders or the sector when needed."

Robert Halfon

Speaking to *Schools Week's* sister paper FE Week, Halfon, who was first elected in 2010, denied he was running as revenge for his sacking.

"I really have massive respect for my former boss, Justine Greening," he said. "I'm doing it because I love education. I worked with Justine very closely. I think she's a really good minister. She's passionate about education."

However Halfon has previously been critical of the schools sector. He said in January, while skills minister, that schools were to blame for the skills deficit in England because of their fixation on "university, university, university".

He also said good quality advice on apprenticeships and skills in schools was still "very rare", adding Ofsted inspections could be "toughened" to ensure schools were doing better.

Then, in the same month, he suggested poor careers advice in schools was down to spending decisions by leaders.

"Wherever I go I meet apprentices and when I'm in a room with, say, 30 of them, I ask each one 'did you get careers advice about doing an apprenticeship?' And the majority of the time they didn't. Clearly there is something wrong."

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NEWS

Schools wait eight years for nine consultations

JOHN DICKENS

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Investigates

As schools close for the summer break, the government has yet to respond to nine consultations on new reforms – three of which have been outstanding for over 16 months.

With a total of eight years of delays between them, the most important is a consultation proposing tougher new laws on illegal schools, following concerns that children have been radicalised in such settings.

Opened in November 2015, the 'out-of-school education settings' consultation closed on January 11 last year – a total of 550 days ago, or around 18 months.

Central government guidance states that all departments should publish consultation responses within 12 weeks.

The government is also still to respond to its 'implementing the EBacc' consultation,



which ended on January 29 last year – 532 days ago.

Schools Week understands a response to the consultation is due in the coming weeks – but schools have been waiting a year and a half for a response to a policy which, if implemented, would require them to recruit an additional 78,000 language teachers and fundamentally restructure most secondary schools' timetables.

In the time schools have been waiting, the Labour party has had three different shadow education secretaries. Nick Timothy meanwhile stepped down as head of the New Schools Network charity, became Theresa May's chief of staff, and was since sacked.

The government even reneged on consultation plans in its manifesto, shifting from a pledge that 90 per cent of pupils

would study the Ebacc subjects down to 75 per cent.

The department's operations have been hindered somewhat this year, however, with two spells of purdah – the pre-election period during which public bodies have to act in a politically neutral manner.

One consultation on staffing advice for schools – which is becoming more crucial as funding cuts push headteachers into redundancies – closed 520 days ago.

According to the government's website, a consultation on developing new teaching assistant standards has gone the longest without an official response, having closed on November 5, 2014, more than two-and-a-half years ago.

The government once claimed it would never publish the results, and instead later allowed unions to do so – after *Schools Week* had already published a leaked version in 2015. We have therefore not included this consultation in our round-up.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION SETTINGS: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Opened: November 26, 2015
Consultation closed: January 11, 2016

DAYS WAITING **550**

Details: This proposed new systems to regulate out-of-school education settings that provide "intensive" education to youngsters (more than six to eight hours a week).

Plans included a requirement for the settings to be registered, for a body to inspect the settings to ensure children properly safeguarded, including from extremism, and the power to impose sanctions where this has failed.

IMPLEMENTING THE EBACC

DAYS WAITING **532**

Opened: November 3, 2015
Consultation closed: January 29, 2016

Details: This revealed government proposals for 90 per cent of pupils to enter the EBacc subjects for GCSE. Ministers wanted EBacc to be the "default option" for all pupils, with a school's EBacc entry rate to be a headline performance measure.

But the government has since pushed back the 90-per-cent target to 2025 – suggesting the consultation includes lots of information outlining the original target was way too farfetched.

We already know one of the big issues is around the need to recruit thousands more modern foreign languages.

STAFFING AND EMPLOYMENT ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS

DAYS WAITING **520**

Opened: December 17, 2015
Consultation closed: February 10, 2016

Details: Views were sought on non-statutory advice to help employers in schools with staffing issues, and provide "consistency in the information provided to all schools". At the time it was seen to be a way of giving schools more advice on how to legally fire people.

The issue has also now risen in prominence as schools are increasingly facing making redundancies as they feel the effect of stretched budgets.

CHILDCARE WORKERS: CHANGES TO DISQUALIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS

DAYS WAITING **378**

Opened: May 6, 2016
Consultation closed: July 1, 2016

Details: The government put forward proposals to amend current rules where teachers can be disqualified from the classroom if they live with someone who is also disqualified.

The three options proposed were to remove disqualification by association, retain it but allow an appeals process, or reduce the scope of the disqualification rules.

VENTILATION, THERMAL COMFORT AND INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

DAYS WAITING **323**

Opened: June 30, 2016
Consultation closed: August 25, 2016

Details: New guidance for the design and construction of school buildings to provide good indoor air quality and thermal conditions to enable effective teaching and learning.

It includes minimum comfort criteria to avoid problems of cold drafts and summertime overheating.

REPORTING AND ACTING ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

DAYS WAITING **274**

Opened: July 21, 2016
Consultation closed: October 13, 2016

Details: The government launched proposals to make the reporting of child abuse mandatory for those working with children.

In the case of schools, that covered teachers and teaching assistants, plus administrative and support staff such as secretaries and caretakers. Those who don't report abuse could face jail, under the plans.

SCHOOLS THAT WORK FOR EVERYONE

DAYS WAITING **214**

Opened: September 12, 2016
Consultation closed: December 12, 2016

Details: The green paper included plans to end the ban on grammar schools, remove the cap on faith admissions, and push private schools and universities into sponsoring state schools.

While the grammar proposals have been ditched, it's unclear what will happen to the remaining plans. Opposition MPs have pressed the government on when it will respond in parliament, but ministers would only say "in due course".

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES: A CALL FOR EVIDENCE

DAYS WAITING **119**

Opened: January 23, 2017
Consultation closed: March 17, 2017

Details: The consultation is part of a review by Dame Christine Lenehan on the experiences and outcomes of youngsters in residential special schools and colleges. Lenehan wanted evidence on the characteristics of youngsters in residential special schools, why they were placed there, and their outcomes.

NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA/HIGH NEEDS FORMULA: STAGE 2

DAYS WAITING **114**

Opened: December 14, 2016
Consultation closed: March 22, 2017

Details: This second consultation included a detailed breakdown per individual school of what their new budget would look like under the national funding formula proposals.

The publication sparked uproar among schools that lost cash, and others that believed they didn't get enough extra money.

The issue played a part in the general election, and caused the government to promise to ensure no school would lose cash under the new funding formula. It also includes a linked consultation on plans to overhaul high needs funding, which closed on the same date.

NEWS

Councils join 32 new RSC advisory groups

JESS STAUFENBERG & JOHN DICKENS

@SCHOOLSWEEK

mobility that she wanted a "culture of the right support" for failing schools.

The new boards will be integral to this, but will only advise the RSCs who chair the group – not make formal decisions about interventions.

A newsletter issued by the Teaching Schools Council South West in March, however, suggests that the boards will have a say which schools will receive grants from the new £140 million strategic school improvement fund.

The boards also seem to be a formalisation of the "sub-regional" events many RSCs have been running for the past few years – where councils, schools and diocese staff met to talk through improvement plans.

The more official plans, however, are the brainchild of the national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, who first floated the idea while he was RSC for the south west.

In a submission to the education selection committee in 2015, he wrote that he wanted to develop four advisory boards to "build on the expertise and knowledge that our headteacher board has provided". He said they would help "provide further input at a sub-regional level and to help shape strategic development" across the south west.

Though a focus



on improvement, rather than simply firing academy trusts, is supported by many in the schools community, others have raised concerns about accountability and autonomy – with RSCs moving more into the realm of commissioning support.

Robert Hill, an education adviser, said it needed to be clear who would be held accountable should the improvement support fail, in what he described as a "big expansion in the remit of RSCs".

He "broadly welcomed" the idea of such boards, although it could herald the end of the school-led system with improvement efforts instead steered in a more centralised way so "people don't fall through the cracks".

He also said the boards should have a more "developmental agenda", rather than just focus on targeting schools that were failing.

It's expected the RSC will be responsible for appointing board members, but this has not been confirmed.

The focus on providing support to failing schools follows similar sentiments from Greening.

On Wednesday, she said the strict accountability system was putting teachers off working in the toughest schools, adding that the two "crucial" objectives of transparency and school improvement needed to "marry up" better, particularly in regions that had the most struggling schools.

The Department for Education did not respond to requests for comment.

The government has brought local authorities back into the fold as part of new "sub-regional improvement boards" set up to advise school commissioners on struggling schools.

The structure, which *Schools Week* has learned involves four sub-regional improvement boards in each regional schools commissioner area, gives a clue to what education secretary Justine Greening (pictured) had in mind when she said this week the government would move away from a "purely punitive intervention approach".

However, there are concerns the move ends the "school-led improvement" system favoured by government since 2010 in favour of a more centralised approach.

Each of the new boards will have members from across local councils, teaching schools, dioceses and the ranks of academy trust chief executives to advise regional school commissioners (RSCs) on improvement strategies for failing schools.

It's understood Greening has bought into the vision of attempting to prevent failure in schools, rather than just intervening in those after they have failed.

As *Schools Week* reported last week, more than 700 schools have been taken over in the past three years following dips in their performance and have yet to be re-rated.

Greening told a conference on social

TEMPORARY RSC WAVES THROUGH 21 ACADEMY CONVERSIONS

A regional schools commissioner who temporarily stepped in to preside over another area agreed 21 academy conversions and approved the opening of a new sixth form at a meeting attended by just two other advisors.

In April, Tim Coulson, the commissioner for north-east London and the east of England, chaired a headteacher board meeting in the east Midlands and Humber region after the area's original commissioner had stepped down.

Headteacher boards advise commissioners on school changes. Ordinarily, they have four elected members and up to four additionally appointed members.

But minutes published this week on the education department website reveal the April meeting was only attended by Coulson and two other members: Geoff Lloyd, the former headteacher of Tuxford Academy, and Andrew Burns, the headteacher of Redhill Academy.

Lloyd was the only elected member present as the trio approved academy sponsorships of 21 schools – including two forced conversions and four free schools.

The decision to approve a sixth form at Stamford Welland Academy in Lincolnshire may prove particularly controversial.

Government rules stipulate sixth forms can only open in schools where more than 200 students are likely to attend. Stamford Welland only has 350 pupils across its five secondary year groups.

Coulson was pulled up over a decision in his own patch that appeared to flout this rule, after approving a sixth form at Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College, in Hornchurch, Essex.

The ruling was taken to judicial review but it was cancelled last minute after the education department announced that the application had been withdrawn.

Elections open for new headteacher board members

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The nomination process to elect headteachers and academy trust bosses on to influential boards that advise regional schools commissioners (RSC) launched last week.

The Department for Education (DfE) has given top academy heads two weeks to nominate themselves as candidates for the headteacher boards (HTBs), with four spots available on each of the eight boards.

Voting will be run through two weeks in September with the results due "before the half-term", says a new election website launched last Friday.

But the DfE has admitted the new boards will not be in place for October, even though members' current terms run out by September.

The delay is mainly down to the late start. In the last elections in 2014, the nomination process was opened in May, with voting closed by early July.

However, *Schools Week* has been told the current elected members have agreed to stay on until the new boards are in place.

The launch of the election comes after a *Schools Week* investigation revealed the concerns of some members that the new boards might not be ready before

Christmas, and that multi-academy trusts were lobbying to get multiple staff into the influential positions.

But under election rules, no more than one headteacher or school leader for each trust can be elected on to any one board.

School leaders from the same trust can be elected on to different boards, so long as the trust operates in more than one region.

A candidate can also stand in more than one headteacher board election, but can only win membership on to one board.

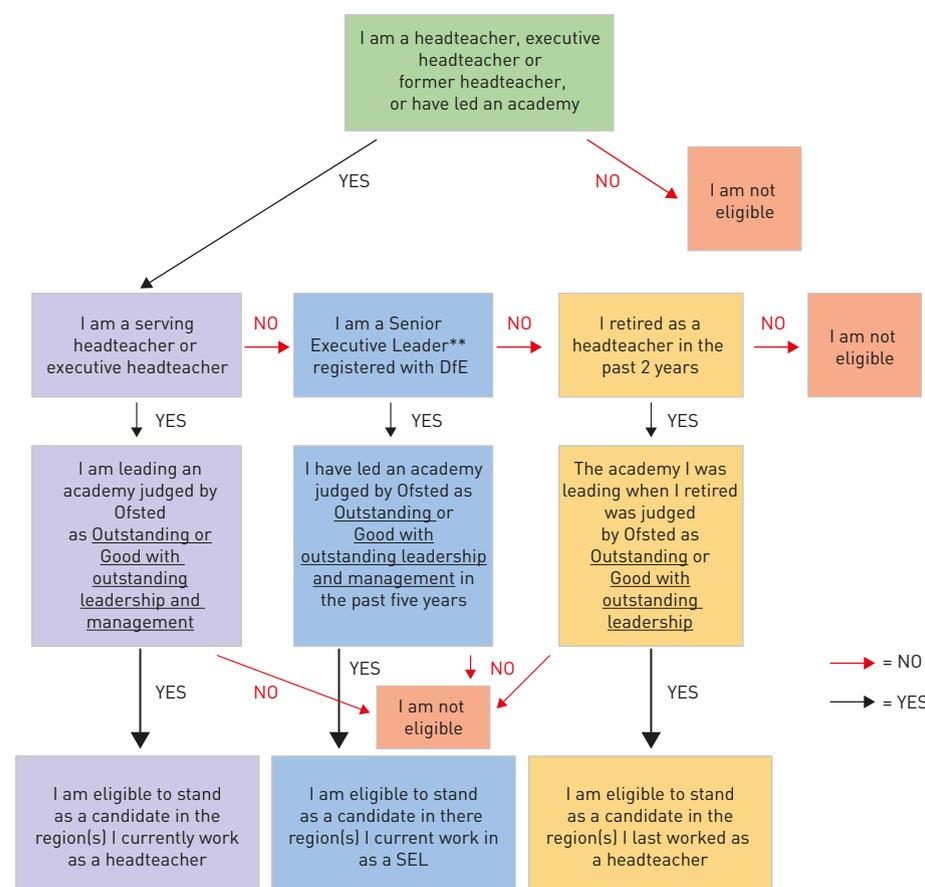
Four members will be elected to advise each of the eight regional schools commissioners, helping them to make decisions on new free schools, converting schools to academies, choosing sponsors, and intervening in under-performing schools.

