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## MATs: 'Power of persuasion' gets rewards



GOT TWO GRADES

ON THE SAME DAY

- Academies' access to funding pots is far from equal
- > The value of negotiated grants and loans is rising
- > 'Trusts must get savvy,' says accountancy expert

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ Investigates

SUMMIT

Headteachers' Roundtable

FRIDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2018ETC COUNTY HALL, WESTMINSTER

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SCHOOLS WEEK

FRIDAY, FEB 9, 2018



## GIRLS SCHOOL HOLDS OFF NEGATIVE OFSTED REPORT

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Exclusive

A Kent school that managed to suppress an 'inadequate' Ofsted report for eight months by threatening legal action has now been rated 'good' across the board after the watchdog opted to reinspect rather than fight in court.

Ofsted has recently published two inspection reports on Chislehurst School for Girls. The first, based on an inspection in May last year, returned the worst possible grade, though the second, based on a December inspection, saw significant improvement.

Both reports were published on January 30. Now a Schools Week investigation into the unusual situation has revealed that the original report was delayed for months by the school's legal threats.

Legal experts warned last year that schools are now more likely to attempt to block negative Ofsted reports in the courts after a landmark in the High Court ruling recently quashed another school's 'inadequate' rating, that of Durand Academy in south London.

Chislehurst School for Girls was first inspected on May 23 and 24 last year, dropping it two ranks from the 'good' grade it had held for five years. Inspectors were particularly critical of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, the school's leadership and management, and the quality of 16-to-19 study programmes.

However, the school did not receive a copy of the report until September, and subsequently threatened legal action to prevent its publication. Ofsted capitulated on a court appearance, agreeing instead to reinspect the school in December.

"We sent the report to the school in September in order to publish our findings to parents," an Ofsted spokesperson said.

"The school threatened legal action against publication on our website. While our legal representatives analysed the



merits of spending public money defending our report, the school acted to make improvements

"We took the decision to conduct a second inspection of the school but insisted on publishing the first report in order to be transparent."

A spokesperson for Chislehurst School for Girls told Schools Week that governors "believed that the overall judgement of the May inspection was not a true reflection of the school".

Ofsted's criticisms "referred largely to medical needs planning, following the loss of Bromley's school nursing provision earlier in 2017", something that has now been addressed with the appointment of a school nurse.

Chislehurst was not the only educational institution to successfully block or delay the publication of a critical Ofsted report last vear.

Durand Academy in Lambeth was granted an injunction preventing Ofsted from publishing a negative report in early 2017. The rating and report were both overturned by the High Court in August following a judicial review. At the time, solicitors warned the ruling would set a precedent.

And earlier this year, it was revealed that the publication of a similarly damning report into the training company Learndirect was also delayed by a superinjunction.

Former Ofsted inspector Colin Richards said Chislehurst's situation raised a number of questions.

"I've never known Ofsted to publish two separate reports of the same school at the same time," he told Schools Week. "I'm surprised too that it took Ofsted over six months before reinspecting the school if they had doubts about the first inspection."

While both the reports are now available online. Chislehurst School for Girls did not inform pupils, parents or teachers of the results of the May inspection before Ofsted published the details online in January this year.

Ofsted said that while the May 2017 inspection of Chislehurst had raised concerns about "the quality of education in the school", when inspectors returned to the school in December they "found improvements to have been made and the school was judged to be good overall".

The spokesperson for Chislehurst School for Girls said it is "proud to be declared a 'good' school".

#### **ABSENTEE FINES FALL** - BUT NOT BY MUCH

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Exclusive

Parents fined for their children's unauthorised absence fell a little last year, but the figures did not change as much as expected given the law has become more lenient.

New figures, taken by Schools Week from 112 councils, showed that last year the authorities issued 103,918 fines to parents, totalling £4.4 million, compared with 108,405 fines in 2015-16 - a reduction of four per cent.

The slight fall occurred in the year after the High Court ruled in favour of Jon Platt, a father who took his daughter on holiday without her school's permission and refused to pay two £60 fines.

Platt claimed he had not broken the rules on pupils' "regular attendance" at school, a position backed by senior judges in May 2016. His case was later overturned at the Supreme Court in 2017, which told him to pay the fine.

Schools minister Nick Gibb wrote to local authorities during the row, warning them not to refund parents who had been fined for taking children out of school, nor to reduce pressure.

However, Bury council refunded 92 parents who were batch issued fines at the end of April 2016, just before Platt's initial positive ruling.

"Given the turmoil that the High Court ruling caused in relation to being able to correctly apply the law, it left us in a difficult position," a spokesperson for the council said.

The council chose to withdraw fines from that batch, and those who had already paid were given a refund.

Most other councils and parents continued to behave as they had in the past, with Warrington borough council notably continuing not to issue penalty notice fines at all.

"The fast track to prosecution process is used and parents attend magistrates court if found guilty of an offence," a spokesperson said.

Warrington and two London councils, Lewisham and Richmond, all said that they issued no fines for unauthorised absence from school between 2015 and 2017.

Other local authorities, such as Haringey in London and Central Bedfordshire council, allow parents to challenge fines before they pay. The school then chooses whether to cancel the penalty or proceed, in which case a refund is not an option.

The Department for Education insisted that rules on the matter are "clear" and that "children should not be taken out of school without good reason".

"We are supporting schools and local authorities to use their powers, which include issuing penalty notices, to tackle unauthorised absence," a spokesperson said. "The purpose of these measures is to provide a strong deterrent against an offence, because we know how important attendance is to pupils achieving their full potential in schools."

Campaigner wants pupil absence phone rules changed

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER **@FCDWHITTAKER**

Schools should be forced to contact multiple family members in the event of unexpected pupil absences, according to a mother whose young children spent almost 24 hours alone at home with their father's body after he died.

Helen Daykin (pictured) was travelling for work when her husband Chris died of heart failure in October 2016. He was a stav-athome dad who looked after their daughters Pearl, four, and Iris, two, and did the school run.

Despite having mobile phone numbers for both parents, Pearl's school did not try to reach Helen after failing to reach Chris, its primary contact. This meant the two girls were left at home alone until police broke the door down the following night.

Now Daykin wants new statutory

guidance to force schools to call all contact numbers held for parents when their children do not arrive for school, and has urged schools to review their own policies to ensure every effort is made.

"Time is of the essence when you've got a missing child," she told Schools Week. "I want schools to have an operational timeline, like they have for fires. I want them to have that same procedure for pupils who have not turned up at school.

"It wouldn't have saved my husband, but it would have saved my children from being with a dead body for hours."

Davkin is not the first person to call for a rethink of the way schools deal with unexpected absences.

Last June, coroner Mary Hassell said action should be taken after an inquest found that four-year-old Chadrack Mbala Mulo died of malnutrition and dehydration after he was left alone in his family flat for

#### after his mother died. In that case, the school only had one phone number for

two weeks

Chadrack's mother, but did not send staff to the family home for several days after acknowledging his absence.

Daykin pointed out that he died in October 2016, the same month her husband died, and that she knew of at least two other cases in that month where schools had not done enough to track down missing pupils.

"I'm not asking them to hunt down 50 kids every day with home visits," she said. "The questions headteachers have to ask themselves is: would this happen on their watch?"



## **NEWS: Mental health**

#### LGA WANTS £90M FOR MORE SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

#### **FREDDIE WHITTAKER** @FCDWHITTAKER

The Local Government Association wants every secondary school in the country to be given cash for an independent counsellor, as a survey revealed that less than half of pupils have access to a healthcare professional in school.

The LGA wants £90 million allocated for school counselling, echoing a pledge made in the Labour Party's general election manifesto last year.

It warned this week that pupils are having to wait up to 18 months for "vital" support that could be delivered in schools if the right funding was available. It also wants to tackle high rates of self-harm among youngsters; almost 19,000 children were admitted to hospital after harming themselves in 2015, up 14 per cent on 2012.

Meanwhile, a survey of 12- to 16-year-olds by YouGov on behalf of the charity Barnado's revealed that just 47 per cent had someone specialising in health problems available in their school.

Richard Watts, the leader of Islington Council and chair of the LGA's children and young people board, said many young people "might not have needed formal social care support if they had received the early help they needed".

"Providing just a small proportion of the funding it is spending on mental health support nationally to ensure every school provides on-site counselling is one way the government can ensure every child and young person enjoys the bright future they deserve," he said.

"Mental health problems are very common and not something children should feel ashamed about. Good emotional health and wellbeing is also about learning to be resilient to life's setbacks and negative emotions."

The idea to extend counselling services to all secondary schools is not a new one. Labour pledged the same thing, with the same £90 million price tag, in its election manifesto last year.

Earlier in 2017, the government told MPs it was considering a similar proposal, but the plan never came to fruition. Instead, late last year, the government announced funding of more than £300 million to train mental health leads in schools and create external mental health support teams to offer treatment to pupils.

Barnardo's chief executive Javed Khan said it was necessary to create a culture "where everyone has a greater understanding of what keeps children mentally well and when professional help is needed".

"We want parents and carers to be confident in recognising if their children are unhappy and teachers and other professionals to be sufficiently trained, adequately resourced and available to support them," he added.

#### Big questions hang over training and pay for new mental health leads

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

Schools are still none the wiser on plans for new mental health "leads" after it emerged the government is yet to decide how much training they will receive or whether teachers will be paid more for taking on the role.

The schools minister told a joint inquiry by the parliamentary education and health committees on Wednesday that officials are still in the process of inviting bids from companies to train the leads, a major aspect of the government's recent green paper on young people's mental health.

It also emerged this week that health support teams being set up to help schools treat pupils may well be made up of psychology graduates and existing school mentors, rather than experienced clinicians.

Ministers announced plans to spend £95 million training the leads and £215 million on the support teams to work between the NHS and schools last December.

But Nick Gibb's evidence to the committee revealed that many questions remain on the designated senior mental health position, which some schools will be expected to fill by September 2019.

Labour MP Emma Hardy (pictured) quizzed the minister on how much training teachers would receive and raised concerns it would be insufficient to prepare them



for the role and an attempt to "deliver something on the cheap".

"If we are going to take this seriously don't we need trained professionals rather than teachers that have been on an inset day?" she asked.

Gibb would not say how much training teachers will receive, and said the government is still in the process of inviting bids from companies to provide the training, claiming officials want it to be "vigorous and high-quality".