According to the website's eligibility criteria, candidates must be from leading academies rated outstanding in every category, or good with outstanding leadership, at the time of election.

They could also be a retired headteacher who fell into either of those brackets on leaving their school, or a senior executive leader at an academy trust, even if they were no longer practising heads.

This previously led to criticism that too many chief executive officers now sit on the boards with some sources suggesting "headteacher board" is the wrong name.

Who can stand in the new elections?



* 'Academy' includes free school, studio schools and UTCs.

NEWS

JUST 10% OF RETURNER TEACHERS FIND FULL-TIME JOBS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Just one in 10 returner teachers recruited under a government scheme to boost falling numbers of maths and physics educators actually went on to secure jobs in schools.

An evaluation report for the Return to Teaching (RTT) scheme published last week found that most people attempting to make a return to the classroom were halted by "negativity of schools".

The scheme ran from 2015 to 2016, with 541 returners taking part. However just 63 of these (11.6 per cent) actually secured a job after the programme.

The report, commissioned by the Department for Education, states that while the programme met its target of recruiting 50 teachers, it had a "lower than anticipated" conversion rate.

This was "partly due to schools being reluctant to offer shadowing and placement opportunities and/or to employ returners".

The study also suggests that there isn't as large a population of inactive teachers as previously thought, and wants the situation "monitored in the future".

The returner teacher scheme was announced by former prime minister David Cameron in 2015, who wanted to target the 30,000 teachers who leave the profession each year.

But the report found a "key difficulty" identified by returners was the impression given that schools were "desperate" for maths and physics teachers, only to find schools "unresponsive" to their contacts.

That included returners requesting opportunities to shadow staff, or have access to a mentor or apply for jobs.

"This led to a minority of interviewees reporting feeling resentful and undervalued, especially those who felt there should be some allowance for expenses or paid internship as part of the strand," it says.

Some returners who were interviewed "held the perception that heads and staff were negative towards them and thought the fact they had previously left the profession showed a lack of commitment".

The report, by researchers from Sheffield Hallam University and the National Foundation for Educational Research, urges the government to provide placements for potential returners, provide courses with more integrated classroom experience, and incorporate a brokering role with schools.

Schools Week reported in November that the government had launched another returner teacher pilot – this time offering schools up to £5,000 if the teacher gained employment.

However the scheme focuses on just two regions – the south-east and north-west.

The government has been criticised for consistently failing to hit the overall number of required teacher trainees.

Figures show just 81 per cent of the required number of trainee physics teachers for this year were recruited onto courses, with the figure at 84 per cent for required maths trainees.

It was reported in January the government was offering a £300,000 contract for a private firm to recruit physics and maths teachers from the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and America.

Academy in shadow of Grenfell stays shut

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

The school just yards from the Grenfell Tower blaze in west London will start the next academic year in temporary accommodation and might not return to its home until after Easter.

Kensington Aldridge Academy (KAA) has been closed since the fire at the 24-storey housing block on June 12 in which it is thought more than 70 people died.

In the immediate aftermath, nearby schools Ark Burlington Danes and Latymer Upper School opened their doors to hundreds of KAA pupils.

School leaders had hoped to move back into its building this September, but that is now looking "unlikely", said its principal David Benson.

In a letter sent to parents last week, he said: "I have always been clear that we will not move back to our building until the tower has been covered and any investigations into what happened have been completed.

"We did think that this could be in time for the new term, but this is now unlikely to be the case."

Pupils will now use temporary classrooms 15 minutes' walk from KAA, with transport provided for those who cannot walk or take the bus.

Benson said the temporary building

was an "amazing" facility, which had the same number of classrooms as KAA, as well as specialist rooms needed to deliver the school's full curriculum.

The timetable would run "as normal" – starting at 8.30am and ending at 3.30pm, with enrichment activities until 4.30pm.

The temporary accommodation was also "very close" to Ark Burlington Danes, which would continue to be available to KAA.

Benson said he could not tell parents exactly when KAA's building would be back up and running, but it would be "at the right time, and we will manage the move back in the right way".

He has been advised by the government that the latest date for return would be in April next year.

The education secretary, Justine Greening, and the national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, hailed the "guts and bravery" of KAA leaders when they visited shortly after the blaze.

Other schools were also praised for rallying round. On the morning of the fire, Ark Burlington Danes – a mile away – made a makeshift exam hall in its atrium for KAA's year 12 who had to sit an AS maths exam at 8.30am.

Even though many pupils were left homeless by the blaze, 55 of the 60 due to sit the exam turned up.

The school is now accommodating KAA's years 7, 8, and 9 classes until the end of term.



Meanwhile, the year 12s, with 20 KAA staff, have been based at Latymer Upper School, about a 15-minute drive away in Hammersmith.

Staff and students at the schools were also among the scores of helpers coordinating the distribution of clothes and food, and have since been fundraising to help those affected.

A Just Giving page set up by a KAA teacher, Haley Yearwood, has raised more than £1.4 million.

"As I watched the news at 5 in the morning, I just wanted to make sure residents affected were well cared for after the tragedy," Yearwood said. "Our school is in the heart of a fantastic community. The response so far has been overwhelming as money continues pouring in."

DfE doesn't know how many free schools have sprinklers

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

The government has admitted it does not know how many free schools have been built without sprinklers.

The schools minister, Nick Gibb, admitted as much in a written answer to a parliamentary question tabled last week by Helen Hayes, the Labour MP for Dulwich and West Norwood.

Her question follows heightened concerns over fire safety in schools after the Grenfell Tower blaze in west London.

A total of 376 free schools have opened since 2010, according to government figures. When asked for the number that had not been fitted with sprinkler systems, Gibb said the Department for Education (DfE) did not hold that data as schools built under the programme were managed by individual proposer groups via their appointed building contractors.

"Due to this, the department does not hold information on the number of free school buildings with and without sprinklers installed," he said.

While the DfE has now dropped proposals that would have weakened the language around safety requirements in schools – including the installation of sprinklers – unions remain worried that not enough new and rebuilt school buildings have systems in place.



Schools Week reported last month that the proportion of new schools built with sprinklers had halved to 35 per cent since 2010.

Gibb also revealed that less than a third of schools rebuilt and refurbished in the first phase of the government's Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP), a £4.4 billion government programme to rebuild and refurbish school buildings, were fitted with sprinklers.

Two phases cover 537 schools. The first, which started in April 2014 and will end this year, involved 260; the second, which is currently ongoing, will involve 277 schools.

Of the 260 schools in the first phase, just 75 (29 per cent) had sprinklers fitted.

Gibb said as schools under phase two are "still in the early design stage", it was "not yet clear which may require sprinklers at

this time".

Andrew Morris, the head of pay, conditions and bargaining at the National Union of Teachers, said the government had given "scant regard" to fire safety in schools until Grenfell, allowing "far too many schools to be built without fire sprinklers in recent years".

The union has now called on the government to "act without delay" to make sprinklers a legal requirement in all new schools and in existing schools where a risk assessment suggested it was necessary.

A DfE spokesperson said it had "always been the case, and remains the case", that where the risk assessment for any new building recommended sprinklers, they must be fitted.

Following Grenfell, councils and academy trusts were instructed to carry out fire-safety checks on school buildings to identify any that may need further investigation.

The government launched its own review of all schools over four storeys high to find out what type of cladding was on the buildings and to test whether it was flammable.

"We have had thousands of responses from schools across the country and our priority now is analysing the data. Where further information is needed, we are contacting schools to gather this," the DfE spokesperson added.

NEWS

Education's a 'dequaliser', says economist

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Education has "not done anything" to improve social mobility and has made inequality worse, according to the education economist Stephen Machin.

Speaking at a debate held by the Sutton Trust on Wednesday in central London, Machin said education had been a "dequaliser" because it benefited rich pupils more.

"Education has not been the great leveller. It's either done nothing for social mobility, or it has reinforced existing inequalities."

Time at school strengthened the link between pupils and their family backgrounds, said Machin, a professor at the London School of Economics, meaning more rich pupils ended up in higher education.

He also cited the OECD's finding in 2012 that in 20 developed countries, only young people in the UK and US had as poor literacy and numeracy skills as their parents' generation.

There have been some "minor improvements" in school outcomes but "in terms of the bigger picture, these are not really that important", he said.

Anna Vignoles, professor of education at the University of Cambridge, said the government would have to "disproportionately" invest in poor pupils'

education to help them to get high-status jobs and wages.

She suggested removing the subsidy for childcare for higher earners, directing the money instead towards poor children in early years.

Even then, she predicted that "you would see the middle and upper classes continue to outstrip any investment the state could make".

It comes as a report by the Sutton Trust showed an increasing public pessimism about social mobility.

In 2008, 53 per cent of respondents said "people have equal opportunities to get ahead". By 2017, just 40 per cent agreed that was true.

But 2,000 respondents to an Ipsos MORI survey have faith in the capacity of comprehensive schools to enable social mobility, with 47 per cent backing high-quality schools over other educational alternatives, such as lowering tuition fees, to help poor pupils.

However at a panel debate, Vignoles said poorer children were already left behind by primary school, and continued to "divide" according to family income throughout school until they got lower grades, on



average, than their richer counterparts at A-level.

This meant that many of the "policy levers" used to help poorer pupils achieve would fail, as family background continued to dominate, she said.

However, while it was "also true" that poorer children earned a "high return" from investments they put in education, rich children on average benefited from education more.

But Vignoles said education enhanced "lives and skills" and should "not be given up on".

"There is a danger this aspect of education would get lost in our disappointment that it's not a route for social mobility."

Schools must concentrate on teaching pupils skills for weathering a new technological era of jobs, she added.

NOW IT'S GREENING WHO'S PROMISING A CAREERS STRATEGY

Justine Greening has become the third minister to announce a long-awaited "careers strategy", two years after it was first mooted by the government.

The careers strategy will be launched "in the autumn", the education secretary told a conference on social mobility held by the Sutton Trust on Wednesday.

Such a strategy was first proposed by Sam Gyimah in December 2015, a former education and childcare minister, when he said the Department for Education would "publish a comprehensive careers strategy in the coming weeks".

This never materialised, with Robert Halfon, then minister for skills, telling a meeting in parliament in January that the strategy would be published the next week. Again, this did not happen.

Now Greening has said that she "will launch our careers strategy this autumn", adding it would have a "clear focus on driving social mobility".

In answer to *Schools Week's* questions, Greening said technology would be central. "We will look at how we can use technology to enable young people to access much better information faster."

She said the website of the National Careers Service was accessed "a huge amount ...we need to pull all this together".

The new strategy will be linked back to the post-16 skills plan, which aims to replace 20,000 further education courses with 15 high-quality routes.

UK Stats Authority corrects dodgy DfE grammar figures

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Exclusive

The government has been forced to backtrack on claims it made about the popularity of grammar schools following a complaint to the UK Statistics Authority.

In an ad-hoc publication put out last October, the Department for Education claimed that demand for selective school places exceeded supply by almost 11,000 places, and that this meant selective places were in greater demand than those in non-selective schools.

However, the anti-grammar campaign group Comprehensive Future complained to the Statistics Authority that its analysis of secondary school applications and offers did not take into account the "significant proportion" of applications to selective schools from parents whose children were ineligible to attend due to them not having an 11-plus test pass.

Under admissions procedure, parents can list grammar schools as their first choice of schools even if their child has not passed an entrance test.

For example, 1,037 of 3,013 first-preference applicants for grammar schools in Kent last year had not passed the 11-plus.

"Parents are effectively applying for places they won't get, due to the nature of selective schools needing an 11-plus pass," wrote Comprehensive Future's Joanne Bartley in



her complaint.

Bartley said the statistics were "misleading" as they did not take into account that while there may be demand for the places, parents could nevertheless not get their child into one of the schools.

Although the Statistics Authority says that first-preference data is a "reasonable proxy measure" for demand for selective schools, it ruled that users of statistics "should be provided with appropriate information to help them interpret statistics, and in this case further details about the eligibility status of these pupils would help with interpretation".

It said the DfE has now "agreed to amend" its publication.

Ed Humpherson, its director general for regulation, said the release would "make clear that a number of applications for selective schools may include pupils who have not passed the 11-plus test".

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NEWS: SOCIAL MOBILITY

HIGH STAFF TURNOVER IN DEPRIVED SCHOOLS LEAVES PUPILS STRUGGLING

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Teachers at the most deprived schools are 70 per cent more likely to leave their jobs than in the most affluent areas, leaving pupils struggling because of a constant stream of inexperienced staff, a new report has found.

The report, launched yesterday by the Social Market Foundation, recommends schools should have to publish their turnover rates so regional schools commissioners can intervene where staff are fleeing poor working conditions.

To help to reduce turnover, new teachers should start in supportive schools, while experienced teachers should spend time in challenging schools. Aspiring heads should also be forced to take middle leader roles in difficult schools, said the report, a move one head has called "condescending".

The report, which was ordered by the former deputy prime minister, Nick Clegg, argues that the best way to reduce the attainment gap between poor and rich pupils is to give them equal access to high-quality teachers, not by creating new "structures" such as grammars or academies.

"Politicians love to argue about the name plate on the school gates," Clegg told

Schools Week.

"We need to do the less headline-catching work of making sure we have well-motivated teachers."

The report, which compared the 1970 British Cohort Study with the Millenium Cohort Study, found that a pupil's academic performance at 11 was more closely determined by their geographic region if they were born in 2000, than those born 30 years earlier.

Pupils in poorer areas faced a "cocktail of disadvantage" in accessing top teachers, it said.

Research by Rebecca Allen at Education Datalab, who sits on the Commission on Inequality in Education set up by the foundation, found that teachers in the 10 per cent most deprived secondaries were 70 per cent more likely to leave than those in the least deprived. A primary teacher was 20 per cent more likely to leave.

Lack of career development, challenging behaviour and league table pressures were the main reasons behind those departures.

Pupils in poor areas were also more likely to have teachers without a degree in their subject. This "expertise gap" was 22 percentage points for physics, 14 for chemistry and 10 for maths.

Meanwhile, 5 per cent more teachers in the richest areas have at least ten years'



experience, partly because experienced teachers apply to less challenging schools, while inexperienced teachers take jobs in poorer areas in schools with a higher staff turnover.

School turnover rates help RSCs and new teachers to spot schools that may be failing to support staff, but the figures would not be used by Ofsted, according to Sam Freedman, director of programmes for Teach First, who also sits on the commission.

Clegg also said programmes such as Teach First, which post top graduates in challenging schools, needed to be "vigilant" about making sure its initiatives "actually stick".

While the programme had done admirable

work, it was important "not to think that once you've got a young graduate with the right ideas that you've sorted the problem", he said. "The thing is longevity."

Sir Andrew Carter, chief executive of South Farnham Educational Trust, criticised the report's recommendation that teachers should be helped with their housing costs, such as cheaper rent. Instead, he said, "why not just pay teachers more"?

Requiring aspiring heads to work in poorer areas for a period also risked being "terribly condescending" to the schools in challenging areas, he said.

Conservative MP Suella Fernandes and Labour MP Stephen Kinnock also sit on the commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON INEQUALITY

1. MAKE SCHOOLS PUBLISH STAFF TURNOVER RATES

Regional Schools Commissioners could work with schools failing to retain early-career teachers by brokering support from schools that do a better job. Publishing the data would also allow NQTs to decide where to take a job and gives schools "a strong incentive" to improve their retention rates.

However, the report notes turnover is not always bad and might have normal reasons.



3. GIVE HOUSING HELP TO TEACHERS

Schools with high levels of pupils from low-income families should be able to bid for a fund that could help teachers buy or rent a home, putting it towards their deposit or a rent subsidy. It should be run as a pilot in a few local authorities first, with a budget of £12 million, which would

allow for 20 per cent equity loans on the average house in England for about 250 young teachers.



5. SIGN HOMEWORK AGREEMENTS WITH PARENTS

Teachers and parents should sign homework contracts at the start of each year. In them, teachers promise to set high-quality homework and support parents in helping their children, while parents promise to make sure homework

is done. The headteacher must lead on this as young inexperienced teachers might find it hard to tell older parents they need to make sure homework is done.



2. EXPERIENCE A TOUGH SCHOOL BEFORE BECOMING A HEAD

A condition of gaining the National Professional Qualification of Headship should be spending time in middle leadership at a challenging school in a poorer area. "This would encourage experienced and aspiring school leaders to spend time in disadvantaged schools". It should become "the

norm" that teachers will work in a school in a disadvantaged area as part of their career development.



4. PUT PARENTS ON AFTER-SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAMMES

The government should launch a programme of after-school 'family literacy' classes in primary schools with above-average proportions of free school meal pupils. A three-year-study by the Nuffield Foundation found family literacy programmes have a positive effect

on key stage 1 reading scores, as well as parents reading more with their children. The funding for these classes should be ring-fenced within the Skills Funding Agency budget.



6. PRIVATE SCHOOLS MUST PUBLISH COMMUNITY "VALUE"

Independent schools should have to provide out-of-school activities to all pupils who live locally if they want to keep their charitable tax status. This should also be published as information on their "public benefit" value – the value of the teaching

support, available sports facilities and extracurricular activities to pupils in the state-maintained sector. This information should be published alongside an estimate of the monetary value of tax reliefs the school has.

KEY FINDINGS

70% - how much more likely a secondary school teacher is to leave the most deprived schools compared to the most affluent

4% - unqualified teachers in schools with the highest proportion of free school meal pupils

2% - unqualified teachers in schools with the lowest proportion of free school meal pupils

23% - teachers leaving the most deprived schools each year

16% - teachers leaving the most affluent schools each year

3 points - how much better pupils whose parents attend parents' evening score in tests aged 11 compared to those whose parents don't

2 points - how much better pupils whose parents make sure they complete homework before doing other activities like watching TV score in tests aged 11

NEWS

Homework contracts raise standards, report claims

Schools should establish homework contracts with parents to set out everyone's responsibilities in making sure it gets done, according to a new report.

Pupils with parents who make sure they complete their homework before they do other activities score almost two points (1.93) higher in verbal reasoning tests aged 11, research from the Social Market Foundation has found.

Its authors are now recommending that schools and parents draw up a contract at the start of each year agreeing to keep in regular contact about their children's progress.

Under former education secretary Michael Gove, the Department for Education chose to scrap statutory guidance which required schools to have a formal policy on how they would engage with parents in 2016, in a bid to cut "red tape" for headteachers.

However, the report wants teachers to sign a home-school contract in which they commit to setting "high-quality homework" and to supporting parents.

Meanwhile parents should commit to making sure homework is completed and to stay in touch with the school.

A survey of school leaders and pupils conducted on behalf of Ofsted in 2015, found around half of all children said their homework 'never' or 'only sometimes' helped them make

progress.

Researchers also found pupils with parents who ensure they complete their homework make more progress between the ages of five and 11.

Kate Ryan, the principal of Christleton International Studio in Chester, which does not set homework, believes it causes too much stress at home.

Instead, pupils could sign up for sessions with teachers to complete independent work in "self-scheduled lessons".

The school also offers sessions to parents on how to "support learning at home" without setting formal homework tasks. "We believe in the value of our pupils having free time to explore hobbies and interests," she told *Schools Week*.

But the report gave Michaela Community free school in north London, whose chair of governors, the Conservative MP Suella Fernandes, also sat on the report's commission board, as an example of where homework contracts with parents were a "cultural norm".

The report quoted headteacher Katharine Birbalsingh (pictured), who said the school "made it clear we will hold not only the child to account, but to parents too".

Schools use "vague" home-school contracts too often, she said, adding: "Before the parent signs, we emphasise just how important that signature is".



CHILDREN DO BETTER IF THEIR FAMILY ATTEND PARENTS' EVENINGS

Pupils score three points higher in verbal reasoning tests if they have a parent who attends parents' evenings, research has found.

Children whose parents never read to them before the age of five also scored almost two points lower in reasoning tests taken at 11, a report by the Social Market Foundation has said.

To help the poorest pupils, the foundation is asking the government to launch after-school "family literacy" classes in primary schools so that parents develop the habit of reading with their child.

But literacy expert Geoff Barton (pictured), the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, insisted that many of the parents in need of such help would be the least likely to want to come.

Instead, initiatives should encourage parents to read with their child in their home, not in an after-school classroom where they may feel "patronised", he said.

The report recommended that primary schools with above-average levels of pupils on free school meals have access to funding ring-fenced by the Skills Funding Agency.

It should cost about £7 per

session per person, or £56 per parent and child, over a four-week session, said the report.

A review of nearly 30 other family literacy programmes for year 1 and year 2 pupils by the Nuffield Foundation found a positive effect on key stage 1 reading scores, and on parents reading more often to their children.

But a 2010 Ofsted report called 'English at the Crossroads' found that making pupils read more in school to compensate for a lack of books at home only "reinforced the feeling it was alien to them", added Barton.

Instead, the report said pupils benefited most if their parents read with them in their own home.

Attendance at parents' evenings was also found to be an important factor, with 11-year-olds scoring three more points as a median average in verbal reasoning tests if their parent went.

Dianne Murphy, cofounder of Thinking Reading, a reading intervention strategy for secondary school pupils, said any attempt to boost pupils' language skills needed to use rich vocabulary, give a clear understanding how letters and sounds connect, and offer a wide range of interesting books.

But not all teachers feel confident about delivering high-end literacy sessions, she said.

"This is a good idea, but we need to make sure that teachers have the skills they need to deliver it."



Greening announces 11 new research schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Eleven schools across England will split more than £2 million to become new research hubs, Justine Greening has announced.

Each school will receive £200,000 to become "focal points of evidence-based practice" in their regions over the next three years.

The hubs are based at schools in the government's 12 "opportunity areas", which are due to receive investment in school improvement.

Twenty-two schools are now designated as research hubs. The first five were unveiled last October, while a further six were allocated in April this year.

The schools build networks between large numbers of schools and create programmes including events to encourage teachers to use research evidence.

Greening said the new research schools would "accelerate work that is already underway" in the opportunity areas and that gathering evidence on what works in the classroom would help to "level up" opportunities for pupils.

Greening also announced Sir Kevan Collins, the chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, as a government



Justine Greening

"evidence champion" for the 12 areas.

He will support the regions to "better use evidence to improve outcomes and social mobility".

"Evidence of 'what works' is one of our most useful tools to do this," he said. "By working with local partners, schools and organisations, we have the potential to really make a difference."



Sir Kevan Collins

- **Hastings Research School at Ark Blacklands Primary Academy, East Sussex**
- **Stoke-on-Trent Research School by The Keele and North Staffordshire Alliance**
- **Norwich Research School at Notre Dame High School**
- **Oldham Research School by The Greetland Academy**
- **Blackpool Research School at St Mary's Catholic Academy**
- **Doncaster Research School by Partners in Learning**
- **Scarborough Research School by Esk Valley Alliance**
- **Derby Research School at Wyndham Primary**
- **West Somerset Research School at The Blue School, Wells**
- **Bradford Research School at Dixons Academies**
- **East Cambridgeshire and Fenlands Research School at Littleport CP School, Ely**

NEWS

LEADERSHIP
QUALIFICATIONS
RELAUNCHED BY
GOVERNMENT

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

The government is to launch revamped leadership qualifications for school leaders in September using two organisations incorporating over 100 teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts.

The Department for Education has earmarked £10 million to support the reformed National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) in schools.

Two separate organisations – Ambition School Leadership and Outstanding Leaders Partnership – have both created alliances accredited to start delivering the full NPQ set.

The national professional qualifications include courses covering headship, middle leadership and senior leadership, as well as a new executive leadership qualification.

Each organisation has over 50 teaching school alliances and academy chains on board, and will start delivering the qualifications from the next academic year.

Schools Week understands more organisations will be accredited to deliver NPQs in future, though details have yet to be published.

Justine Greening announced the new “gold standard” NPQs in February and said they’d have a strong emphasis on using evidence.

“NPQs should have the same kudos as MBAs do in business,” she said. “I want them to be recognised outside of the teaching profession to show individuals that hold them have high quality leadership skills.”

Ambition’s alliance has around 750 schools involved across the country, and will work with the country’s largest academy trusts to develop leaders in the areas “that most need them” – including in the DfE’s “opportunity areas”.

James Toop, the organisation’s chief executive, said his alliance will help create a “self-sustaining system” where schools are “empowered to develop their leaders at all levels”.

Meanwhile Outstanding Leaders Partnership’s consortium will deliver the new-look NPQs in over 1,000 schools from Manchester to Exeter.

Another training provider, Best Practice Network, is heading up the design and development of the refreshed programmes for outstanding leaders.

Phil Haslett, its programme director, said the qualifications had been adapted to “reflect the changing realities and demands” of school leadership, such as “tighter budgets, changes in assessment policy, and the recruitment and retention of teachers”.

He added that the new NPQs would address those challenges as the programmes include modules on managing resources and risks, supporting leaders to “better understand” the financial and staffing implications of budgets, and strategies for “identifying, developing and retaining talent”.

Tarun Kapur, chief executive of the Dean Trust, a partner of the alliance, said the programme would help schools develop a “pipeline of skilled leaders” during a challenging time.

“If we are to make sure enough people become heads and senior leaders, and they have sustainable, enjoyable careers, then it is vital that as many as possible get access to the very highest quality training and support, delivered at a scale that makes it good value for schools,” he added.

Sheffield school to rehire TAs as ‘teaching fellows’

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

A primary school in Sheffield wants to sack the majority of its teaching assistants before rehiring them as “fellows” who will work towards teaching qualifications, *Schools Week* understands.

Hatfield Academy has kicked off a staffing restructure which unions claim will allow them to get rid of nine teaching assistants, and employ six “unqualified” teachers in their place.

A consultation is ongoing but *Schools Week* understands that at least three TA scale posts will remain, and that the others losing their jobs will potentially be rehired as fellows, and will then work towards qualified teacher status if they do not already have the qualification.

Dave Pike, a regional organiser for Yorkshire and the Midlands at the National Union of Teachers who is representing the school’s TAs with Unison, described the move to help qualify these fellows as “obviously positive”, but he said it was important to note that “we are potentially undermining qualified teachers by replacing them with unqualified, albeit temporarily, teachers”.

Hatfield is run by Astrea Academy Trust, which sponsors 18 academies in total, and is proposing a restructure to find what works best for pupils while making cost savings.

Schools Week understands the fellows’

duties will include small-class teaching, subject-specific interventions, team teaching, marking and other similar tasks.

Unions claim that TA posts in schools across the country are under sustained threat due to the real-terms cuts in school budgets.

Data released by the Department for Education last month shows a fall of four per cent in secondary TAs in 2016, following another four per cent drop in 2015.

Within primary, however, the total number of TAs increased by 1.8 per cent last year, in line with the overall increase of primary pupil numbers in the country.

Hilton primary school in Derbyshire recently handed its 50 teaching assistants – the equivalent of 12 full-timers – redundancy notices, and a third of these will lose their jobs while the school tries to make up for a £120,000 budget shortfall, as *The Guardian* reported in April.

Jon Richards, head of education at Unison, said schools are cutting teaching assistants and other support staff jobs at a “quicken and alarming rate”.

“Yet many of these support staff play safety-critical roles in schools around safeguarding and administration of medicine,” he told *Schools Week*.

“These tasks will have to be done by the remaining pressured and too-often untrained members of staff, putting pupils’ health and safety at risk.”