Picking a provider is about "balancing value for money for the tax payer with maximum output" and the government has a "vigorous sifting process" for assessing potential bids, he said.

Labour MP Ian Mearns warned that the earmarked £95 million only amounts

to £500 per school or college per year, although Gibb said that was a lower estimate and that they were "confident" their estimates on funding were correct.

Ministers are also yet to decide whether the mental health lead role will be voluntary or paid. There are also questions about who will staff the support teams, which will be the main point of contact between mental health leads and the NHS, and are expected to provide treatment such as cognitive behavioural therapy in the classroom and early interventions for children with mental health issues.

Professor Tim Kendall, the national clinical director for mental health at NHS England, said the support teams would likely be filled by psychology graduates in their first job, or by giving extra training for mentors already working in schools.

Jonathan Marron, the director general of community care at the Department of Health and Social Care, said the model is likely to include experienced staff to provide supervision to the support teams, though he is seeking feedback about how best to proceed.

"Getting supervision right is very important, getting the quality of training right at the beginning is really important and actually having success with the first couple of years of roll-outs, where people really believe this is worth doing, will be a key test of how we go forward," he added.

#### **GETTING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT RIGHT IS A STRUGGLE, LEADERS ADMIT**

#### **FREDDIE WHITTAKER** @FCDWHITTAKER

School leaders' lack of understanding about counselling and psychotherapy are making it difficult for them to commission mental health support for their pupils, new research has revealed.

A joint survey of 655 leaders and 1,198 health workers in schools by children's mental health charity Place2Be revealed that 45 per cent of school leaders have found it difficult to commission support.

At the same time, 34 per cent of those working with children and young people as counsellors and psychotherapists said it was difficult to provide their services to schools.

Schools' understanding of counselling and psychotherapy for children was highlighted as a "common difficulty" by 57 per cent of counsellors and psychotherapists working in schools, while 30 per cent said expectations of them are "not clear". For both schools and therapists, a lack of funding remains "the most common barrier to providing support".

Furthermore, 44 per cent of school leaders said "knowing what type of support is needed" is a barrier to providing mental health support for pupils, and 37 per cent said they "don't feel confident" in commissioning a counsellor or therapist.

The government last year pledged more than £300 million in funding to help treat mental health problems in children and young people, but headteachers are



disappointed that more money hasn't been allocated directly to schools to deal with issues on the ground.

"School leaders are already under immense pressure to deliver academic progress – and we shouldn't expect them to become mental health experts as well," said Catherine Roche, the chief executive of Place2Be.

"Our evidence and experience shows that embedding skilled mental health professionals in schools, as part of a whole school approach, can have an enormously positive impact for pupils, families and staff."

While Roche said it was "encouraging" that the government's green paper proposals recognised the role mental health professionals could play in schools, she argued that schools needed "access to dedicated funding" to "really transform children's mental health provision".

Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the NAHT, said schools "have always been on the front line with children's mental health" because "school is often where issues first become apparent".

"This is why a significant number of schools choose to commission counsellors and psychotherapists themselves. However, school leaders are not experts in therapeutic interventions so it can be difficult to know what kind of support is needed," he continued.

"NAHT has continually argued for a more rounded approach, to take some of the emphasis away from schools and reassert the importance of well-resourced and accessible local support services."

Figures released by the government this week show a substantial drop in the number of educational psychologists working in schools over the past seven years. In 2010, there were 1,720 working in state-funded schools, but this fell to 1,370 in 2016.

At the same time, however, the number of staff providing pastoral support and employed as learning mentors rose at both primary and secondary level. This is largely driven by a huge increase in the number of people in both roles in the early years of the 2000s.

Between 2010 and 2011, the number of pastoral support workers rose from 1,200 to 3,450 and the number of learning mentors increased from 2,290 to 8,290. By 2016, the number of staff employed by state schools to deliver pastoral support had risen to 5,920, and the number working as learning mentors hit 8,650.

## NEWS PERFORMANCE DATA FOR EAL PUPILS IS 'PROFOUNDLY MISLEADING'

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

Attainment scores for children with English as an additional language (EAL) are "distorted" and "profoundly misleading" according to a new report.

The Education Policy Institute (EPI) and the Bell Foundation want the government to add a "late-arrival premium" to its national funding formula to pay for additional support for EAL pupils, after their research found that a "huge disparity" in achievement is hidden in official statistics because children from so many different backgrounds are grouped together.

According to 2016 figures from the Department for Education, EAL pupils achieved similar attainment scores to the national average and better-thanaverage progress during school. They were also more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate than those with English as a first language.

However, the EPI's report 'Educational outcomes of children with english as an additional language' warns this "obscures significant disparities in performance" due to the differences between different groups classed as EAL.

EAL pupils are "extremely heterogeneous" and range from British citizens who speak another language at home to refugees fleeing war zones. Key elements affecting attainment include pupils' first languages, the point at which they arrived in the English school system, and prior



educational and life experiences.

Grades are severely affected by when they start school. For example, EAL pupils averaged a C if they arrived between reception and year 7, but this dropped to a D for those who began in years 8, 9 or 10, and to an E for those starting in year 11.

Some pupils also need more support than others depending on their first language. Primary pupils with first languages including Pashto, Turkish and Slovak perform below the national average, even if they enter the English school system as infants, while groups including Tamil, Chinese and Hindi pupils perform above the national average, even if they arrived as late as year 5.

At secondary level, a student with Pashto as a first language who starts in year 9 scores on average between an F and an E at GCSE, while a Chinese-speaking child who arrives at the same time is likely to achieve between a B and a C grade. The report also warns that many EAL pupils have missing attainment records, with children arriving just after national assessments waiting up to four years in primary school, or up to five years in secondary school, without any formal national attainment data. The report estimates a third of EAL primary school students, and 10 per cent at secondary, fall into this category. This makes it difficult to truly assess performance.

There is a "severe attainment penalty for pupils arriving late". Even pupils who appear to do well at first later end up performing significantly worse than peers who arrived early. The EPI said there is an "urgent and unmet need" to provide "intensive support" to those who arrive late.

The research also raises concerns about funding, following the abolition of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant in 2011, which had ring-fenced money from local authorities to support children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Since the grant was axed, most authorities have either reduced or entirely cut EAL funding, leading to a "lack of specialist expertise".

The "most potentially damaging" feature of EAL policy in England is the "absence of any national oversight or provision of professional qualifications, staff development and specialist roles for teachers and other school staff working with children with EAL", the report said.

"There is currently no mechanism by which new specialists are likely to emerge under current funding pressures."

#### SCHOOLS ARE STILL BEING BUILT WITHOUT SPRINKLERS

The government has been accused of a "shockingly cavalier" attitude to fire safety, as schools continue to be built without sprinkler systems.

Unions are concerned that Selsey Academy in West Sussex, which was almost completely destroyed by a fire in 2016, is going to be rebuilt without sprinklers because the original building did not have them.

In an open letter to education secretary Damian Hinds, leaders from the National Education Union and Fire Brigades Union described the decision as "incomprehensible" and warned: "If all decisions were made on this basis, sprinklers would never be fitted for rebuilds, because no school fitted with a sprinkler system has ever burned down."

The letter also condemns the decision to build 32 new schools in Northamptonshire without sprinkler systems, and adds that none of the new schools built in Croydon or Kensington Aldridge Academy, the school at the base of Grenfell Tower, have sprinklers fitted.

In 2007, the 'Building bulletin 100: Design for fire safety in schools' guidance document specified that all schools should have sprinklers apart from "a few low-risk schools". However, the unions warned that only 35 per cent of new schools have been fitted with sprinklers since 2010.

Unions successfully campaigned last year to stop the government weakening fire protection arrangements for schools and remove the "expectation" for sprinklers to be fitted in new schools.

## Sweet-talking the ESFA can be worth six figures to struggling trusts

#### JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Some academy trusts are getting extra money simply because of their "powers of persuasion" while others struggle with their finances, leading accountants have warned.

Investigates

The government's "official message" is that no further funding is available for schools but "there appears to be a pool of money" available to some trusts, while others cover restructuring costs themselves, according to a wide-ranging new academies benchmark report from education specialists Kreston Reeves.

For example, Delta Education Trust negotiated a £500,000 boost from the government in 2016-17, at the same time as by the Education and Skills Funding Agency slapped others in a similar financial position with financial notices to improve.

The Kreston Reeves report, which analyses the finances of 750 schools, found that negotiated grants and loans are the "one area" where academy income is rising.

A small number of trusts are demanding more money from the ESFA, usually for "cashflow purposes" or to deal with "unusual circumstances" such as taking on difficult schools.

"There does not appear to be a formula as to which it should be, so rather than funding being equitable, the outcome is down to the trust's powers of persuasion,"



#### the report concluded.

Trusts are also persuading the ESFA to fund them based on their estimated pupil numbers rather than on the previous year's, an arrangement with a "significant cashflow advantage". Officially, only free schools are allowed to be funded on this predictive model, but some academies have managed to switch to it, again "based on the skill of the negotiator rather than any fixed set of criteria".

Pamela Tuckett, a partner at accountancy firm Bishop Fleming, which contributed to the report, said only a handful of trusts are "savvy" about negotiations, with the majority only starting to "hear about it on the grapevine".

"This imbalance has been going on a long

#### time," she said.

The latest accounts for Delta, which rebranded from the School Partnership Trust Academies almost two years ago following poor performance and redundancies, concluded it had a "reasonable expectation" of continued operations due to a £480,000 government advance to its general annual grant as part of a "recovery plan".

Both Tuckett and Phil Reynolds, an academies specialist at Kreston Reeves, agreed this was an example of a trust negotiating funds on its own terms. *Schools Week* has approached the trust for comment.

Chatham Grammar School for Girls also negotiated instalments of cash payments when it ran into financial difficulties, before it joined the University of Kent Academies Trust this September. By being upfront with the ESFA immediately, the school managed to avoid a financial warning, Reynolds claimed.

"We always say, tell the ESFA as soon as you can. Otherwise they come down like a ton of bricks," he said.

But other trusts are not so lucky. In September, the government handed Plymouth CAST, which runs 35 schools, a financial notice to improve over its "weak financial management and inadequate governance" – even though its chief executive insisted the trust referred itself to the ESFA.