Richards pointed out that no rules bar schools from removing all of their TAs, even



Libby Nicholas,
CEO, Astrea Academy Trust

with regards to a school’s duties to take care of high-needs pupils, so long as the school can prove it will be able to meet its statutory duties with the staff they have.

Astrea told *Schools Week* that under its proposed restructure, there will “continue to be a number of posts on the TA pay scale”.

“At Astrea, we regularly review our staffing models to ensure that the structure in each academy is providing the best possible support to the children and young people in our care, so that we can deliver on our promise of an education that inspires beyond measure,” said a spokesperson.

Teacher pay cap maintained at 1% despite warning

JOHN DICKENS & FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Pay rises for teachers will remain capped at one per cent on average in 2017-18, even though the official review body has warned that recruitment is stalling and retention rates are falling.

The Department for Education intends to accept a recommendation from the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) that teacher pay scales for everyone except mainscale teachers shift by one per cent.

The rise will apply to the upper and lower ends of the pay scales and includes unqualified teachers and school leaders.

Teachers paid on the six-point mainscale will see their pay range increased by two per cent at the top and bottom. This means teachers on the lowest salary will get an automatic – but still below-inflation – two-per-cent rise.

It is unclear, however, how schools will meet the change given mounting cost pressures and stagnant per-pupil funding. No extra cash will be provided, and the STRB estimates the uplifts could cost up to £81 million across all schools.

The STRB also delivered a stinging warning over school recruitment problems, and said it was “deeply concerned” about falling retention rates and missed teacher

training targets.

Nearly 35,000 teachers left the profession in 2015 (not including retirees) – a figure that has risen each year since at least 2011.

The STRB said it “considers that this presents a substantial risk to the functioning of an effective education system” – particularly with a bulge in secondary pupils looming in the next few years.

Although lifting the pay cap by more than one per cent would leave school leaders with “difficult decisions”, the review body warned that such increases will be needed in coming years to make pay competitive for teachers.

Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the government’s decision to stick with austerity pay sent the “wrong signal to exhausted school staff, to pupils and parents” – and would lead to more teachers quitting.

“It is disingenuous of the government to say schools can pay some teachers more when school budgets are already squeezed so hard that schools are having to make staff redundant,” she said. “Without more funding this is just a nonsense.”

The National Association of Head Teachers also claimed the cap “has got to go”, with general secretary Russell Hobby describing the government’s decision as “deeply

disappointing given the massive challenges we face for recruitment and retention of teachers”.

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, called for clarity on whether there would be new funding for schools to pay for increasing wages, amid uncertainty the government would make good on its pledge to add £4 billion to school funding over the next parliament.

“The simple fact is that this means teachers are still facing a real terms pay cut,” she said.

“With pay rises for the vast majority of teachers capped below inflation, they will be worse off in a year as a direct result of this government’s policies.”

Last year, the STRB recommended a one per cent rise, but warned of the need for a “significantly higher” rise before 2020.

Justine Greening, the education secretary, said schools have “significant flexibility” to pay individual teachers more to take account of “performance and retention”.





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EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Three stars and a wish: my end-of-year report card for the DfE

I know "feedback" is a contentious issue these days – what with triple marking, and lollipop sticks, and everyone going crazy about exam mark schemes.

But there's something I still love about the simple "three stars and a wish" format I was taught in teacher training. Three good things, one thing that could be better. I've no idea if it's evidence-based, maybe the government's new evidence "champion" Kevan Collins will tell me, but it's definitely a format that leads to fuzzy feelings with room for improvement.

I know I can be hard on our beloved government overlords, but that's because they're hard on schools. There is no hiding place for school leaders who preside over dipping data or delayed deadlines. They are mauled by governors, Ofsted, commissioners, parents, auditors. Exam results are published. So we do the same for the group with ultimate power. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

But, in the same way that education secretary Justine Greening says we must no longer purely be punitive towards schools, so too should we remember what the DfE and government has done well. After all, as the schmaltzy speakers at most INSETs will tell you, we are all on an

improvement "journey" together.

So, as it's the end of the academic year, here's my report card for the Department for Education with three stars and a wish.

Star 1: Pushing back against the use of nationality data for immigration purposes

As home secretary, Theresa May planned for schools to collect data on pupils' nationality and country of origin to hunt out illegal immigrants.

Although the plan was watered down, by last autumn schools were starting to collect this information and it wasn't clear how it would be used. Amid a public furore, the DfE created an agreement that protected the data from Home Office use. Given May was prime minister by this time, that was not an easy thing to do. Civil servants had to use much diplomacy while being harangued daily in public (including by us).

There are children who will still be in education next year because of these moves. Thank you to the civil servants who managed it.

Star 2: School place provision

It's easy to complain about the free

schools programme. It hasn't always been efficient. But the huge bulge of primary children has, largely, hit without too much of an issue. Class sizes have expanded a touch; first preferences fell a tiny amount. But given the stark warnings of a few years ago (including from me), the DfE deserves some kudos for having worked with local authorities to get cash, schools and teachers to where they are needed.

Will they manage it as the population bulge moves into secondaries? The jury is still out!

Star 3: The SATs resit u-turn

This was a smart move by Justine Greening. Given the many problems with the exams, and their expense, this policy was unpopular and impractical (even if well-intended). That Greening was willing to do a u-turn bodes well as we go into the choppy territory of funding and assessments over the next year or so.

The (somewhat massive) wish

As our front page shows, there are currently NINE outstanding consultation

responses which – when you add the time the schools sector has been waiting – equal EIGHT YEARS of delay. That's ridiculous.

Funding, environments, staffing, timetabling. These things make schools go round. Proposals have been mooted for each and school leaders have been left dangling for years.

Prevarication while you make good decisions is one thing. But these delays are about the cowardice of a government that only wants information to come out when it's convenient to its electoral cycles. We don't have to put up with it.

Hence, we are creating a consultation calendar with the days totted up that we have been waiting and we will be reporting it regularly. What gets measured gets focused on.

*

We'll be back with our first edition of the school year on September 15. In the meantime you can find daily news on www.schoolsweek.co.uk and, if you don't want to keep checking the site, you can sign up for our daily round-up of headlines at www.bit.ly/schoolbellmail



READERS' REPLY



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Schools forced to 'pick up the pieces' of home education

Zoe Sadaoui, Cheshire

The title is wrong. It should be "Home education doubles, with parents left to 'pick up the pieces' when school fails".

Tracey Maciver, Swindon

If the number of children being home educated is rising dramatically, does that not demonstrate that the education system is failing countless children and that it is the system that needs to change rather than strict regulation of something that is clearly working for many children?

As a home-educating parent I have met many former teachers, such as me, who will not put their children into the current education system. Is this another indicator that the government needs to give schools more freedom to pursue curriculum and assessments that are more in line with the way children learn, rather than a one size fits all?

Seb Fuller

Sadly many schools are just Ofsted-obsessed sausage factories. Everything is so standardised that they have lost sight of the individual child. Ironically this seems especially true of those schools that pack their policies with claims of personalised provision and differentiated learning.

Jos Sy

Failure to support my daughter and threat of prosecution despite health and social care needs meant I home educated. It was the best thing I ever did.

New funds for teacher training

Carolyn Hughes

The way to attract teachers to challenging areas is to change a system that is so heavily skewed against those challenging areas. It is very difficult to get the results the current Ofsted framework requires for a "good" rating in challenging schools. This is not because the teachers or kids are crap. It's because Ofsted only values a particular skill set, the type exhibited by highly academic individuals, and disregards the practical, social and life skills taught in abundance in "challenging" schools. If our government and Ofsted actually started to respect what goes on in those schools, instead of denigrating staff and children, then there might be a few more applicants for the posts that become available.



Terry Fish // @terryfish

If only the government would pay teachers properly and deal with workload and accountability. Then no need for yet another scheme.

Academy slashes break times



Emma Havoc

Why is this unusual? We have started at 8.40am for most of my teaching career and next year move to half-hour lunchtimes. Break has always been 15 minutes.

Sarah Bailey

This is common practice in some academy chains to "maximise learning time".

Teaching isn't about being on the right team



Ngozie Obidiegwu

Teaching should be about passion not ticking the boxes. If a child sees a teacher who enjoys teaching, he or she would start to enjoy learning.

Pupil becomes school's head for a day



Julia Smith // @wingcramp

I did this once in the school where I was head. Great fun – and an eye-opener!

Ruth Belle-Fortune // @RBelleFortune

Would he want the job?

Multi-academy trusts are great for career progression



Tara Bailey

Erm no, you just become another payroll number in too large an establishment.

Ofsted ratings 'wiped clean' in 700 schools

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ian Taylor, Bristol

The next time schools minister Nick Gibb brags that academies have better Ofsted results than maintained schools, remind him that the worst-performing academies have their Ofsted results deleted.

Imagine having a credit card debt that you transfer to a new lender. And the new lender immediately cancels the debt. Are you ever going to get to grips with your spending problem? When the debt builds up, just transfer it. The same applies to this method of school "improvement". It is school improvement using the "dodgy statistics method". Good for the multi-academy trust chief executive bonus though – success is guaranteed, plus they don't have to send their own kids to schools like these.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

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

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REPLY OF THE WEEK
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FEATURE: FOCUS ON CURRICULUM

WHAT IS OFSTED LOOKING FOR?

Ofsted recently announced it will introduce a new focus on how schools plan their curriculum. We look at what the watchdog has said so far, how inspectors have been involved in curriculum in the past, and ask some experts: how can schools make sure they're building a strong curriculum?

Ofsted's delegation to the recent Festival of Education at Wellington College was all about curriculum. The chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, said grades were less important than the "real substance of education", while her right-hand man, Sean Harford, delivered a workshop on Ofsted's plan to incorporate curriculum into the new inspection framework, due in September 2019.

Why the sudden focus on curriculum?

It's been brewing for some time. Even before Spielman took over the reins, Harford warned SSAT conference delegates in December against a "narrowing" of the curriculum, saying schools would need to place the emphasis on broader curriculums to gain higher inspection judgments.

Spielman picked up the theme in her address to the Association of School and College Leaders in March, condemning some schools' 'gaming' practices - such as entering pupils en masse for easy qualifications - as "nothing short of a scandal".

"Young people get one opportunity to learn in school and we owe it to them make sure they all get an education that is broad, rich

and deep," she told delegates.

Ofsted also announced a study in the spring to look at examples of the most successful curricula across early years, primary, secondary and further education.

What do they mean by curriculum?

Ofsted's working definition: "The curriculum is a framework for setting out the aims of a programme of education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage (intent); for translating that framework over time into a structure and narrative, within an institutional context (implementation) and for evaluating what knowledge and understanding pupils have gained against expectations (impact/achievement)."

None the wiser? In plain English - and to paraphrase Spielman - Ofsted wants school leaders to be taking a whole-school strategic approach to the spiritual, cultural and moral development of pupils, to make the world a better place. They should be thinking less about preparing students for exams, and more about the "body of knowledge" young people will gain during their time at school. Practices such as depriving bilingual students of the chance to study a third language to optimise Ebacc outcomes are anathema.

What is Ofsted doing?

The inspectorate is visiting schools, reception classes and colleges to conduct a review of curriculum, and has promised a "no judgment" approach in this

DID YOU KNOW?

HM Inspectorate, Ofsted's predecessor, created a framework for the analysis, review and development of a "broad and balanced" school curriculum.

It proposed "areas of learning and experience" to feature in every school's curriculum: aesthetic and creative, human and social, linguistic and literary, mathematical, moral, physical, scientific, and technological.

It also outlined four "elements of learning": knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes - as the bases for planning learning experiences within each of the nine areas.

HMI was clear: "The curriculum should be broad... Not to involve pupils sufficiently in all these areas and elements is to leave their education lacking in some respects."

A school was encouraged to adopt such a framework (or a modified version of it) to scrutinise the adequacy of their current curriculum and as a basis for developing it further - as part of the national discussion on the school curriculum encouraged by the then secretary of state, Sir Keith Joseph.

The framework was set out in The Curriculum 5-16 (HMSO 1985) as part of Curriculum Matters, a series of discussion papers on subjects and areas of the curriculum, which later informed the working groups set up to establish the national curriculum.

Colin Richards, former HMI and editor of the *Curriculum Matters* series

information-gathering phase. The current plan is to do a lot of fact-finding, identify best practices, define a set of common terms for talking about curriculum, and feed it into a separate curriculum section in the new framework.

Will Ofsted publish a curriculum?

Schools will not be inspected on whether they are delivering an "Ofsted-approved curriculum". At the festival, Spielman said inspectors would look more closely at whether schools were thinking properly about their curriculum, planning it well, and delivering it effectively.

What should schools be doing now?

While Ofsted has not yet issued any detailed

guidance, it has said schools need to:

- know their curriculum - design and intent
- know how their curriculum is being implemented
- know what impact their curriculum is having on pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Whether schools use data to monitor this is up to them. Harford insists Ofsted's concern is less with how schools "demonstrate" the above, more with how they "know" it.

We asked some people with experience to tell us what they think schools should be doing to ensure a robust approach to curriculum design. Read on...

@CATHMURRAY_NEWS

We must develop curriculum expertise in our leadership teams

Summer Turner, director of teaching and learning, East London Science School

Forget Jeremy Corbyn at Glastonbury, the real headliner of this year's summer festivals was Ofsted's Amanda Spielman at Wellington College. In a seismic moment, the chief inspector united the crowd in just two sentences: "One of the areas that I think we sometimes lose sight of is the real substance of education. Not the exam grades or the progress scores, important though they are, but instead the real meat of what is taught in our schools and colleges: the curriculum."

I was ecstatic; curriculum had earned its time in the spotlight. Yet anxiety and fear soon began to creep in as I imagined something that I care so much about ending up on an Ofsted checklist. Could curriculum become the new Assessment for Learning, the lollipop stick of education? As Spielman seemed to recognise, schools have lost the way when it comes to curriculum, often as a consequence of fearing accountability measures and Ofsted. Would an Ofsted intervention over curriculum cause more harm than good, driving heads into a frenzied panic to fit the inspectorate's requirements?

That is up to the profession. In our hearts we all know that Spielman is right. Last week I spoke to some year 6 students about studying foreign languages. As each one chimed "Well I studied Spanish/German/Mandarin/Russian but then we stopped at year 5 because of SATs", I was reminded of Spielman's warning about this purely functionalist approach to education. If we do not fight for an education that is "about broadening minds, enriching communities and advancing civilisations", then we all stand guilty.

So how do we do this? First we recognise that there is not a shared understanding of curriculum and curriculum purpose. We need some honest conversations about purpose, so that we "move from an intervention culture to a curriculum design culture" (Christine Counsell, director of education at the Inspiration Trust). We must

WE MUST AVOID A GENERIC APPROACH

also recognise that there are bodies of knowledge in terms of curriculum design and in respect to the subjects we teach.

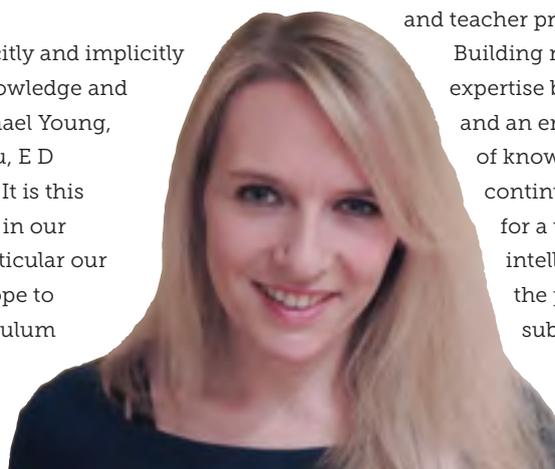
Spielman's speech was explicitly and implicitly underpinned by a wealth of knowledge and expertise from the likes of Michael Young, Tim Oates, Daisy Christodoulou, E D Hirsch and Daniel Willingham. It is this expertise that we must develop in our school leadership teams, in particular our headteachers. If these heads hope to achieve the richness of a curriculum that incorporates "the great works of classical musicians" or the "intricacies of ancient civilisations", they will

also need to know how to find and nurture subject specialists. They must ask the types of questions that allow them to understand how different subjects work and the implications for content selection and sequencing.

Avoiding a generic approach is essential to avoid curriculum becoming another piece in the Ofsted game; if we assume there can be a one-size-fits-all approach, we risk ruining it all. This demands a complete shift in the way schools, professional development and leadership works. It's something that academy chains such as Ark and Inspiration Trust have made a priority by appointing teams of specialists to work with their schools to develop communities of subject knowledge. School leaders must be brave enough to show they take curriculum seriously by making it the core of their school and teacher professional development.

Building meaningful subject and curriculum expertise based on a clear sense of purpose and an engagement with existing bodies of knowledge is not beyond us. We can continue to run scared, we can blame Ofsted for a tickbox culture or we can face this intellectual challenge and battle to offer the pupils in our schools an education of substance.

Summer Turner is also the author of *Bloomsbury CPD Library: Secondary Curriculum and Assessment Design*



Curriculum should come first, how best to teach it follows on

Martin Robinson, author and consultant

How we decide what to teach, when to teach it and why we teach it are some of the most fundamental questions we ask in our schools.

However, in some instances, important questions about what to teach has taken a lowly position in educational discussions. Instead we focus on how to achieve outstanding Ofsted's and how to become outstanding teachers, which leads to an obsession with pedagogy at the expense of an in-depth discussion about what we teach. Instead of a focus on short-term lesson planning, we need to look at the long term, how we intend the powerful stories of our subject to unfold.

Curriculum should come first; how best to teach it follows on. Schools need to decide what children should learn to help them to flourish – and not leave it to the individual choice of teachers or even to government.

The word curriculum comes from the Latin verb *currere* meaning "to run" and is associated with the word "career", which meant running at full pelt. This gives us a clue to one of the problems that has dogged some pupils' experience of curriculum over the years: they career at full pelt through an incoherent morass of ill-thought-through experiences that leave them not knowing much at all.

This sort of education can be a chaotic experience for a child. Schools should design their curricula in a joined-up way. Teachers should know what

their colleagues are teaching, when and why. They should know how the curriculum unfolds and how children might best learn it.

Beginning as novices, pupils are on a trajectory towards expertise; a joined-up curriculum recognises this. Regular review and assessment is an important part of the process, as the real curriculum is the one retained in the memories

“ PUPILS ARE ON A TRAJECTORY TOWARDS EXPERTISE

of the children, not just the one envisaged by their teachers at the start.

A curriculum is a narrative; pupils begin the story knowing relatively little and end up knowing a lot more. That some things are more important should be tackled unapologetically.

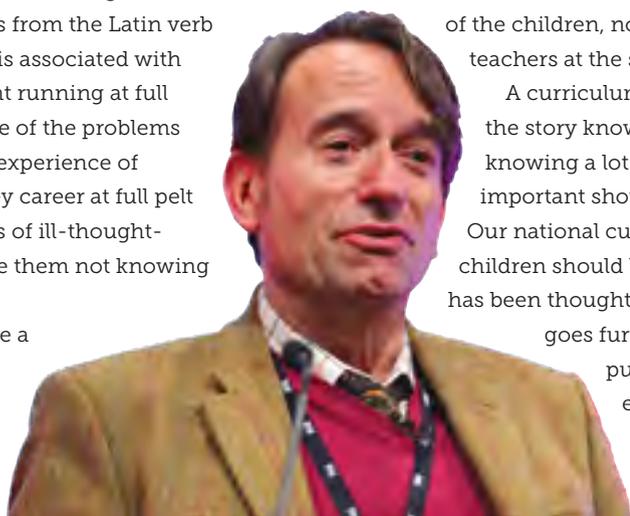
Our national curriculum merely suggests that children should be introduced to the best that has been thought and said. A powerful curriculum goes further, engaging the child in the pursuit of wisdom, truth, beauty and eloquence.

Children need to be taught how to question whether what they

are being taught is the best that has been thought and said – to not simply accept the teacher's word for something is one of the delights of a maturing academic mind. We need to ensure they are fully equipped to take part in the great conversations of our time; deeper knowledge of crucial debates and conflicts can only enliven our democracy, and our cultural and public spheres. We also need to ensure that young people can add to our knowledge, whether that be in the arts, sciences, humanities, technologies, languages or sports. A powerful curriculum can help to ensure they have the wherewithal to do this.

Extra-curricular opportunities and voluntary work should be thought of as part of the whole curriculum offer, as should a policy on options that ensure breadth underpins choices. We should start from the premise that children must experience the full range of disciplines throughout their schooling. Whether in primary school or the sixth form, breadth of experience ensures young people have a powerful engagement with some of the best expressions we have of human understanding. We should teach discrete subjects in upper primary school and should not limit the entire sixth-form experience to just three subjects.

A good curriculum is one in which we address the physical, mental, spiritual, cultural and intellectual health of the child, in a joined-up way. Young people should learn to question and be encouraged to make a meaningful contribution throughout their lives for the good of us all.



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PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_McINERNEY

**Dave Cobb, chief executive,
Oceanova Group**

Dave Cobb has sold cakes to old ladies, mobile phones to wide boys and, in his more than ten years in teacher recruitment, has probably interviewed more disgruntled teachers than you've had hot dinners.

Now he wants to use the same entrepreneurial spirit that made him a whizz DJ to revolutionise the way teachers – “talent” as he calls them – are trained and developed through their careers.

With his strong saarf-east gravelly accent, he sounds like a chain-smoking Michael Caine. Only this guy really does want to blow the bloody doors off.

“There is no talent management in education,” the 39-year-old says, as we sit in his spacious east London office for Oceanova, a specialist in teacher recruitment and training.

“Here’s the worst thing about schools. If a head wants a cup of coffee, they click their fingers, they get it straight away. But if a teacher needs a new whiteboard marker? They usually don’t get it. We are not looking after them. We are not putting appropriate energy into keeping them in the profession.”

Over the past decade, while other industries have shifted the way they consider the pipeline of staff, education has stood still. In policing, staff carry and regularly review a personal portfolio, and sit exams to move up their ranks. The NHS, Cobb says, has created pathways from service delivery into management.

Despite years of complaints about professional development in schools, high-performing teachers – who are on the frontline of service delivery – are still tracked into management jobs they have little training to perform. If they don’t move, their pay and development in the classroom languishes; many soon leave, bored and frustrated.

“I was talking to a head of languages who has been a teacher for 11 years,” Cobb says. “She was saying that if it wasn’t for the kids she would have left, but she didn’t know where to go next. I asked about CPD and she said she had some INSETs that were completely irrelevant. Otherwise, she gets nothing.

“It shouldn’t be like this. We want teachers to come into the profession, get great training from the start, and then have a ten-year professional plan. They should get a masters, double masters, an education MBA. Why doesn’t an education MBA exist? Because so many people are already in an ivory tower by 35!”

In 2014, Oceanova created “Premier Pathways”, a programme that Cobb sees as a challenger to Teach First. Over two years it takes committed individuals with a minimum 2:2 degree, and puts them into school, in a paid job, supporting them to get QTS. The trainee gets £70 a day for working in a support role in the first year, and £82 in the second. The training, including a university-accredited PGCE, is all paid for.

“The single biggest factor why we can’t train enough teachers in this country is because the money doesn’t work. If you are coming out of university with £50,000 of debt, you don’t want to take on another £20,000 to start a job on £23,000. The equation is broken.

“But I tell you what we learned when we created Premier Pathways. So many universities are inflexible, out of touch and charging way too much for teacher training. £9,000 for a PGCE is criminal; they don’t need to charge that. It’s for tuition time, but you don’t need it. Look at the results of school-led training. They speak for themselves. It’s better quality. They are keeping

“THERE IS NO TALENT MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION”

people in the profession longer.”

Cobb tells the tale of a shelf-stacker in Waitrose who went on to become a teacher through the programme. Having grown up on an estate in north London, the young man had gained a degree from a lower-tier university with a 2:2 in media studies.

“He wasn’t the highest academic achiever, but he was striver and he passionately wanted to be a primary teacher back on the estate where he grew up.”

But as the eldest child in a single-parent family, his struggling mother now depended on him to be the breadwinner. He couldn’t afford the PGCE. “So we called him. We said: you can earn £15,000 and we’ll pay for your training over two years. In the middle of his shift in Waitrose, he cried. Because that’s how passionate people are. There is this latent talent out there of people who want to become teachers. They’d love to do it, but they don’t have the route. Whatever else you think of my previous career choices, that really is criminal.”

The career riff relates to Cobb’s early business experience as an 18-year-old selling the country’s first pay-as-you-go phones. Business rapidly boomed with queues out the door. Turned out, Cobb had unearthed a need in Dartford, Kent – where he grew up – for phones that local reprobates could use without having to get a contract. “It was great business. Before that I used to sell cakes on the local market. I was one of those people who would convince old ladies to buy a bundle for a fiver!”

His youth was not all cakes and wide boys, though. He attended Dartford Grammar School, a top selective school, where both of his elder brothers had flourished. Cobb had different ideas.

“I liked school, I had a great time, it just didn’t particularly like me,” he says with a laugh. “I am capable, I was a contributor, but clerical work isn’t for me. I like writing what I want to write. I don’t like rules, I don’t like hierarchy and I don’t like being told what to do. I always want to challenge the system.”

He credits the school with giving him a solid foundation in English and maths, but his skills in the arts, particularly music (he does a mean rendition of *Mustang Sally*) were not valued.

“No one ever said to me that because I was good at talking to people, I should get a speaking coach. Instead they said ‘you’re not paying attention in maths, we’re giving you detention.’”

After a series of stand-offs with teachers, he was invited to leave after his GCSEs. From there he went to college

DAVE

to study media and ended up becoming a professional DJ. When the glamour ran out, he took a job in digital marketing, before working in teacher recruitment.

But Cobb felt he was taking money to place people inappropriately in jobs, which inevitably led to high turnover and poor value for schools. Over time he developed a recruitment business, before creating Oceanova with Wayne Phillips.

He wants the company to become the leaders in showing schools that people management can be more than an office manager hiring and a teacher leading a few INSETs each year.

“I don’t want government funding. The whole principle is that it is affordable for schools within the existing budget. That’s been a pillar from day one: don’t charge more than people are already spending on creating talent. My vision is to have local school networks, with executive heads, training teachers across their lives. It’s to have a ‘school of education’ in every county.”

In particular, he wants the model to work outside London as that’s where programmes such as Teach



David with his wife, Michelle, and his son, Charlie



Cobb as a child

COBB

First have failed to scale (he also thinks it is outlandishly expensive). He also wants to create team management training in which leaders see their job as making life easier for everyone else. They should be the person who gets the teacher the whiteboard marker if they need it.

So, can he really resolve the workload crisis with a teacher training programme that links into a longer ten-year development plan for teachers? Maybe not. But he's certainly committed to try.

"I'm an entrepreneur; it's not a job; it's who I am," he says, before tipping me off to a secret plan he's cooking up for the autumn. Watch this space – and watch out for the flying doors.

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

What is your favourite book?

I should say something intellectual like *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand, which is the only book that celebrates the entrepreneur in popular fiction. But Judith Kerr's *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* is what I read to my son every night!

What is a party you attended as a child that you remember?

An after-party for the Henley Regatta. One of our friends who was doing the catering in a burger van got us in. It was a huge marquee for 2,000 people and they had bungee jumps and bucking broncos. It was fantastic, but the poshest people I've ever met.

Possession you are proud of?

I can hear a voice saying "don't say your car" but ... I've a Bentley GT Speed [enormous grin]. I'm not that much of a possessions' person, but I do like cars.

If you were invisible for the day what would you do?

Go to nursery and follow my son around. I'd love to see him interacting with other kids. He's so me ... he's going to be in so much trouble when he's a teenager.

What was a promise you made to yourself as a child?

Work hard. It is a challenge for me to have discipline. You build character when you work on things you are not good at. It did hurt me having to leave my school and friends at 16. It gave me a kick.

What animal are you most like?