Plymouth CAST must now run most spending decisions past the funding agency, and could even have had its funding terminated, had it failed to submit an action plan.

The critical importance of negotiating with the ESFA has led to much more demand at academy trusts for top chief financial officers, and the biggest trusts are offering salaries upwards of £80,000 a year.

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the report's findings confirmed a "lack of transparency" about academy funding arrangements. She wants the finance needs of all schools to be "objectively assessed."

The DfE was unable to comment by the time of going to press.

#### ZERO-TOLERANCE BEHAVIOUR POLICIES EXCLUDE MORE VULNERABLE CHILDREN

#### JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The recent increase in exclusions has been worsened by behaviour policies that shame children at schools backed by the Department for Education, experts have warned.

Jane Pickthall, the chair of the National Association of Virtual School Heads, which oversees children-in-care policy at local authorities, told the parliamentary education committee that humiliating classroom control techniques make schools "less inclusive" both for children in care and those with mental health needs. Another witness told MPs that zerotolerance policies may be unlawful because they discriminate against SEND pupils.

The committee is in the middle of an inquiry into the quality of alternative provision and rising exclusion levels, prompted by concerns about the lack of oversight in the sector and malpractice at mainstream schools.

During Tuesday's session, Pickthall said that some of today's most popular behaviour policies are damaging for pupils most at risk of exclusion as they are "often quite shaming".

In one example, endorsed in the DfE's behaviour review last March, pupils' names were placed at the start of an image of a rainbow at the beginning of the school day, and those who behaved badly had their name moved across the rainbow, eventually ending up on a grey cloud.

"That was actually an example in the behaviour review which came out as an example of good practice," claimed Pickthall. "That is not good practice for vulnerable pupils at all."

Emma Hardy, a Labour MP and former teacher, asked whether "extremely strict, rigid, noexcuses behaviour policies" were driving a rise in exclusions and the transfer of more pupils to alternative provision.

She has witnessed such policies at some large academy trusts near her northern constituency of Hull West and Hessle.

Pickthall claimed that naming and shaming caused worse behaviour in pupils "already carrying around a large amount of shame".

"To have your name on the board, and have to stand up for public humiliation, that in itself triggers responses that lead to more challenging behaviour," she said.

There has been a steady increase in permanent exclusions over the past two years, and the Institute for Public Policy Research has warned that at least half of all permanently excluded pupils have a mental illness.

Meanwhile zero-tolerance behaviour policies are also likely to be "unlawful", according to another witness at the session.

Matthew Dodd, a policy advisor at the Special Educational Consortium, said that making reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities was required by the Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended in 2005).

It "might be unlawful", he said, for schools to deploy a zero-tolerance behaviour policy that doesn't act to ensure SEND pupils have proper support to learn.

"We would like to see an end to that zerotolerance behaviour approach," he added.

## THE SHOWING OF CATHOLIC CERTIFICATES CAN GO ON

#### **JESS STAUFENBERG** @STAUFENBERGJ

Catholic schools can continue to accept a certificate signed by a priest as proof of pupils' faith when giving them priority in admissions, the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) has ruled.

The future of the Certificate of Catholic Practice, first used in 2015 to replace a range of criteria that had to be met by religious families wanting to jump the queue for Catholic schools, was cast into doubt around 15 months ago after the OSA said it was "unfair and arbitrary".

The regulator originally said the certificate breached rules that parents must be able to "easily understand how any faith-based criteria will be reasonably satisfied".

However, the OSA has now backed church leaders' new definition of a "practising" Catholic, which means schools can go on recognising the certificate without fear of being hauled in front of the regulator.

The certificates, which are issued at the discretion of priests and not based on any specific criteria, are accepted as proof that pupils come from "practising Catholic family" in order to satisfy the school admissions code.

According to the Catholic Education Service, which last year threatened to take the government to court over the OSA's rejection of the certificate but eventually



backed down, schools have continued to use the document since it was called into question in November 2016.

Throughout the review of the certificate, which has gone on for over a year, the CES argued that the certificates method was more flexible than previous requirements, such as one where parents had to prove regular Mass attendance, because it took into account families' individual circumstances.

Prior to the introduction of the certificates, schools were using a variety of forms and asking numerous questions of parents about whether they were Catholic. But one headteacher who sits on the DfE's working group on school admissions said that simply getting a priest to "say you're a jolly good egg" is "not fair enough". However, following the latest ruling, schools that demand the certificate will be considered to be "striving" to meet the code's requirements, according to the OSA's report.

Over a year ago, the OSA upheld

complaints by Surrey county council about unclear admissions rules at St Paul's Catholic college, St Michael's Catholic primary school, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic primary school and St Ignatius Catholic primary school.

It also ruled against St Richard Reynolds Catholic college in west London, after a case brought by a local parent and the council.

The code requires admissions practices to be "reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair", and for parents to be able to easily understand how faith-based criteria can be met.

A CES spokesperson said the aim of the certificate "has always been to achieve clarity for schools and fairness for parents. We are extremely pleased that the OSA recognises this, referring to the certificate as a 'great help to parents'."

Elsewhere in its report, the OSA warned its research had found that eight local councils were "not confident" that schools in their area have lawful admissions arrangements.

Chief adjudicator Shan Scott said the findings were "concerning", especially in light of the growing importance of councils' role in objecting to schools' admissions rules when they believe they break the law.

The report also reveals there has been a rise in the number of objections made to moves by secondary schools to choose their own "feeder" primary schools.

## LKMCo: £10k per 'at-risk' pupil is a cheaper way to stop exclusions

#### **JESS STAUFENBERG** @STAUFENBERGJ

Schools should be paid to help support pupils at risk of exclusion, a leading education think-tank has said.

Exclusive

In its evidence to a parliamentary education committee inquiry into exclusions and alternative provision, LKMCo told the government to establish an "avoiding exclusion" fund of up to £10,000 per pupil to help ensure the most challenging children stay in school.

Under the proposal, mainstream schools would get money usually reserved for alternative provision, such as pupil referral units, for those pupils considered at risk of exclusion.

This cash would then be used by schools to pay for extra support and resources, especially for pupils with special educational needs.

Bart Shaw, a senior associate at LKMCo, said the funding pot should be directed at SEND pupils with behavioural issues in particular, because they are disproportionately more likely to be excluded.

Pupils identified as just needing "SEN support" should be targeted because they generally get less support than those on education, health and care plans (EHCPs). *Schools Week* reported last year that pupils simply considered to be in need of SEN support make up three quarters of those with identified special educational needs, but struggle to access proper support.

The most recent exclusions data also shows special needs pupils accounted for almost half of all types of exclusions. "It would be fair to assign schools money where pupils need SEN support and have behaviour problems that could put them at

risk of exclusion," Shaw said. Where pupils in a mainstream school are funded at a rate of between £3,000 to £4,000 a year, those at pupil referral units are automatically funded at a base rate of £10,000 a year, plus other higher-needs funding on top.

This means the government is spending "huge" sums of money on excluded pupils in PRUs, often when it is too late to improve their outcomes, which leads to a perverse incentive for schools to exclude pupils so they benefit from

Kiran Gill

better resources. "There's a strong argument that, if there is more per-pupil funding available later, it's more logical to bring that forward and make it available for schools," Shaw added.

The education

select committee recently launched an inquiry into exclusions and alternative provision amid concerns about the variable quality of provision and lack of Ofsted oversight.

Its first evidence session heard that many schools do "not have their eyes open" when looking for decent alternative provision.

Kiran Gill, founder of The Difference, a teacher training programme for AP, who gave evidence at the first session, welcomed LKMCo's suggestion. She said the focus on the poorest pupils through the pupil premium, which has "massively increased the focus on vulnerable students", could be "echoed" with a fund for special needs pupils.

"Anything that would mirror that success of the pupil premium, and which would be preventative, would be a really good idea," she said. "We know that when we encourage schools to focus on something and be accountable for it, they tend to get better in that area."

A spokesperson for the DfE said permanent exclusion should "always be used as a last resort", and said its ongoing review of exclusions practice was aimed at "improving experiences for pupils and families through sharing best practice

nationwide", with a particular focus "on those groups who are disproportionately likely to be excluded".

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## **NEWS** Secondaries lose 15,000 staff in just three years

#### **JESS STAUFENBERG** @STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

Secondary schools have lost more than 15,000 members of staff over the last three years, but teacher-to-pupil ratios have remained relatively stable.

Schools Week analysis of new data from the education unions shows that although there were 15,065 fewer people working in secondary schools in 2017 than in 2014, teachers are still teaching roughly the same numbers of pupils, despite a rise of almost 4,500 over the same period.

Non-teaching staff appear to have borne the brunt of the cuts. According to the unions, teachers made up 6,463, or 43 per cent, of the total staff losses from secondary schools between 2014 and 2017. However, last year, the teacher-to-pupil ratio in secondary schools remained at 1:17, the same as it was in 2014.

The unions say their figures show that cuts to school budgets are hitting the front line, but the Department for Education suggested the numbers are "fundamentally misleading", and claimed there were "15,000 more teachers in classrooms since 2010".

At primary level, there are 3,975 more teachers now than three years ago. But there are 166,555 more pupils – working out as one new teacher for every 41 new pupils.

There were also 9,895 more teaching assistants at primary school, but 4,455 fewer



in secondary schools last year, compared with 2014.

Paul Whiteman (pictured), the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said schools had made "every other possible efficiency" and it is now "impossible for schools to avoid making redundancies".

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said schools are now less able to give individual support to children, and are seeing class sizes grow.

Despite the nationwide increase in primary staff, some areas have seen staff numbers increase. More than half of the 10 areas with the largest net loss of primary school staff were in northern regions. The three in the south were all based in London.

Four of the 10 councils that saw the biggest net loss in teaching assistants were in London. York and Knowsley were the only two local authority areas to make the top 10 staff cuts at both primary and secondary level. The 10 local authorities that lost the most staff per secondary school

#### NUMBER OF ALL STAFF LOCAL AUTHORITY LOST PER SECONDARY SCHOOL Middlesbrough 19.1 Reading 17.5 Isle of Wiaht 16.6 Knowsley 16.3 Doncaster 15.8 Central Bedfordshire 15.2 East Riding of Yorkshire 14.3 13.9 York Kensington and Chelsea 12.7 Milton Keynes 12.6

## The 10 local authorities that lost the most staff per primary school

LOCAL AUTHORITY	NUMBER OF ALL STAFF LOST PER PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bexley	-3.6
York	-1.3
Blackpool	-0.7
Blackburn with Darwen	-0.7
Knowsley	-0.5
Redbridge	-0.2
Gateshead	-0.2
Hillingdon	-0.2
Rutland	-0.2
North Yorkshire	-0.1

## The 10 local authorities which have cut the most teaching assistants per school

LOCAL AUTHORITY	NUMBER OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS Lost per school	TEACHING ASSISTANTS LOST ACROSS LA
Bexley	-2	-140.8
Blackburn with Darwen	-1.5	-92.6
Plymouth	-0.7	-55.1
York	-0.7	-37.6
Camden	-0.5	-21.6
Rutland	-0.5	-9.2
Hillingdon	-0.5	-36.1
East Sussex	-0.4	-71
North East Lincolnshire	-0.4	-13.4
Tower Hamlets	-0.3	-27

## United Learning and Ark in north London turf war

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

Exclusive

Two of the country's leading academy trusts have clashed over plans for an "unneeded" free school in north London.

Plans for Ark to build the Ark Pioneer Academy – a secondary school with a sixth form – on the site of the former Underhill Stadium in Barnet are expected to be rubberstamped soon despite objections from United Learning, which took over the nearby Totteridge Academy in November 2016.

The new school will open in September 2019, and will have 900 secondary and 300 sixth-form places when it reaches full capacity. The Totteridge Academy, a secondary school with 399 unfilled spaces, is located just 0.7 miles away.

Two more secondary free schools with sixth forms – Saracens High School and The Compton School – will also open in the borough this year and next year respectively.

Ark insists the Pioneer Academy is needed to address "the need for additional places in Barnet" that have been identified by Barnet Council and the Department for Education, but in its own analysis, United Learning said there was already a surplus of places in the borough and no need for another secondary school.

Jon Coles, United Learning's chief executive and a former DfE civil servant, blasted local and national officials over their handling of the case.



"As someone who has worked in public service all my life, I have been dismayed by the poor quality of analysis, communication and basic service to the public which has been seen in this case from local, regional and central government," he said.

Plans for the new school, submitted jointly by Ark and the government, were initially rejected by Barnet Council in January last year, amid traffic concerns and warnings that it constituted "inappropriate development within the green belt".

However, updated proposals for the same site, which removed plans for a nursery and primary school, were approved in principle last October, and sent to the London mayor's office and the communities secretary Sajid Javid for approval. Last month, the plans were sent back unchallenged to the council to be waved through, and building is expected to begin later this year.

Coles accused the council of an "extremely poor" submission to its own planning committee which "did not demonstrate" a need for places.

Coles said his trust would continue to discuss place-planning in the borough with the council and government "to avoid the waste of public money that an unneeded school would represent".

He added that the Totteridge Academy had made "stunning progress" over the last 18 months, and said the trust was confident it would be "a school of choice for local parents whatever the competition." A spokesperson for Ark said school place projections done by the council and the DfE showed that "even if both schools are full, there will still be a need for additional secondary places in Barnet".

He added that Ark wants to "work together with all schools in the local area", and said the trust already had a "positive relationship" with the head of Totteridge Academy, Chris Fairbairn, who was previously the vice principal of Ark Academy in Wembley.

London Assembly member Andrew Dismore has also spoken out, claiming the council supported the school because it feared having to find £30 million to build one itself if the DfE-supported scheme were rejected.

"It's a particularly ridiculous place to put a school," he said. "Barnet Council privatised its planning and I think has had a very shabby approach to the whole thing, but there's nothing you can do now. They're building it." A council spokesperson said councillors had given consideration to "the future demand for school places as well as the lack of alternative sites in the borough", and had agreed there were "exceptional circumstances to allow development in the

"In recent years, a large number of additional primary school places have been provided to keep pace with demand, and as these pupils progress through the school system, we expect to see a significant need for additional secondary places in the next few years," they added.

areen belt".

#### **GOVERNMENT PRESSES ON** WITH £7,400 FSM CUT-OFF

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER **@FCDWHITTAKER**

Children of parents who earn more than £7,400 will no longer be eligible for free school meals, the government has confirmed, despite fears that a million pupils will miss out on free lunches, corrupting data on disadvantage.

Nadhim Zahawi, the children's minister, announced on Wednesday that the new earnings threshold for households claiming the new "streamlined" benefits will be introduced as planned in April.

The threshold will be introduced as part of the new universal credit system, under which most benefits will be replaced by a one-size-fits-all payout by 2022.

In areas where universal credit has already appeared, pupils from every family claiming the benefit are currently eligible for free meals, despite having household incomes of up to £55.000, the maximum threshold for some universal credit payments.

It was warned last year that extending the policy across the nation, a move favoured by Labour politicians and some campaigners, would mean 1.7 million more children became eligible at a cost of £600 million.

The government claims an extra 50,000 pupils will become eligible for free school meals under its new threshold. However, this figure has been disputed by organisations like the Children's Society, which predicts up to a million pupils will lose out.

Clare Bracey, the charity's campaign director, said she was "deeply disappointed".

"This disadvantage poor children from working families and mean some parents will be better off taking a pay cut," she said.

The Local Government Association, which represents councils, also raised concerns.

"The LGA supports an earnings threshold, in principle, if it extends coverage to more low income children. We are concerned, however, about how one threshold might impact on free school meals and early-years pupil premium across England, as earnings and living costs vary," said Richard Watts, the chair of the LGA's children and young people board.

Policy experts have also raised a series of concerns about the impact any change to FSM eligibility will have on disadvantage data. Last November, Andy Ratcliffe, the chief executive of the private equity philanthropy charity Impetus, warned that changes to free school meal entitlements would render school data "useless" for years to come.

The number of pupils who eat free meals is one of the main indicators of disadvantage used by schools. It affects GCSE results data, pupil premium funding and other important statistics. According to the government, pupils

currently in receipt of free school meals will be protected "at the point at which the threshold is introduced", and every pupil who becomes eligible while universal credit is rolled out will retain it until the rollout is completed.

### OFSTED JUNIOR INSPECTORS WILL LEAD SHORT INSPECTIONS

#### JESS STAUFENBERG **@STAUFENBERGJ**

Ofsted will allow 25 junior inspectors who signed up to a fast-track training programme with a cash incentive to lead new short inspections.

Payments of £5,360 were made to 25 junior inspectors for a 10-day training programme to prepare them to lead short inspections - a new form of one or two-day visits to schools previously rated 'good' - according to a Freedom of Information request by Schools Week.

Less-experienced inspectors would not normally lead inspections, but recruitment issues at the and the new short inspections framework has forced Ofsted to train more junior staff.

The plan was first announced just over a year ago, after Ofsted axed nearly half of its workforce of so-called additional inspectors external contractors hired to carry out inspections - and brought their jobs inhouse. It maintained at the time it was not struggling to recruit.

However the watchdog's most recent



the it had fallen below its hiring target for short inspections, due to "challenges in recruiting and sourcing high-



#### calibre inspectors".

Colin Richards, a former inspector, said more than 25 new hires would be needed to ensure that every 'good' school would get short inspections within five years of its last inspection, as Ofsted has promised. Daylong inspections such as these are important because inspectors use them to decide whether a school might drop or improve its grade.

He wants inspectors to be able "fail" their training, so that only decent candidates get through.

His words were echoed by Malcolm Trobe, the deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, who said the inspectors needed to be "carefully selected". Even then, Ofsted must not "over rely" on non-HMI staff, he said. Details of the training programme undertaken by the new recruits, also obtained by Schools Week, revealed that the 25 inspectors spent the equivalent of just one day out of 10 focusing on short inspections. Recruits were taught about safeguarding, how to put schools into a "category of concern" and SEND, and were also given a two-hour session on "avoiding complaints" on their fourth day. They also studied the

"impact of their body language" when interviewing governors, and how to make sure they left their "baggage at the school gates".

Although these inspectors will now be able to lead short inspections, a report from a trial run suggests they will still be checked up on to make sure judgments are fair.

Two pilot inspections took place in the south-east and the north-west to assess the effectiveness of new inspectors leading short inspections, the FoI revealed.

These found a "need for specific and tailored training" which accounted for the background and experience of the new inspectors. Meanwhile their first inspection will likely require a "wrap-around" approach to quality assurance.

However, almost every pilot was qualityassured by regular or senior inspector, "and in all cases the judgments reached by Ofsted inspectors were secure".

## Teacher workload crisis threatens examiner recruitment

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Investigates

Teacher workload and reforms to GCSEs and A-levels are affecting examiner recruitment.

Union officials, school leaders and examiners have lined up to call for a change in approach after the organisation representing the four big exam boards admitted workload was a "barrier" to recruitment at a time when reforms mean more examiners are needed.

Speaking at a recent Westminster Education Forum seminar, Darren Northcott, a representative of the NASUWT union, warned the shortage of teachers willing to take on exam marking will continue to worsen unless the teacher "workload crisis" is addressed.

Increasing and sustaining the recruitment of examiners and driving down "excessive and unnecessary" teacher workload are "two sides of the same coin", he claimed.

"The way we design, implement and monitor our exam system must have considerations around teacher workload at its heart." he said.

"If you want to recruit more teachers to mark exams, you have to start by understanding that many are struggling to manage their roles as teachers never mind taking on additional tasks and responsibilities."

At the same event, Helen Pike, master of the private Magdalen College School in Oxford, pointed out that while teacher workload is "the biggest barrier" to exam marking, pay is



another problem.

Rather than paying per script, a fixed fee would be "more dignified".

"The only other time I have been paid like that was when I was planting seedling or packing lettuces in a market garden," she said. She wants exam boards to think about how to retain those teachers who have marked papers in the past too, rather than just focusing on recruiting new examiners.

"Every time a specification changes we haemorrhage experts, examiners are going to ask themselves every time if they can be bothered to retrain to embrace the new gualification."

A report published last January by the Joint Council for Qualifications, which represents AQA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC, found that around 34,000 individuals - the vast majority of whom are practising teachers – were required to mark the exam papers of around two million pupils last year.

It is understood this target was met, though fresh reforms have increased the number of examiners that the system requires. Around 50,000 examiners will be needed this year, a

JCQ spokesperson told Schools Week. Recruiting sufficient numbers of

examiners is "always a challenge", he said, acknowledging that workload is having an impact.