We've got a French bulldog that mostly just sleeps and farts. My wife says that's my spirit animal. I'd like to say a lion... but it's probably the French bulldog.

END-OF-YEAR

Our favourite front pages

The grammar schools gamble

We pride ourselves on remaining politically neutral, but felt the issue of grammar schools compelled us to take an editorial stance. This front cover explains why. For the 20 per cent of children who get in, grammar schools get good results. But the best data we have suggests that there is a neutral or negative impact on the other 80 per cent.

This cover illustrates that "grammar schools gamble". If your child's chances of getting into a good school relied on rolling a 1, but the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 got you a worse one, would you still support the system?

The forgotten heroines

We got a lot of love after we revealed that only 10 multi-academy trusts are named after women, compared with 63 named after men. And new free schools are named after men at twice the rate of women.

It has been heartening since to hear how many people have taken this on board and have named trusts and schools after the last names of their mums. Bless!

General election

We were criticised for this cover, completed early in the election campaign, for appearing to show a preference for Labour. That

wasn't our aim. The debates and manifestos showed Jeremy Corbyn was making a bid for the popular vote while the Conservatives weren't doing much at all. We ran the cover, not to signal our support for Labour as some have suggested, but to reflect the stark difference. After the result, the front page – which weeks earlier looked wildly unbalanced – turned out to be prophetic as the country unexpectedly lurched left. We didn't influence the vote, but we did spot

Labour were crafting policies designed to appeal to the public, the Tories were not.

Cereal U-turner

Who doesn't love a pun (or three)? When the Tories came up with their genius plan to scrap universal free lunches for infants and replace them with free breakfasts, they thought they were being all clever by basing it on research showing they would cost about 10 per cent of the cost of midday meals. *Schools Week* crunched the numbers and revealed the flaw in the plan. The figures were just 7p per breakfast. But when we

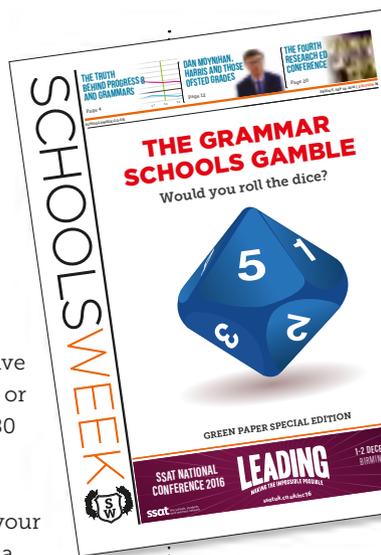
ran the story the party rang to tell us we had it wrong: actually, it didn't know how much it would cost! We got a second story, and several more puns.

Nick Gibb

What do you put on your paper the week after an election that has blown apart the mandate of the elected government?

We weren't sure what would happen next, but we knew this: Nick Gibb would still be the schools minister. Hence, we created a homage inspired by a recent *Time* magazine cover of Donald Trump looking moodily over his shoulder, surrounded by a black background.

We hear Gibb was a great fan. Others have told us they're using it as a dartboard.



TEAM VOXPOPS: HIGHLIGHT OF

CATH MURRAY FEATURES EDITOR



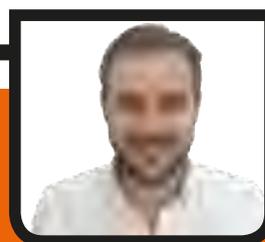
@CATHMURRAY_NEWS
CATH.MURRAY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

Meeting the menagerie at Limpsfield Grange school for autistic girls was my highlight. After an interview with the head, Sarah Wild, we moved outside for a photoshoot... and discovered the Surrey school not only had "comfort dogs" for pupils, but also sheep, goats and alpacas.

A close second was getting to see the bed in Speaker's House, traditionally used by

monarchs the night before their coronation. A group of heads from the London Leadership Strategy managed to wing an invitation. Drawn by the rare privilege of socialising among grandiose portraits and lavish furnishings, several current and ex-ministers stopped by to mingle with the people who run schools. It was a moment of unaccustomed glamour for all of us.

JOHN DICKENS CHIEF REPORTER



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Picking up the award for outstanding national education journalism at the CIPR education awards in November tops my list. It was a proud moment for myself, but also great recognition for the investigative journalism we produce at *Schools Week*.

The huge amount of time we devote to investigations has included me driving round England to track down

parents made bankrupt by private schools. We revealed that some parents – despite owing amounts in the low thousands – ended up with more than double the original debt after repayments were pursued through the courts. Other parents were unaware they had been made bankrupt; others said some private schools employed bullying debt collectors.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER POLITICAL REPORTER



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Ministers and spin doctors scoffed last summer term when we first questioned the government's decision to start collecting data on pupils' nationality and country of birth.

After repeated denials that the data would be used for immigration, the Department for Education (DfE) finally came clean in December, admitting it had indeed intended to share the data with the Home Office.

Talk about feeling vindicated. We had been accused in the Lords of "myths and fearmongering"; a senior civil servant slammed down a phone on me. We took the DfE to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The deal to use the data for immigration checks was shelved, proving that one should always question the things that don't sound quite right.

SPECIAL



Behind the profiles

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_MCINERNEY

The loveliest thing about writing profiles is that you can make the whole thing sound seamless. Cups of coffee over laughter and cake; fancy meals with edu-superstars; serious questioning of politicians.

We wordsmiths make it look glam by the bits that we choose to keep in – and the parts we leave out.

Here is the annual confession box where I admit that, sometimes, it's not so smooth. Sometimes, I'm a bit of a wally.

Take, for example, the day I interviewed Alison Peacock and managed to set off the College of Teaching's fire alarm.

Waving goodbye, I was asked by an office member if I needed help to get out the building. "No, it's fine," I said, "back down the stairs and out, no worries." Reading on my phone as I bounced off the final step, I confidently strode down the corridor, outstretched my arm – still without looking – and promptly opened a wired fire exit.

Bleeee-erg. Bleeee-erg. Bleeee-erg. I didn't know what to do. Run off? Line-up outside? Run upstairs and confess my sins? I tried the latter but the doors back in were now locked. Inside, no one seemed to care about the din. The alarm went quiet. Frazzled, I stood in the corridor, panicking, before texting Peacock's PR with a mea culpa.

Thankfully, they both found it very funny. And I learned a valuable lesson about not trying to leave a building while reading on my phone.

The lowest-key profile of the year goes to Jill Wood, the inspirational Leeds head who chose not to have her pupils complete the SAT tests this year. We were fellow panellists at the Northern Rocks conference, during which I essentially said I thought it a crazy move. Afterwards, we sat on the bleachers in the sports hall and she gave one of the most thought-provoking, honest, gentle interviews I've ever heard. An hour later, as we walked out, she apologised for rushing off, but said she'd arranged a speaker for her staff who she really wanted to



hear, and she'd already missed lots of it. It was incredibly kind of her to give up that time, and the tidal wave of support after the profile was printed showed her generous spirit showed to many readers too.

A more upmarket tale is the day I met Jonathan Simons, director of policy and advocacy at the Varkey Foundation, at the Blue Boar pub in Westminster – a bar so posh that tea is served in silver pots. At one point, a familiar face loomed into view. Then another. The former schools minister, David Laws, and the former chief inspector, Michael Wilshaw, ambled over to greet Simons. He recoiled when he saw it was me. I guess no one wants a journalist sitting a table away from a private conversation. Ho hum.



But perhaps my favourite moment during a profile interview was with the national schools commissioner, David Carter. Kept away from our questions by an overly protective government press office, we finally arranged an interview that took place in a bizarre prison-like glass box in the depths of the Department for Education. It was to be 25 minutes. NO MORE, barked the press officer, putting a watch on the table.

Playing along, we finished dead on time. As I stood up to go, Carter shook my hand and said: "Are you going to the conference dinner later?" I was. "If there's anything we missed out," he said, "you can always ask me there." The press officer looked glum. You can't keep a smart schools commissioner locked in a glass cage after all.

THE YEAR

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JESS STAUFENBERG REPORTER



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JESS.STAUFENBERG@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK

One of my favourite moments was sitting in an event with Justine Greening [her aides had said the media must leave during audience questions, to which I simply said "please try to remove me"] and hearing her drop a hint about primary assessment. Then cornering her afterwards and reporting her saying: "It will be soon. Hold that pen." The website went into

meltdown and we pre-empted her announcement that the Department for Education would not be imposing maths and reading resits, among other things – to everyone's relief. I also found speaking to the victims of mesothelioma, caused by asbestos in classrooms, very moving. Telling their story felt important.

BILLY CAMDEN REPORTER



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My highlight was combining two of my passions – investigative journalism and football.

Bolton Wanderers Football Club has had severe financial problems over the years, but those troubles hit the public purse when they leaked into the classroom.

The club set up a free school in 2014, but swiftly announced plans in for its closure in March this year after becoming

financially unviable.

Underneath the on-surface failures, I uncovered that not only did the school owe the government £500,000, but had already paid an eye-watering £600,000 to the former premier league football club in rent and utility bills in just two years.

I love football, but please stick to playing on the pitch guys, leave education to the experts.

SAMANTHA KING REPORTER



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When I discovered a Cambridge school was using a virtual cat to teach its students about science and sustainability, I had to write about it. Prime *Bulletin* material if ever I saw it!

The cat appears on a screen in the school's atrium and interacts with anyone who walks by. Pupils have the option of feeding

her, depending on how much energy the school has produced from its solar panels.

A picture of the virtual cat subsequently made the front page of edition 83, which led to a couple of murmurs of "Have we really put a cat on the cover?"

This week, it's a pig. The fun never stops...

END-OF-YEAR SPECIAL

WE DON'T SET QUOTAS, BUT WE DO KEEP DIVERSITY IN MIND

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY_NEWS

In an ideal world, people of all genders, ethnicities and the like would be so integrated into every structure of power that there would be no need to monitor representation.

But that's not the case. Teaching itself is far from representative with, for example, less than 7 per cent of the teaching workforce in England registered as non-white in the latest Department for Education census – compared with 14 per cent of the population (2011 census of England and Wales).

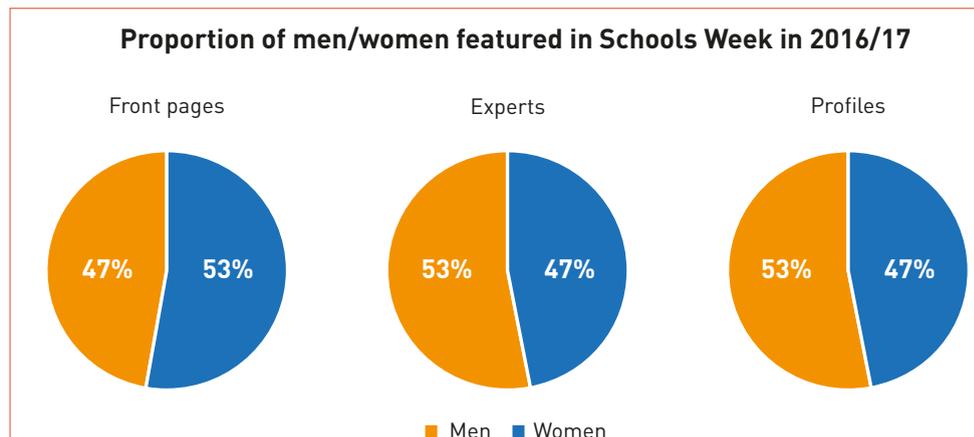
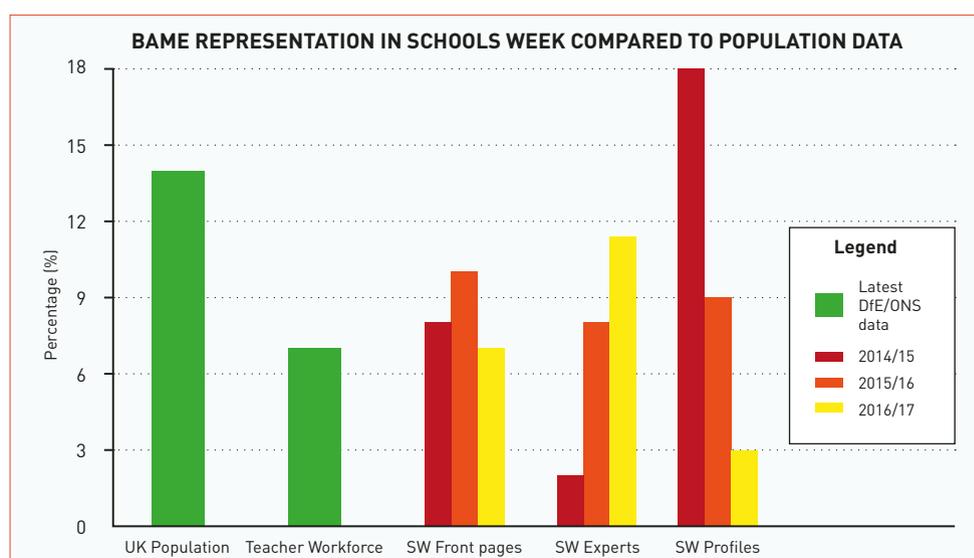
When planning our content, we keep diversity in mind because we believe that people of minority groups should not feel limited by failing to see role models they can relate to.

But we refuse to print content simply for the sake of hitting targets. And for that reason we don't set quotas for the paper, but at the end of the year we do a count to evaluate how well we've done.

It's a mixed bag this year. Opinion pieces are our most representative section, with 47 per cent women and 11 per cent BAME, a steady improvement from 8 per cent last year and 2 per cent the year before.

Our front pages, with 7 per cent pictures of BAME people, are closer to the make-up of the teaching workforce than to that of the population, although women fare better, at 53 per cent.

While we did fairly well with gender representation in our profile interviews, with 47 per cent women, our BAME stats of 3 per cent are abysmal – and way down on



9 per cent last year and 18 per cent in 2014-15.

The representation of less visible groups such as Gypsy/Roma, or LGBT people, are much harder to measure. We've done one profile this year on a teacher actively campaigning for equal rights, and two expert pieces on specific LGBT issues. However, we don't ask contributors what their sexual orientation is.

To be honest, we don't ask our contributors or interviewees about their

ethnicity either (perhaps we should).

When doing our BAME count, we simply look for non-white faces. While the method certainly has its flaws, it does have the benefit of not putting unrealistic expectations on reporters rushing to meet deadlines, and has a certain validity in that it likely mirrors the perception of most readers in terms of seeing people who do or don't "look like you".

Achieving better representation of traditionally under-represented groups

requires an understanding from the sector of its importance, and a willingness to work together to achieve this.

Networks such as WomenEd and the newly formed BAMEed have been invaluable. It's easy to criticise a publication for being white male-dominated – it's harder to work to change that. It means caring enough to spread the word; it means making yourself available for instant reactions to news stories and taking ten minutes out of your overflowing schedule to chat to a reporter over the phone. Or eating into your precious evenings or weekends to write a longer piece for publication. It's not for everyone, but we do want to encourage more people of diverse backgrounds who want to add their voice to the mix, to get involved.

Achieving diverse representation in a fast-paced media environment also requires strong leadership. I got a shock when I proudly presented my first expert pieces to the *Schools Week* editor and was told, one hour from deadline and 36 hours before going to print, that there was no way we would run an all-male spread. No ifs, no buts: I had to find a woman to write for us.

There's carrot as well as stick. I've also been praised for going the extra mile to recruit people from minority groups to add to our database. The old adage of "what gets measured, gets done" is certainly true. But we all love a bit of appreciation, and – whether measured or not – what gets valued by your boss is also something you'll probably go out of your way to make happen.

FAVOURITE CARTOONS



THE ONE WITH THE REALLY BAD PUN

In November, a leading former headteacher encouraged state schools to charge parents a "premium" for activities not covered by government funds. Andrew Carter, chief executive of the South Farnham Educational Trust, admitted it was the "thin end of the wedge" towards privatisation of education, but with "an 8 per cent cut in schools budgets, schools need to be able to be more creative about bringing in money". Get with the programme, fundraisers... sorry, headteachers.



THE ONE WITH THE TOILET HUMOUR

When *Schools Week* exclusively revealed Ofsted would pilot "reliability" tests of inspectors we knew there might be problems. Two years of dogged pursuit of the pilot's evaluation and we learned the first attempt found inspectors attempting to surreptitiously communicate with each other and ensure their results were the same. We could only imagine how they'd managed it...



THE ONE WHERE WE TAUNT A NEW MINISTER

The post-election reshuffle threw up a conundrum for the Department for Education, after *Schools Week* pointed out that Robert Goodwill – the replacement for children and families minister Edward Timpson, whose purview included sex education – had in 2013 voted against gay marriage. Timpson's role was quickly redrawn and the sex ed part given to... that's right: the ever-dependable Nick Gibb. Despite the department's workaround, we couldn't resist this cartoon.

10



THINGS YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T KNOW WITHOUT SCHOOLS WEEK

1. **The Conservatives' free breakfast manifesto pledge was costed at just 7p, per child per meal.** Simple maths got us one of the biggest scoops of the election campaign. It even appeared on a Liberal Democrat poster.
2. **The government tried to gag education researchers** by refusing access to key data unless they first passed their conclusions past the Department for Education press office. After our campaign, the rules were watered down and the gag was lifted. Hurray.
3. **Schools wanted pupils' passports and nationality data** because of unclear government guidance created in cahoots with the Home Office to get at illegal immigrants. We also learned of a plan to pass the information to the Home Office. Eventually, after a grassroots-led campaign, the policy was overturned.
4. **Bolton Wanderers football club charged a failing free school almost £1 million** for using its facilities, despite the free marketing of having the school named after it. One governor also claimed more than £800 in expenses for each meeting they attended. The club won't say who it is, or if it provided any charity to the school as it had said it would in its application.
5. **RE and PE teachers are most likely to be a "bad" superhead.** In our most controversial story of the year, we premiered research from Alex Hill and Ben Laker showing the subject taught by heads strongly correlated with the "type" of superhead they became – with RE and PE teachers coming out worst. Historians were best.
6. The doomed **primary spelling and grammar tests cost more than £1 million to create.** They were abandoned last year, but that's how much their creation cost, according to documents we obtained.
7. After the Conservatives said they wanted more private schools to "sponsor" state ones, we used documents obtained through a legal battle to find that **only 6 of the 103 private schools that applied to become free schools made it.** So much for superior quality.
8. **The government is proactively seeking to massage the cost of rebrokering academies.** Each year we report how much the government gives academy trusts to "encourage" takeovers of failing schools. But documents accidentally sent to us showed Lord Nash will be releasing the figures on his own terms, and only in a format that he likes.
9. The **special needs places deficit is costing the state HALF A BILLION a year in private provision.** Since we published the story, 21 new state special schools have been promised.
10. **More Olympic medallists went to state school than ever before.** We know because last summer we counted them. It may have involved Facebook stalking to find out, but we got the names of those schools. You can run, athletes...

IF YOU MISSED ANY AND WOULD LIKE TO READ THEM IN MORE DETAIL, THEY ARE ALL AVAILABLE ONLINE IN OUR ARCHIVE AT WWW.SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK. SUBSCRIBERS CAN ACCESS PDFS OF ALL PAST EDITIONS.

Schools Week is on a publication break and will return on September 15



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OPINION



ELLIE MULCAHY

Research associate, LKMco

We need to address the last respectable form of racism

Racism is treated with due seriousness in all schools. Except, that is, for racism against gypsies, Roma and travellers, says Ellie Mulcahy

Gypsies, Roma and travellers are the most underrepresented minority group in UK universities. About 3 to 4 per cent of GRT people aged 18 to 30 access higher education, compared with 43 per cent nationally. In fact, only 200 gypsy and traveller students attended university in 2016.

We recently released a report for King's College London's widening participation department, which explores the range of cultural and material barriers that make accessing higher education so difficult for these groups. However, no finding was more shocking than the degree of discrimination faced by GRT pupils at school and university – and the need for urgent change became abundantly clear.

Discrimination against GRT groups was described as the "last respectable form of racism" in 2003 by the chair of the Commission for Race Equality and it seems little has changed in the intervening 14 years. Half of British people have an "unfavourable" view of Roma, and one in three admit prejudice against gypsies and travellers. Pupils feel the effect of these attitudes in schools, where up to 80 per cent report experiencing bullying in the form of racist name-calling and even physical attacks.

The media does little to help, often reinforcing prejudicial views. One gypsy parent told me how her own children were "bullied remorselessly" in school following Channel 4's *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding*. One pupil I spoke to that "people look at us and think we're threatening and dangerous" and that people told him "you're a traveller, you should be fighting".

Disturbingly, it seems that schools' responses are often inadequate, and almost two thirds of incidents go unreported. Not only are pupils reluctant to report racism because they don't believe it will be dealt with, half have physically retaliated to bullying and a third believe teachers hold racist attitudes themselves.

This discrimination has long-term impacts on GRT pupils' educational outcomes. Bullying and subsequent withdrawal from school or low attendance contributes to poor attainment, making it less likely pupils will progress to university. Fear of further discrimination in higher education makes going to university, and leaving home to do so, an unappealing prospect. Interviewees discussed the pernicious effect of rumoured student "pikey parties", while one GRT young person who made it to university heard a

lecturer use a racist term during a seminar.

Other factors that affect GRT pupils' success at school and access to higher education are complex and efforts should certainly be made to tackle these. However, when it comes to discrimination and bullying, the situation is clear-cut: prejudice is real and bullying is taking place.

School leaders and staff must recognise

“**Disturbingly almost two thirds of incidents go unreported**”

derogatory terms. Though some are obvious, one gypsy graduate suggested that many people don't know which terms are not OK. "Pikey" is a racist term, often used to refer to gypsies or travellers; Roma do not like to be called "gypsy" as it is often used pejoratively in eastern Europe. Once staff understand this, they can ensure that students are also informed.

Second, incidents of bullying must be treated seriously, with the same gravity afforded to racism against any other ethnic minority. Responding appropriately serves not only to reduce bullying but also to encourage victims of bullying to report incidents to teachers rather than retaliating themselves. Due to the isolation of GRT groups from mainstream society, many people know little about GRT groups, which can give rise to suspicious attitudes and stereotypes.

Schools can use bullying incidents as an opportunity to teach pupils about GRT culture and dispel stereotypes. In one school, children who bully a GRT peer spend a detention producing a research project on GRT history which they later present to the pupil they bullied.

Finally, working with and reassuring parents is key. Many parents will have experienced discrimination during their own schooling and have perhaps previously found that schools do not respond effectively when their children are bullied. This is particularly pertinent for recent arrivals from countries where quasi-state sanctioned persecution persists. Schools should communicate with parents to reassure them that the issue is being taken seriously and addressed.

Schools all now need to review their approach, be clear that any discrimination is unacceptable and alter how they address incidents.



TOM SHERRINGTON

Former head and education consultant

The problem with Progress 8? Your starters for ten...

Progress 8 is an embarrassment, says Tom Sherrington, a measure far removed from any sense of what the quality of schooling should be

Every time I blog about Progress 8 and the disproportionate impact a few students can have or the depressing curriculum decision-making that it drives in schools, someone will try to explain the maths to me. As if I don't fully understand what the measure is. I do; as a piece of data engineering, it's a masterpiece. Imagine: we can represent the average progress made by every child in an entire secondary school in one two-digit decimal.

However, in doing so, I would argue that in Progress 8 (P8) we have created a measure that is so far removed from what learning is, from what an education is, from any sense of what the quality of schooling should be, that we should be embarrassed. We're descending into a vortex of delusional algorithmic data-worship.

P8 is deeply flawed at every turn. To begin with, it depends on measuring progress from a baseline that is formed from the average scores from a couple of tests in year 6, scores that are the product of an intense accountability-driven system with significant variation around the country. A small change in the key stage 2 baseline makes an enormous difference to expected outcomes at key stage 4 to the point that, arguably, the validity and reliability of the key stage 2 scores for any given year 7 cohort are the biggest variables in the whole calculation. It's a house of cards with a very shaky foundation.

At the other end, we create an Attainment 8 (A8) score from an arbitrary combination of subject components, using an arbitrary scale of scores, and assert that this is a measure of a student's aggregate attainment. This masks a host of major assumptions. There is the illusion of linearity – that the jumps from one grade to the next are of broadly equal size in terms of attainment, even when grade boundaries turn on the decision to award just one mark more or less out of hundreds as we seek to capture some sense of "standards" in an examined performance.

Ultimately, all exam grades are nothing more or less than bell-curve markers. Essentially, we are simply gauging where our

students lie in a national ranking exercise compared with where they started. That is in the context where, by definition, 30 per cent of students must fail to achieve "pass" grades – they're not all allowed to succeed; that's how it works.

“**We're descending into a vortex of algorithmic data-worship**”

The P8 measure is riddled with arbitrary elements: the double weighting of maths and English – with the weird "choose your best from language and literature"; the exclusion of sociology from counting on the same footing as geography; the third-class status of arts subjects that only count in one "bucket". And then we average it all out. This means that five students with a -2.0 score and five with +2.0 are no different to ten with a score of 0.0. We're not interested in the spread or the profile of scores – just the average, outliers and all.

It's here that the great data machine loses credibility, even on its own terms. Many schools have confidence intervals for their scores many times bigger than the scores themselves; we kid ourselves that 0.3 must be "better" than 0.2 or even 0.1, but, in all likelihood, within the error, this might not be the case. Not in terms of real learning, real achievement and real progress – whatever that means.

There are numerous other plausible rules and algorithms we could devise to combine subjects that would lead to very different A8 scores, rank orders and P8 scores. This tells us that there is nothing that is inherently "true" about P8. It does not measure anything with objective, intrinsic meaning; it's an arbitrary construct with a loose association to the learning journey our students go on – on average.

Why not ditch this fetish for made-up aggregated numerical measurement and try to develop more intelligent, more nuanced qualitative and quantitative ways to determine the quality of the educational experiences and outcomes we actually value.

Tory education policies in the 2017 election didn't hit home with voters, but Jeremy Corbyn has the wrong ideas for schools, argues George Looker

The government's election campaign has been widely criticised for failing to set out a positive vision and lacking broad appeal to voters. Now that the campaign is over (for the time being at least), the Conservatives have to use education policy to set out their agenda for aspiration and opportunity.

During the 2015 general election we emblazoned on anything and everything we could the statistic that a million more children were in "good" or "outstanding" schools than in 2010, while ministers and candidates would repeat the mantra that the party wanted "a good school place for every child" in their sleep, having had it repeatedly briefed from headquarters as the top line to take on education. Despite such a positive message, and the party's strong track record, education wasn't an election-defining issue – and the most coverage probably came from Tristram Hunt's bizarre attack on nuns during *Question Time*. That's because, as validated by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), both parties offered broadly similar spending packages for schools.

This time around, education was a central battleground. The policy to introduce a new wave of grammar schools meant that Labour could rebut 2015's good-schools-for-every-child message: increased selection inherently means that not every



GEORGE LOOKER

Former special adviser to Nicky Morgan

The Conservatives need to hit back on schools

school place is as good as another. And school funding was used effectively by opposition candidates and the unions as part of a wider campaign against necessary restraint in public sector spending, without much acknowledgement that Eds Balls and Miliband offered a similar spending settlement to the Conservatives in 2015. Back to the IFS, which calculated that spending plans for all major parties "imply real-terms cuts to school spending per pupil" of seven per cent between 2015-16 and 2019-20.

While the school funding message cut through the public conscience, the notion that Jeremy Corbyn and Angela Rayner have the right ideas for England's schools cannot be left to stand uncontested. As they shift in the direction of the Socialist Workers Party, Labour has embraced the hard-left NUT and turned its back on Adonis and Blair-era reforms. They aren't questioned on their

plans for raising standards; they've opposed every measure since 2010 to make the profession more self-led, to introduce new "outstanding" schools such as Michaela, or to ensure every child studies the core academic subjects they need to get on in life.