"JCQ, its members and school leader associations have actively been highlighting the benefits of being an examiner, both to the individual teacher and the school or college. Teacher workload is a barrier for many wanting to examine, but many school leaders are being innovative in how they support their teachers, for example setting up examining stations within a school."

Paula Goddard, a senior examiner and fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, told Schools Week the current approach "is just not going to work anv longer".

"If exam boards want to carry on using teachers as examiners, they don't just need to need to encourage teachers, they need to encourage the entire school," he continued. Some headteachers have stopped giving permission for their staff to be examiners as workload has increased, she said.

In these circumstances exam boards need to "step in", and offer schools something in return for their teachers' time and effort.

They could help with invigilation, offer new techniques or technology to speed up mock exam marking, or provide supply staff to cover classes. Just paying for exam scripts to be marked is no longer enough, she said.

"After all it's their exams, why aren't they supplying the entire infrastructure that goes with the exam process?"

#### THE SENCO FORUM IS BACK UP – BUT ONLY FOR A LUCKY FEW

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

An important online forum for special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) has been partially restored nearly three months after it was taken offline by the Department for Education.

The National SENCO Forum, which allows 2,500 coordinators to contact each other for support through an email chain, was disconnected during work to upgrade the DfE's online platforms on November 18.

Just hours after Schools Week published a story about the problems last week, the DfE's IT team apparently managed to restore the service, but the site's advisory chair Christopher Robertson claimed many members are still completely cut off from the forum.

People with email addresses connected to BT, Virgin or AOL still have no access to the vital service, which has been running since 1995, and the DfE has not given an estimate for when this problem will be fixed.

"It's all been partially and ineffectively restored. I have no idea how many of our members can access it and how many can't," said Robertson. "This is seems to be a barrier that the IT team is not able to overcome, or present a timeframe for overcoming. It's frustrating but it's not surprising."

He is demanding an "immediate shortterm fix" with ongoing IT support as well as



a longer-term solution to establish a new platform to ensure the forum is protected from being disconnected in the future.

He also said school staff are struggling to access eight other e-forums, which also went offline in November. They include forums for teachers of children with severe learning difficulties, visual impairments and deaf children, as well as one forum for those working in sensory impairment services and four specifically for special needs IT specialists.

Last week, the DfE said the SENCO Forum is a "valuable online resource", and that officials were "working closely with members of the forum to get it up and running again as quickly as possible".

A spokesperson said the DfE had nothing



further to add on a timeframe for fixing the ongoing problems today.

The

"They say they are committed to working with us to put a new platform in at some stage, but that stage has not been mapped out in any way, shape or form," said Robertson.

"There's a commitment to working with us to achieve a solution in the longer term but I'm afraid the longer-term could mean 18 months, by which time the community that has been building for over 22 years is likely to have been destroyed completely."

#### MAT FACES CLOSURE OVER PERFORMANCE

An academy trust in Cambridgeshire has been warned it could be closed over "unacceptably low" standards at one of its academies.

The Department for Education has issued The St Neots Learning Partnership with a pretermination warning notice, and suggested it give up one of its schools.

The trust runs Ernulf Academy, Longsands Academy, and St Neots Sixth-Form Centre. The notice suggests to directors that "it would now be appropriate to seek an alternative academy trust" for the struggling Ernulf Academy.

In the letter, Sue Baldwin, the regional schools commissioner for the east of England and north-east London, describes a series of failures at the school, including performance that is "significantly below the local authority and national averages in Attainment 8, Progress 8, and the percentage of pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs in 2017".

She noted a lack of improvement over time, and said performance of disadvantaged pupils is "of particular concern". The trust is also forecasting a deficit, which could hinder its ability to make improvements, she said.

"Previous visits to Ernulf Academy by my education advisers have indicated that improvements were being put in place, but they have had insufficient impact on performance," Baldwin wrote.

The letter also warned that unless the issues raised "within a reasonable period", the government will consider terminating the trust's funding, which would result in its closure.

The trust hit back at the DfE's decision to issue a pre-termination warning notice, in a press release which condemned the action as "a misguided judgment that will put the education of vulnerable children at risk" and "ignores two years of good progress at the school".



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## Ministers under pressure on funding for PSHE lessons

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Ministers are under increasing pressure to say whether they will make personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) lessons compulsory, amid apprehension about the extra resources schools will need to teach the subject.

Labour wants clarity from Nick Gibb, the schools minister, who has refused to say exactly how cash-strapped schools will be supported to deliver the subject if it is put on a statutory footing from next year. The party says it is prepared to "put the pressure on" if the government backtracks on its commitments.

Last year, a change in the law gave ministers a duty to implement compulsory relationships education in all primary schools and sex and relationships education in all secondary schools from September 2019.

But no such duty was approved for PSHE, which subject experts believe should also be compulsory, and incorporate sex and relationships education, leaving schools in the dark about exactly what they will have to teach from next September.

During a debate in Westminster on Tuesday, Emma Lewell-Buck, the shadow children's minister, pressed Gibb on how struggling schools would be helped to pay for extra staff and training to deliver PSHE, but was told the government's position was still under review.



Speaking to Schools Week after the debate, Lewell-Buck said she still expected Gibb to explain how the government will reconcile its commitments on PSHE and sex education with "the savage cuts agenda that's happening in our schools".

"How can you ask them to do more, how can you have effective roll-out of PSHE and SRE if you're not going to give the resources and the money that's needed?" she asked. "If they're serious about this and it is

something that they want to do, and it's not

just yet another act of parliament that's going to sit on a shelf and get dusty, then they need to show some commitment in a financial way as well. But so far Gibb has been unable to say how much money has been set aside."

Labour, along with MPs from other parties, the children's commissioner, the PSHE Association and several education unions, believes sex and relationships education should be delivered as part of PSHE from September 2019.

"Crucially for me it comes down to the

resource issue and if they've set aside any money to implement this," said Lewell-Buck, who told *Schools Week* that any backtracking by the government on an issue with such cross-party support would put them in a "very tricky position".

"With a very small majority they can't deal with that headache. They can't let people down now," she said.

There has also been debate about what PSHE lessons should cover if the subject does receive statutory status. Several MPs want first-aid training included, while others suggest that education about early cancer diagnosis and weapons awareness should also be involved.

Jonathan Baggaley, the chief executive of the PSHE Association, said the debate demonstrated "levels of cross-party support for high-quality, statutory PSHE for all pupils in all schools".

"It was also welcome to hear Gibb reiterate DfE expectations on schools to deliver PSHE well, while recognising need to raise standards. This can only happen if PSHE is a statutory curriculum subject from 2019, including but not limited to relationships and sex education," he added. "The government should seize this great opportunity to act, and in good time so that schools have the opportunity to prepare"

Gibb told MPs this morning that the future status of PSHE would be discussed as one of the "next steps" in the government's reforms after the first consultation closes on February 12.

## HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE SEX EDUCATION?

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

External speakers should not be used as substitutes for trained teachers under plans to make sex and relationships education compulsory in all schools, subject experts have warned.

From September 2019 it will be compulsory to teach relationships education in all primary schools, and sex and relationships education in all secondary schools. However, there are concerns across the schools community about the level of training teachers will receive.

At a Westminster Education Forum seminar on Thursday, panellists said it was "essential" that teachers be given proper training to run sex and relationships lessons "with accuracy and confidence".

Lucy Emmerson, co-ordinator of the Sex Education Forum, said she has regularly received requests from schools to come and teach sex and relationships education lessons herself because none of their staff have the knowledge to do it.

She warned that outside speakers must not be "a substitute for having trained teachers" and said schools have to take "real care" to make sure advice given by any external party is medically and ethically accurate, rather than based on their "own agenda".



Teachers with expertise are "essential" to ensure sex education is not "too biological, too embarrassing and plain incorrect".

"We believe the government need to commit a quantifiable resource to teacher training," she said.

Laura Foley is lead teacher in personal, social, health and economics education at the Hodgson Academy in Lancashire, where she has overhauled the curriculum to ensure one hour compulsory PSHE sessions a week for every pupil.

She believes it is important to bring in external speakers to address students during sessions, but argued it is more so that they are of "good quality".

Sarah Hannafin, a senior policy adviser at the National

Josh Brad

Association of

Head Teachers, said that just half of the teachers surveyed by her union reported that sex education is being taught by trained staff in their schools.

Panellists also worry about what will be taught in the sessions. Professor Vanita Sundaram, from the University of York's education department, said sex and relationships education currently focuses too much on heterosexual relationships, reproduction and the risks of sex, rather

than challenging stereotypes and teaching young people about consent.

Josh Bradlow, a policy officer at Stonewall, said primary schools should be teaching students about LGBT families. Secondary schools should, he said, include lessons on gender identity and provide advice about health clinics and LGBT services.

However, Sandra Teacher, an education consultant at the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said it was important that sex and relationships education is "age and religion appropriate". She said primary schools should focus on teaching tolerance, friendship and the "importance of strong family relationships, including traditional marriage".

She wants parents to have the right to withdraw their child from a lesson and teach sex and relationships in a way that is more "consistent with their values", and insisted they be involved in designing the curriculum.

"We need to consider traditional families in the heart of what we do," she said.

But others, including panel chair Lord Storey, the Liberal Democrat education spokesperson in the House of Lords, argued that parents should not be allowed to withdraw their children from

any lessons on religious or moral grounds.

The Department for Education's consultation on the new sex and relationships education curriculum will close on February



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12 SCHOOLSWEEK

## NEWS





EDITORIAL

## Money is funny in a small trust's world

We all know academy trusts are supposed to be equal. They make up that great "school-led system" of cooperation and sharing, they're allowed to expand no matter how tiny or large, so long as they're good, and they must all be transparent at Companies House.

In fact, it's usually the big boys who make the bad headlines: think Academies Enterprise Trust getting put on the naughty list, or Wakefield City Academies Trust's meltdown. But it turns out some trusts are more equal than others. A 43page accountants' report has a number of eye-catching findings (55 per cent of trusts are in deficit, to pick just one) but a few paragraphs will set the pulse of any strapped-for-cash trust boss quickening: funding decisions as critical as grants (that's free money) or advance loans (that's early money, without the student loan-style interest afterwards) are being won by some trusts but not others.