If, as noises from senior cabinet ministers indicate, public sector pay reviews result in a bigger budget package for schools, then the argument will shift back to underlying policy differentials. The indefatigable determination of reformers such as Nick Gibb and John Nash to make sure that all children enjoy a knowledge-based curriculum, study key EBacc subjects that will set them up for employment, and take qualifications that raise the bar for every child across the country, no matter their background, has to take centre stage. This reforming zeal should be set against the opposition's campaigns to stop the opening

of new, popular free schools, reduce the autonomy of teachers and embrace the soft bigotry of low expectations for pupils.

The government needs to set out a positive agenda based on the fundamental principle

“**The government needs to set out a positive agenda based on the fundamental principle of higher standards in our schools**”

of higher standards in our schools, with a world-class curriculum for all subjects that give the next generation the skills they will need for the rest of their lives. The fantastic key stage 2 results last week showed that more children are capable of mastering higher levels of numeracy and literacy – this should be brought to the front and centre.

It might not make for an easy soundbite, but the demonstration that every child can fulfil every ounce of his or her potential is exactly the sort of positive message that the government needs to focus on and which parents (and voters) will embrace.

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SCHOOLSWEEK

REVIEWS

THE BEST
NEW BLOGGERS

We've asked our blog reviewers to mix it up and recommend not their old favourites, but someone they've recently followed or who's new to the edu-blogsphere. We think you'll enjoy their suggestions

To view individual blogs visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews



Iesha Small, educational researcher, teacher and commentator
@ieshasmall

All Ears

@PositivTeacha

"There has been violence in my life." Mr Pink (possibly a nod to the hyper violent character from the film *Reservoir Dogs*?) is the most recent eduperson I follow regularly via blog. He writes refreshingly and unflinchingly about masculinity for young (working-class) men in school and society, as well as his journey as a newish head of English.

Occasionally his posts have click-bait type titles such as "Learning objectives are a waste of time". At first read, especially on Twitter – under the handle @PositivTeacha – he can come across as brash. But beyond first impressions of his online persona there is an honesty, vulnerability and universality that always makes me think and question. His posts stay with you.



Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean at the Institute for Teaching
@HFletcherWood

Bennewmark

@bennewmark

I've enjoyed the writing of several newish bloggers this year, but Ben Newmark in particular. His blogs are personal, thoughtful and considered, and reflect a decade's thoughts about teaching and history teaching. They vary from strong articulations of key ideas in education to personal meditations. Whatever the subject, his approach is thoughtful and thought-provoking.

For an example of the range of his writing, try his attack on empathy as a goal of history teaching and then compare it with his tribute to his geography teacher, Mr Wilkes, who didn't believe in plate tectonics, telling his students it was "rubbish. But I better teach you what everyone is saying."



Jill Berry, former head, now educational consultant, author and Twitter addict
@jillberry102

Curriculum Team Leader

@curricteamlead

When *Schools Week* asked for recommendations of up-and-coming bloggers, or bloggers who were new to us, I put out a plea on Twitter and was overwhelmed by the response. Thanks to all who offered suggestions – I hope to feature many of them in my columns next year.

The one I chose, suggested by @Lisa7Pettifer, is an anonymous secondary head of English who writes about many of the topics I find fascinating: career development and leadership, managing workload and balance, the nature of knowledge and what we should be teaching (and how we should teach it).



Andrew Old, teacher and blogger
@goldandrewuk

The Grumpy Teacher

@grumpyteacher17

An anonymous independent school teacher's blog made the most impact on me.

The name of the blog doesn't sum up the content, which is often very positive. The Grumpy Teacher puts a lot of thought into posts, calling on considerable experience and knowledge, often adding something new to ongoing debates. As well as this, he or she does a wonderful job of describing what it's like to work in a certain type of independent school, with an emphasis on sport and an ethos uninfluenced by what goes on elsewhere.

Unfortunately, he or she is now leaving teaching, but I hope whoever it is keeps blogging.

SCHOOLS WEEK SUMMER BOOK GIVEAWAY!

We love it when publishers and authors send us books to review, but every so often our shelves get too full. So, to spread the love, we're offering a special summer subscriber offer.

We will send three publications from our bookshelf to 15 lucky subscribers drawn at random.

To participate, you need to complete a *Fly on the Wall* entry by midnight on Sunday, July 23, at surveymonkey.co.uk/r/flyonthewall. The winners will be drawn on Monday, July 24, and the books sent out that week.

If you've previously submitted a *Fly on the Wall* entry but want to be entered into the draw, please email samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk with "Book Giveaway" in the subject line.



If you'd like to review books for *Schools Week*, contact our Features Editor at catherine.murray@schoolsweek.co.uk or [@cathmurray_news](https://twitter.com/cathmurray_news)



Week in Westminster

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

FRIDAY:

Still reeling from the outrage following the decision to collect data on pupils' nationality and country of birth for immigration control purposes, the Department for Education (DfE) has now told schools they must tell parents of their right to refuse to provide the data and to retract information already given.

The DfE has issued strengthened guidance on the matter before, but this time it emboldens certain words such as "must" and "any" to force the point, following a review by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

We asked to see the review, but were told by the ICO that we had to request it under the Freedom of Information Act. The ICO are the very people in charge of the act, of course. Oh the irony.

MONDAY:

A good day to bury bad news? The DfE snuck out the 1 per cent cap on school

leader pay rises after 5.30pm on a day when a massive scandal around racist comments from a Tory MP engulfed the media.

TUESDAY:

It's 2017 and the new the big thing, apart from huge political uncertainty and fidget spinners, is using social media to SATS-shame the government.

Teachers ridiculed this year's tests after pupils' marked test papers came back riddled with mistakes.

Examples in tweeted photographs include one pupil given no marks for a correct answer on a maths paper, while another was awarded a mark for writing the word "Monique" instead of "monarch".

There has also been a Twitter storm over discrepancies in marks awarded for using semicolons, which, of course, are such an important punctuation mark that nobody uses them any more.

The tweets will make embarrassing reading for the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), which has already been subject to one review following the leak

of the key stage 1 SPAG test last year, and could face another if the recommendations of a recent damning report by the education select committee are observed.

The government is also under pressure to hand over "secret" marking guidance to schools after it emerged on social media that some additional guidance was issued to markers, but not revealed to schools.

The DfE says any concerns about the tests should be reported to the STA, and any issues will be "properly investigated".

WEDNESDAY:

Justine Greening was left red-faced after leaving her ministerial box (also red) unattended on a path outside her house for several minutes as she ran away from reporters asking questions about her decision to award teachers a measly 1 per cent pay rise.

When approached by *The Mirror* outside her London home, the education secretary ran inside to "take a phone call", leaving the box, which often contains sensitive government documents, at the end of her

path.

When she eventually did respond, she said the government was simply following the recommendations of the School Teachers Review Body.

Meanwhile, the DfE has assured the media that the box remained firmly locked and "contained no sensitive documents" while it was left unattended.

To be fair, we've all left a pupil on a trip unintentionally before now, right?

Another issue left unattended is that of the government's comprehensive career strategy.

First mooted by Sam Gyimah (remember him?) in December 2015, the strategy was set for a launch earlier this year and has now been announced again by Greening. She told delegates at a conference today that the strategy will be out in the autumn.

If the government sticks to that timeframe, the strategy will arrive two years after it was first promised to come out "in the coming weeks".

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Chloe Mortimer

Age 27

Occupation Trainee teacher (starting September)

Location Leeds

Subscriber since January 2017



FLY ON THE WALL

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

At home when I get back from work on a Friday, or with my breakfast on Saturday.

Which section do you enjoy the most?

News, political articles and the Experts section.

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

Tough choice... academisation. Many schools drastically need to improve the level of education that children receive, but enforcing a new school model isn't necessary. Schools have a lot to learn from business, but that can be better achieved by training and hiring the right staff, not private sponsorship.

Who is your favourite education secretary?

I didn't pay particular attention before I graduated in 2011. Since then, it's been slim pickings.

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

I was pleased to see a recent article on the use of technology to match schools with supply teachers. In 2015-16 I began my own business doing just that. However, I then decided that the place I really want to be is in the classroom.

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

For the past few months I've been working for a company that delivers positive handling training to schools and have been shocked at the misconceptions some schools and teachers have. I would want to raise awareness of teachers' legal rights and how positive handling can be done safely.

Favourite book on education?

I am just getting stuck into *Teacher Toolkit: Helping You Survive Your First Five Years* by Ross McGill. It's a really useful read in preparation for my ITT.

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

Some honest reviews about the many education start-ups and new companies. I know that it can be tricky to speak to schools and tell them about new products and services that can provide a genuine benefit. However, not all businesses are good or offer schools the best deal, so they should be exposed too.

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

It has to be the education secretary. Justine Greening... grammar schools... when some schools are struggling to keep their doors open five days a week... what were you thinking?

Fly on the Wall is 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...

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



SEARCH IS ON FOR THE HAPPIEST SCHOOL

A competition searching for the nation's happiest schools has opened for nominations.

The National Happiness Awards, run by Laughology, is looking for the happiest school, employee and pupil.

Entrants have to fill in a nomination form and submit evidence that shows how happiness, mental health and wellbeing are at the heart of school life.

The employee category will look for those who promote children's development beyond the curriculum, with the pupil category for young people who contribute to their local community.

Winning schools will receive a cash prize that they can use towards school equipment.

A spokesperson for Laughology said: "The idea of the awards is about schools that embed things such as resilience, wellbeing and confidence into their curriculum."

The £5 fee for each nomination will be donated to the war veteran charity, Combat Stress.

Applications close on October 20, with the winners announced on November 17.

You can apply at <http://www.laughology.co.uk/happiness-awards/national-happiness-awards-2017-nomination-form>

FEATURED

Porker pair take over primary

Two micro-pigs spent a week at a south London school to help its primary pupils to develop their English skills.

Seven-month-old Stacey and Jane were brought in to Dunraven School to tie in with year 1 pupils looking at *The Three Little Pigs*, and the year 3s studying *Charlotte's Web*, which features Wilbur the pig.

Pupils observed Stacey and Jane and then wrote a diary entry from their perspective, using what they had learned about the pigs' personalities to determine the tone of voice they used.

David Boyle, the school's head, said: "Rather than just saying to the pupils 'Oh, there's a pig, why don't you write from the pig's point of view?', we got them to watch the pigs for a while and study their behaviour to find out more about their characters. One of the pigs was much more sedate, and the other one was inquisitive and spent much of its time annoying the other one.

"From observation, the quality of the pupils' writing improved significantly."

The school also tied in the pigs' visit with the science curriculum, teaching pupils about their life-cycle, as well as safe handling and feeding.

"People who were initially a bit grumpy about the idea of animals coming to school changed their mind as soon as they saw them," Boyle said. "A number



Stacey and Jane settle in



of our partner schools have asked how we did it and are now planning a pig week themselves.

"The pigs brought access to the



curriculum, a focus for particular knowledge and understanding, but most of all, they brought joy."

Teams build their perfect cities



Teams show off their creations

A group of 175 schoolchildren created their own cities at a STEM event at Roehampton University in south London.

The pupils, aged 8 to 14, came from seven schools across London, forming small, inter-school teams to create their idea of a perfect city from cardboard boxes, straws and sticky tape.

The winning designs received awards in categories including best business space, domestic space, education space, health and wellbeing space and most accessible building.

Gwen Murray, head of design and



Teams build their perfect cities

technology at Raynes Park High School, said: "The students had the freedom to create unique prototypes of buildings of the future. This gave them an opportunity to use their planning, designing and making skills, which they will build on in their future lessons in D&T."

As well as igniting pupils' flair for construction and engineering, the TeenTech event was also designed to help 130 of the university's trainee teachers develop their teaching skills in a cross-curricular environment and to work with a range of age groups at once.



Lucas Brazier, Etienne Maughan and Polly Ross

Year 7 pupil sets national record

Wellingborough School pupil has set a new 200m record at the national preparatory schools athletics finals.

Etienne Maughan, a year 7 pupil at the Northamptonshire school, won both the 100m and 200m, breaking the 200m record with a time of 27 seconds, making her the fastest girl of her age group across the UK's prep schools.

Fellow year 7 pupil Polly Ross took fourth place in the shotput, while year 6 pupil

Lucas Brazier came sixth in the 800m event.

Sue Knox, Wellingborough's head, praised the pupils' achievements. "We are incredibly proud of the pupils who took part, and they should be proud of their own achievements too.

"Etienne's achievement of double gold and a new national record is incredibly impressive, and we are sure this is just the beginning of a successful career in athletics."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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



JOE THACKWAY

HEADMASTER, CRESCENT SCHOOL, RUGBY

START DATE September 2017

CURRENT JOB Deputy head, Hallfield Prep School, Birmingham

INTERESTING FACT He is a keen sportsman who enjoys long-distance cycling and running marathons in his spare time.



ALLAN OSBORNE

EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL OF WEST ESSEX HUB, BURNT MILL ACADEMY TRUST

START DATE September 2017

CURRENT JOB Headteacher, Epping St John's Church of England School, Essex

INTERESTING FACT He saw Whitney Houston in concert more than 40 times when he was a teenager.



FIONA LONG

HEADMISTRESS, HERRIES SCHOOL, MAIDENHEAD

START DATE September 2017

CURRENT JOB Deputy head academic, Sherborne Prep School

INTERESTING FACT Long loves to tread the boards and most recently played Mrs Joe in a production of *Great Expectations*.



KEITH BATCHELOR

HEADTEACHER, THE BEACON SCHOOL, SURREY

START DATE September 2017

CURRENT JOB Deputy head, Glyn School, Surrey

INTERESTING FACT He ran the 2016 Run Reigate half-marathon.



KRISTINA YATES

HEADTEACHER, THE TURNER FREE SCHOOL, KENT

START DATE January 2018

CURRENT JOB Vice-principal, Folkestone School for Girls, Kent

INTERESTING FACT Yates' MA dissertation was on the changing narrative voice in Holocaust fiction.

Get in touch!

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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.