Some savvy bosses are even getting that funding on the basis not of last year's pupil numbers, but on what they think they need next year (just make it up! They'll fund you and then claw back what you didn't use later; see *Schools Week* ad nauseam). But who's missing out?

There are nearly 1,300 academy trusts in this country, it's so likely to be the smaller trusts, in part because they can't pay as much for that vital member of staff they so desperately need: a chief financial officer. This person will become increasingly crucial as a chief dealmaker, say the accountants. But trusts with up to 2,500 pupils offer a salary of £50,000 – and those with more than 5,000 pupils are offering more than double that. How can we level the playing field?

First, headteacher boards must check all academy trusts can access the expertise needed to negotiate with the ESFA. Second, the Institute of School Business Leadership must press for a recruitment drive for CFOs. If we can post leading heads to the most struggling schools, we can manage the same with CFOs. If this post isn't held by top people no matter the size of the trust, the small chains will continue to be less equal.

### God works in even more mysterious ways than school admissions

It's an interesting case of speaking in tongues: in 2015, some London dioceses started to use a "Catholic certificate of practice", in which a priest guarantees that a particular child is indeed a Catholic and should get a faith-based school place. Last year the Catholic Church rolled it out to all schools, but two councils complained, saying it wasn't clear to parents why one child would get a certificate and another wouldn't, breaking the schools admissions

code. The church went away and made its criteria clearer. So far, so good.

But Schools Week soon asks the obvious question: does the priest now have to check his inclination against these new criteria? No. We have clearer criteria parents can understand, but the priest doesn't necessarily have to stick to them. Apparently the Office of the Schools Adjudicator is happy with this situation. A divine mystery.

## A stroke of serendipity after SENCOs endure a torturous three-month wait

Any doubters of the awesome and absolute power *Schools Week* holds must surely have been silenced forever by the news that, just hours after this newspaper published a story about the DfE's failure to fix a forum for SENCOs, the department's IT team managed what had apparently been impossible for the last three months and brought it back online.

Cynics might question the timing of this miraculous resolution – and point out the fix is only partial, as the site still isn't operating properly for all users nor indeed for users of other similarly afflicted special needs forums.

At least some of the 2,500 SENCOs around the land will be rejoicing at the news they are connected again to this invaluable source of support. But the question remains: when will the DfE will decide these important services are worthy of an IT system that can survive a minor upgrade without causing a major upset? CALL 02081234778 OR EMAIL JOBS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP YOU ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCIES

## Head of Mathematics



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We want somebody who is looking to make a real difference. As a leader, someone who has a 'roll up your sleeves' attitude to work. As a teacher, someone who embraces and enjoys working in challenging circumstances. And we need someone who will champion our passionate vision about helping our students strive for a culture where hope, aspiration and ambition is not a thing of the past, but a reflection of their future adult lives.

#### If you apply for this post, you must already be a dynamic, innovative teacher who will inspire, motivate and challenge. Above all, you will be passionate about mathematics and be ready to help our students feel the same way.

In return, we will invest heavily in helping you to develop your career aspirations into reality. We can offer you a great salary, the chance to be part of a group of schools where you can develop, excel and flourish; with career progression unrivalled by any other MAT. However, most of all, we can offer you a school that is totally focused on ensuring that every child is supported and challenged to deliver outstanding personal progress.

We will offer you the support of a leadership team dedicated to helping young people striving for more and as a GLF Schools' employee, you will enjoy the benefit of working within an excellent support and learning network and will be exposed to significant collaboration opportunities across our schools.

Ultimately, though, we can guarantee you the ultimate teaching project, one that on reflection, you can look back and are proud to say YOU were a part of.

We would strongly recommend that you let us arrange a visit for you to visit the school to see for yourself why this is such a special opportunity.

Salary: highly competitive Closing date: 26th February 2018 Start date: September 2018 (earlier start date available for the right candidate)

Please contact the GLF Recruitment team on **020-8716-4987** or **recruitment@glfschools.org** for further information

GLF reserves the right to invite candidates for interview prior to the closing date. We would therefore recommend that you submit your application as early as possible. Please be advised that references may be requested on receipt of your application. Please state if you wish this to be delayed until shortlisting/interviews have taken place.





## **Role:** Executive Principal

School: Green Spring Academy ShoreditchBorough: Tower HamletsAge Range: 11-19Start:1st September 2018Salary: Generous and competitive salary

#### Make a difference within a strong supportive leadership group and an inspirational community of practice

Green Spring Academy is an 11-18 secondary academy located in Shoreditch, East London. It serves an urban, inner city and multi-ethnic intake with a very high percentage of pupil premium students. The academy is in the process of preparing to join the Mulberry Schools Trust and in September 2018, it will begin a fresh and exciting new journey.

The successful candidate will play a significant leadership role in this new stage of the academy's life, crafting a strategic future for the academy within the Trust. The post holder will:

- build on the academy's many outstanding strengths to create a system-wide role in school improvement and cutting edge professional practice
- have oversight of one of the academies in the Trust
- contribute to Mulberry's Teaching School work, heading the development of a leadership academy focused on developing new senior leaders and headteachers for the Trust

This is a unique opportunity for a talented leader with vision, drive and ambition, and the desire to make a real difference to our pupils and community within a supportive MAT leadership group.

For an application pack and for more information contact Shanaz Jameson, Mulberry Schools Trust sjameson@mulberryschoolstrust.org 0207 790 6327 x 205 Closing Date: Monday 26th February 2018, Noon. Interviews: 8th and 9th March 2018 We are an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.





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You will lead an innovative team and help to develop our CPD offer through our teaching schools, Maths Hub and wider Federation, as well as overseeing our Apprenticeship strategy. You will work alongside Federation Executive Leaders and advise and guide Principals and other leaders on the requirements and design of our entire offer.

This is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced senior leader who would like to further develop their leadership experience to impact on the quality of professional learning across London, working in a large number of schools and extending your understanding of leadership in a variety of contexts.

#### Closing Date: 15th February 2018

Harris academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment are subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

## Discover more at: www.harriscareers.org.uk



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## **Head of Academy**

The Russett School Middlehurst Avenue Weaverham Northwich Cheshire CW8 3BW. Required for September 2018 or sooner Leadership Point 18 to Leadership Point 22 (£59,857 to £66,017)

The Russett Learning Trust and Governors are looking to appoint an excellent leader for the Russett School.

The Russett School is a special academy providing outstanding education for pupils and young people from ages 2 to 19 years with Severe Learning Difficulties, Speech and Language Difficulties and Complex Needs.

This role brings a wonderful opportunity to become a key player in our academy and our Trust. We are looking for someone who has the highest expectations in terms of our pupils/students and staff. Who is passionate and committed to working with children with special educational needs and who will embrace the ethos and values of the academy and Trust.

This is an exciting opportunity to work with our Trust in continuing to maintain our high standards by providing an outstanding education for all our pupils and young people.

As Head of the Academy, you will lead on the day to day organisational management of the academy. You will be working with a strong Trust Board, Executive Head Teacher and Local Governing Committee. You will work closely with the Executive Head Teacher who oversees the strategic direction of the academy.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk to you and show you around the academy. To arrange, please contact Julia Hughes, Clerk to the Board of Directors, on 01606 855831 or by email to jhughes@russett.cheshire.sch.uk

An application pack (including job description and person specification for this role) is available to download https://www.russettschool.co.uk/about-us/vacancies/

For further information about the academy, please visit www.russettschool.co.uk

Completed application forms should be returned to Jhughes@russett.cheshire.sch.uk by noon on Thursday 1st March 2018. Shortlisting Friday 9th March 2018 and interviews will take place on Wednesday 21st March.

The Russett Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service is required prior to appointment

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The Academic and Cultural Exchange (ACE) program offers teachers an opportunity for a full-time salaried educational experience, coupled with dynamic cross-cultural activities with U.S. schools and communities. This program offers a J-1 visa for up to three (3) years with a possible extension of two (2) additional years if approved by the U.S. Department of State for a total of five (5) years living and working in the U.S.

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## **PRINCIPAL – AVANTI FIELDS**

Salary: Competitive salary and PRP up to £110k (subject to performance outcomes)

Avanti Fields School is a new all-through school (4-16) with two-forms of entry in primary and six-forms of entry at secondary. The school will be growing incrementally year by year to a full cohort of 1,320; the first intake of Year 7 pupils will be in September 2018. The first Reception intake is to be confirmed.

Both permanent and temporary sites have been identified and the Heads of Terms are currently being negotiated with the DfE.

In preparing for the opening we need a Principal who, as an exceptional leader, can put their stamp on the operational, educational and strategic work that is required throughout the preparation phase through to the opening. You will be an energetic, innovative and inspirational Principal, who will ensure Avanti Fields provides its pupils an outstanding education rooted in the inclusive and distinctive Avanti Schools' ethos of educational excellence, character development and spiritual insight.

This new school is part of a growing family of Avanti schools and the Principal of Avanti Fields will have the opportunity to play a key role in the growth and excellence of that family. Avanti Fields will be the second secondary school provider within the Trust and the successful candidate will be able to contribute to shaping the future of our trust-wide secondary offer.

All our existing schools have strong senior teams in place. The attainment, achievement and behaviour of learners in all our schools are excellent. Our parents and carers and students are highly aspirational. The successful candidate, whilst not necessarily a Hindu, will subscribe fully to the ethos and vision of the Avanti Schools Trust for the school. **Please visit www.avanti.org.uk/careers for more details.** 

#### The Successful candidate will demonstrate:

- highly effective leadership and organisational skills with the ability to motivate, lead and inspire the school community;
- excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with all members of our community in continuing to develop our school;
- capabilities of a visionary leader with the highest expectations, and equally high levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills.

#### CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2018 AT MIDDAY

#### Shortlisting

Successful candidates will be contacted about selection process Monday 19th February 2018

#### Assessment Part 1

Student & Staff panel interview, data analysis, lesson observation etc Tuesday 27th February 2018 Avanti House Secondary School, Harrow

MONTESSORIO SCHOO

#### Assessment Part 2

Presentation and interview panel (if successful at part 1 of assessment process) Thursday 1st March 2018 Krishna Avanti Leicester

## DIRECTOR OF EARLY YEARS AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Valencia, Spain

Imagine Montessori School, located in Valencia, is looking to hire a Director of Early Years and Elementary (3 to 12 years old children) Education, to join-in immediately. Candidate is expected to be assertive, warm, positive and organised, with the ability to lead a dynamic and motivated team. Native or fluent in English, the candidate will also bring a passion for education and a creative approach to achieve our School's vision. Among the candidate's responsibilities are: leading academic coordinators and teachers team, ensuring authentic Montessori practice throughout our programs while meeting or exceeding British curriculum. Building relationships and engaging with staff, students and our diverse multicultural community are important elements of the role.

#### "Must have" characteristics for the role:

- Montessori qualification at Elementary level
- Bachelor in Education (Bachelor of Education (BoEd), Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), "Magisterio" or UK Level 6 equivalent)
- A deep knowledge on prepared environment for Elementary
- +3 years' experience in both Upper Elementary and Lower Elementary
- Be fluent in English
- Be a EU-citizen or have a valid work-permit

#### "Nice to have" characteristics for the role:

- Knowledge of the British Curriculum (Early Years Foundation Stage and and Elementary)
- Experience in British Schools
- Experience in leading teams
- Experience in training teachers on Montessori principles

Imagine Montessori School is a growing school with the vision of spreading Montessori methodology through a relevant number of children by contributing to their natural deployment, involving families and the community into this process. English is the primary language of the School (Certified by British Council) with students ranging from 3 to 18-year-old. We already have a wonderful team of Montessori Children's House and Lower Elementary guides.

PLEASE APPLY HERE: https://imaginemontessori.es/en/director-of-earlyyears-and-elementary/

#### SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

**EDITION 129** 

...

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## **READERS'** REPL

#### **David Laws: 'Michael Gove was forced** to establish UTCs'

Joe Hallgarten // @joehallg Was he also "forced" to create the perfect conditions for a teacher recruitment and retention crisis?

#### Ofsted rejects social media monitoring plans

Dad and Two // @DadAndTwo After a local headteacher threatened to sue parents for comments made in a private Facebook group. I hate to think how this would change the dynamic between parents and schools.

#### George Osborne wants schools measured on ex-pupils' success at 25

#### H Simpkin // @pipkinzoo

Are you quite mad? Am I really responsible for the quality of post-16 provision that my year 11 leavers receive? And their parenting/domestic circumstances? And the advice they receive at their post-16 provider? And force majeure? Ridiculous

#### Gill Ditch // @brighton118

Hmm. How will they measure "success"? Will it

n the summer of 2013, the health secretary was stopped in his tracks. Jeremy Hunt's decision to close the emergency department at Lewisham Hospital was ruled unlawful. It was a victory for local campaigners but it would also become a parable for the situation in which academies would one day find themselves. I fear that time has come

Totteridge Academy, a non-selective secondary school in a deprived part of northeast London, has had a rough past. But since 2016, it has had an incredible management team who are turning its fortunes around, and its academy sponsor, United Learning, is one of the most successful in the country. It is on the cusp of finally coming good.

Unfortunately, two years before the current team took over, another academy chain also had its eye on the area. Ark, another of the country's largest and most successful chains, applied to open a free school in the area. Pioneer Academy was to be the first "blended learning" school, in which teachers would be partially replaced by computers for several lessons each day.

Planning problems held it up for years but diggers have now moved in to build Pioneer on a sliver of green belt land that is, predictably, just a stone's throw away from Totteridge.

If I were Totteridge's headteacher, I would feel crushed. Turning around a challenging school is difficult at the best of times. Doing so when you've only got half the pupil numbers you need to make it all work is even tougher. But doing it when a shiny

be points? Earnings? Those in a public sector job? Also how to gather data?

#### Jackie Pepper // @jackiepepper9

Don't think this is the answer as data would be difficult to capture and analyse, and schools may have radically changed in the interim. However, I hope this is the start of consideration of when and why we measure success and how we define success. The current system is meaningless.

#### Harris puts Moynihan salary up to £440,000

Adrian Bethune // @AdrianBethune My problem with Moynihan's pay is WHO ON EARTH NEEDS THAT MUCH MONEY?!?! Although Alexis Sanchez is probably thinking Moynihan is a peasant on minimum wage.

#### **Excluded pupils must have protective** 'bill of rights'

Simon Knight // @SimonKnight100 This is so important. There may also be value in commissioning some independent case reviewtype evaluations of what led up to exclusion to better understand what schools, other professionals, families and young people could do differently to avoid this outcome.

## Home-schoolers fear new bill to monitor children

**FACEBOOK** 

## **REPLY OF THE WEEK**

TWEET

EMAIL



I find it really hard to understand why teachers face such intense scrutiny and have to prove that they are sufficiently competent to teach, yet any parent can withdraw their child and home educate. We owe it to the children to ensure they are being taught well and given every opportunity to be successful later in life, in terms of academic qualifications and softer skills such as cooperation, resilience etc.

**Reply of the week** receives a Schools Week mug!

> could close, and the other would be made to take everyone in. But if either Totteridge or Pioneer are half-empty, who makes the call?

CHOC

One way to resolve the problem is to let the market decide. If a shiny new-build flounders, let it close. But Pioneer is being built on the site of the former Barnet FC football stadium, bought from the club in 2015

I couldn't pin down the exact costs of the new school, but the land cost £14.5 million and discussions at the local planning meeting suggested it would cost an additional £30 million in construction, so £50 million seems a fair ball-park estimate (literallv)

So what happens if, as with Lewisham, the school with the older buildings has won the race in 10 year's time? Will they really close a £50 million site?

In an ideal world, none of this will matter. A population uplift will pack out both schools and both will perform brilliantly. But there are already other parts of the country where we are seeing the shiny free school losing out to an older competitor which everyone had written off. Bungs may be keeping those newer schools from an embarrassing closure, but they cannot last forever.

In the end, we may have to accept that opening new schools near struggling ones simply kicks the problem a few years down the line.

Let's hope the courts don't have to intervene in our sector in the same way they had to in health



## LAURA **MCINERNEY**

## Love thy neighbour is all well and good in theory

new establishment is going up next door, when there won't be enough kids to make both financially viable? That would feel impossible.

And yet, the story of Lewisham Hospital is important here.

The hospital was developed in the 1800s after a workhouse on its site became so packed with infirm workers that it was essentially operating as a hospital. Its pathology department is still in a building which opened in 1894. Its accident department, originally planned for closure, was built in the 1960s.

Down the road, however, two more hospitals opened in the early 2000s, both with shiny new buildings and a promise of brilliance. But 10 years on, the trust in charge of those hospitals was in serious debt, with neither raking in the patient numbers

needed. Shiny new hadn't won: Lewisham had

In a sensible world, one of the less successful hospitals would have closed but the newer buildings still had outstanding debts on them, which would need to be paid off. Hence, Jeremy Hunt tried to close Lewisham – and a legal challenge was the only thing that stopped him.

It is therefore not impossible that over the next few years Totteridge Academy will continue to do well. If it does, and there isn't a need for more school places. Pioneer Academy could end up being the one that's half-empty.

But here's the difficult question: then what happens?

Back in the pre-2010 world, the local council had sway in situations like this. If one school was limping on, half-full, it

Contributing editor, Schools Week

## PROFILE

## EMMA SHEPPARD

#### CATH MURRAY @CATHMURRAY\_

#### Emma Sheppard, Founder, MaternityTeacher PaternityTeacher

The fi man -

mma Sheppard is on a mission to make it easier for parents to stay in teaching – and to move into leadership roles – and one way she intends to achieve this is by making it acceptable to bring babies to conferences.

There's pressure on Sheppard on the day we meet. First, I'm showing up at her house just two weeks after the birth of her second child. Second, she is pondering how to dispel the myth, sparked on social media, that she's a heartless careerist who cares more about keeping up with her coworkers than spending time with her babies. And third... I think she's worked out I'm a little sceptical of her claim that schools aren't parent-friendly.

For transparency's sake, I should probably confess that before I met the founder of the MaternityTeacher PaternityTeacher project, the entire undertaking bugged me. As a mother who has spent years pawning off children to relatives and summer camps, part of me figured she should just get on with it: with 13 weeks of paid holiday a year, isn't teaching the family-friendly profession par excellence?

We meet on a clear January morning in Wimbledon, early on in Sheppard's second maternity leave. Slanting sun colludes pathetically with the Victorian brick house fronts to lend a glow of domestic bliss as mother and toddler greet me at the door. Eyes stare up at me from knee-height – this is Hugo, I'm told, he's fine with But Sheppard got bored, "essentially in the first two weeks".

"I just didn't know what to do with myself." She took some online courses with FutureLearn and spent time thinking about resources and English lessons, but it wasn't long before she began to dig into the research on the gender pay gap, and started comparing herself mentally to her male co-workers, realising how much faster they would get promoted. When she blogged about it, however, the responses tended again to advise her to stop worrying and enjoy the time out.

"But nobody was saying, 'Yes, do some CPD, develop yourself, keep learning'. It was very much a case of 'this is a time for domesticity, so just like it or lump it'," she says.

Sheppard describes herself as "solutionsfocused", in the sense that "I don't like to complain, and I don't like the sort of angry feminist voice. So I just thought instead of looking for role models, I'll be that role model for other people. And that's where it started."

The MTPT project (currently her and six other volunteers) aims to support teachers who choose to do CPD while on parental leave, by creating a community, providing coaching and helping them get recognition for the tricky-to-certify professional development many will do during this phase.

One of the teachers in the pilot researched student wellbeing and is now running an art therapy club; another is a maths teacher who looked into low-stakes

### "NEW PARENTS HAVE A LOT OF SKILLS THAT CAN BE USED IN DIFFERENT WAYS THAT DON'T TAKE UP THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME AS TEACHING"

strangers. Toddler and interviewer are steered into the front room: "The clean one – please stay in here".

It's clear this will be no standard interview: Sheppard whisks the dictaphone out of Hugo's reach then spends the next 40 minutes holding it to her mouth as she leaps around the room, replacing noisy toys with softer ones, displacing mugs of tea, selecting books that will temporarily distract. If all the while she manages to maintain a hawk-like focus on our conversation, mine is sporadic. Once the small creature contently settles into my lap, my heart rate slows; points of policy matter less.

Which is, presumably, one of the reasons for the mantra she kept hearing on her first maternity leave: "Take it easy. This is a precious time in your life. Don't try and fight it." testing and attended ResearchEd through live streaming.

"So the minute they go back, they're able to sit down with their line manager and say 'I have value; use my skills effectively. I haven't stopped, I've just taken my path in a slightly different way." She wants returning teachers to have the confidence to negotiate things like flexible hours

with leadership positions and TLRs. But can they really put the same amount of

energy into the job? "I don't think any job should require so much time and energy that you can't have a life outside of your job as well. The whole idea that people who are working all the hours that God sends, and not spending time with their families or friends, or having walks in the park or taking their dog for a walk or whatever, have somehow got it right. I think that's really bonkers.

#### IT'S A PERSONAL THING

#### What is your favourite book and why?

I always say Catch 22 to this, because I did it for my dissertation, but I'm not sure it is any more. I just really love the humour in it, and the antihero. It's completely absurd and bizarre but at the same time has really important messages about anti-war stuff. I was obsessed with war fiction at university.

#### What made you decide to be a teacher?

I was working as a church youth worker, and talking to girls about their terrible lives, and realised I didn't want to be a youth worker or a social worker, and that I couldn't be their mother but I could get them through their GCSEs. I just thought "I can't help you, but I can open doors to you to help yourselves through education".

#### If you could have a billboard featuring a piece of social art, what would yours look like?

Oh, something about positive outlook: "Life is what you make it", or "It's not to do with the reality, it's your perspective of reality", something about that. You can make all of those situations positive if you have the right outlook.

#### Where do you want to be in 20 years' time?

The last eight years have taught me that you can never really plan things. The project, I could never have been able to plan that, and that's been amazing. Marrying a Frenchman in Vietnam, I didn't plan that! So I would like to have positive impact in whatever form that takes.

#### What's your most memorable foreign experience of being abroad?

Teaching at the British International School in Vietnam for two years was amazing, but one of the most memorable things was travelling on my own in South America for four months when I was 21. Just proving to myself that I could get out there, do my own thing, learn Spanish, get around by myself, when a lot of people said "you won't come back alive if you go there on your own as a woman".

That's not what we should be striving for." She insists that outcomes are more important than hours. But the question remains: Can you, as a mother, really get the same outcomes when you're constantly sleep-deprived and your baby is ill every second week during the first year at nursery?

"I think that's a huge stereotype and a misconception," she retorts. She's riled that nobody's asking the same question of men who are parents, but more to the point, is adamant that once you've had kids, you become more efficient at managing your time. She recalls her GP asking how many hours she worked when she was pregnant, "and I wrote down 60 hours, knowing that I worked about 70 a week because I didn't want the GP to worry".

Now her student outcomes have improved, through prioritising the things that are important.

"It's just about being confident in your pedagogy," she insists. "It's about working efficiently within the restrictions that you have, rather than saying in order to be a good teacher you have to do this amount of time or this many animations on your PowerPoint."

An ex-Teach Firster, Sheppard is now an English lead practitioner at a London Harris academy, and in addition to teaching, she mentors trainee teachers and contributes to improving teaching and learning across the school.

A lot of women and men who are getting to their thirties and having children are experienced practitioners who "shouldn't necessarily be used just at the coalface".

"They have a lot of skills that can be used in different ways that don't necessarily take up the same amount of time as teaching, planning, marking," she explains.

The pat claim that long holidays make teaching the world's most parent-friendly profession doesn't wash with Sheppard, who insists that schools need to do more: on-site crèches, discouraging presenteeism, sending calendars out in advance so people can organise childcare, offering co-leadership positions, and even just adding the words "part-time considered for the right candidate" to job adverts. She reckons this would even improve teacher wellbeing and aid retention across the board – "if schools have cultures that are appropriate, and facilitate being a parent, they're going to be a happier place for everybody".

Fair enough, but what about those mums who just want to forget about work for a few months and enjoy time with their baby? Isn't this project putting pressure on other parents?

"Why should I not be able to look after my wellbeing and make decisions about my life, and the way that I want to be happy, which comes a lot from my career, because I might upset somebody else who is not making that decision?" she replies. "I'm not saying that them taking their kid to Shake and Sing makes me feel bad as a parent, because I'm not doing those things. It's all about choice."

As I step out the front door, the light throws long shadows on a group of women exercising in the

## **PROFILE:** EMMA SHEPPARD

park across the road, near a huddle of prams. "Look, buggy fit!" she exclaims. "I don't feel guilty – I'm going to go read a book."

A few days later, I'm tagged in a tweet. The hosts of a weekend CPD event are pictured holding Sheppard's baby, and she's giving them a shout-out: "Explicit welcomes like this create #familyfriendly #inclusive #CPD cultures and build confidence for parents."

The more she niggles away, stating and restating her point, clear in her messaging, the more impressed I am by her refusal to settle. Specifically, by her boldness to challenge the British working-parent paradigm, where it can feel as if you're expected to box away your children and your parenthood, disappearing from professional life entirely until you're ready to engage with it as if nothing had happened.

It occurs to me that my initial gut reaction was little more than an unconscious aversion to upsetting the status quo – challenging the wisdom of the tribe, if you like. But having listened to her arguments, it seems obvious that the MaternityTeacher PaternityTeacher project isn't a threat to anything – and that Sheppard is just the latest in a long tradition of brave women pushing back the bounds of what is deemed acceptable. "IF SCHOOLS HAVE CULTURES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE, AND FACILITATE BEING A PARENT, THEY'RE GOING TO BE A HAPPIER PLACE FOR EVERYBODY"

V	

2015-present:	Lead practitioner for initial teacher training,
	Harris Academy Morden
2012-2014:	English teacher, the British International School,
	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
2013:	MA leadership (Teach First), the Institute of
	Education
2010-2012:	KS3 lead in English, Westfield Community
	Technology College, Watford
2006-2009:	BA comparative literature, Kings College London
	first class honours
1998-2005:	St. George's School, Harpenden

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MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

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## **SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED!**

We are delighted to announce the first six speakers for the second Headteachers' Roundtable summit. Across the day we will hold ten workshops focussing on funding, staff retention, accountability, system coherence and recruitment. Plus, we will have two keynote speakers to open and close the event.

Last year's event was a sell-out with over 250 senior school leaders attending. Earlybird tickets are available until the end of January.

Further speaker announcements will be made next week.

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#### SCHOOLS WEEK

## 18 geschoolsweek



## Five solutions for teacher retention and development

The numbers quitting teaching are becoming a full-blown crisis. David Weston presents five solutions that might stem the tide

s a basis for a strategy to attract and keep teachers in our schools, Professor Dylan Wiliam's approach, "love the ones you're with", is bang on. We certainly need some overarching strategy to deal with, what the Public Accounts Committee noted last week as the "growing sense of crisis" at schools struggling to retain and develop their teachers.

The government needs to create a "coherent plan" by April, they recommend, plus set out what represents an "acceptable" workload, say more about the teacher vacancy service, take a more "strategic" role on teacher housing, address regional differences in teacher quality, explain how CPD will improve, and give more detail on the opportunity areas.

Some of this is easier said than done, but I believe there are five solutions that will support teacher retention and development:

#### 1. Retention

Teachers will stay when a) the majority of their effort feels like it matters and b) they are recognised and developed in a meaningful way. In too many schools, teachers feel they are giving countless hours of overtime for activities that aren't truly helpful for pupils. These activities flourish in an unforgiving system obsessed with back-covering.

Culture trickles down from the top. Government needs to rebalance school accountability systems to focus more on developing excellence and less on punishing failure. We need career routes that are not just about management, as suggested by the DfE in its latest consultation and supported by the excellent new Chartered College of Teaching programmes.

#### 2. Workload

If you're going to ask someone to give up some of their own time for the school, you'd better be sure that they feel the task is important. Far too much energy is expended on proving progress or documenting feedback and teachers resent the demands on their time for activities that aren't student-focused.

However, it is somehow also seen as normal that teachers spend much of their evening and weekend marking and planning, and on a regular basis. I believe the job of a teacher should generally fit into the actual working week, or else we'll continue to see talented teachers leaving to work elsewhere.

#### 3. Recruitment

The very best advocates for recruitment are teachers themselves, but I keep meeting teachers who try and put off their own children from considering it.

When teachers themselves tell a story of professional respect, good management and minimal bureaucracy, we'll have half a million advocates out there. Even the slickest advertising campaign can't counter this absence. Get the culture and workload right and we'll solve recruitment.

#### 4. Quality and CPD

Teachers are much more likely to stay when they are being properly supported to develop. CPD in schools doesn't just need a tweak: it needs a massive overhaul. We must stop driving repeated one-off training based on superficial lesson observations and start providing regular job-embedded CPD to develop and share rich professional expertise. This requires a serious and systematic national investment in the leadership of teacher development, something which the government appears to acknowledge through its recent consultation on QTS and CPD.

#### 5. Opportunity areas

challenging.

It's fantastic that the government is investing so much into these areas but it's important that they guarantee longevity, with at least a decade of funding and consistent leadership.

Communities facing the greatest challenges should be supported with the most resources, but the last thing they need is multiple flash-in-the-pan opportunities that teach local schools that they must try and grab any resource going because it will rapidly vanish. I suspect that the DfE has the will but it's hugely constrained by government rules that make longterm planning and resource allocation

If we get it right, the prize is huge. A "love the ones you're with" strategy is the only approach that works in both the short term and the long term. It reduces the need for bursaries, it reduces spending on recruitment and cover for long-term illness and it reduces the pressure on the initial teacher training pipeline.



## At last, MATs are driving the innovation in EdTech

66 -

#### Multi-academy trusts used to be an afterthought for software developers, but no longer, explains Joshua Perry

School software has been around for a long time. The market has blossomed and evolved over more than three decades, with the release of the ever-popular SIMS Management Information System (MIS) in 1984 a particularly pivotal moment. Software for multi-academy trusts, on the other hand, has been surprisingly slow to emerge. A few suppliers have dabbled with features like multi-school administration, or MAT-wide analytics, but the resultant modules have felt like prototypes, which they often are, rather than integral elements.

Indeed for a time a limited product was the best-case scenario for a MAT. Many suppliers just ignored the additional needs of MATs entirely, or even displayed something approaching hostility. Standalone schools may be hard to acquire, but once you have their business, they are a profitable mixture of slowness to change, price insensitivity, and a lack of bargaining power. MATs, in contrast, are a threat to existing business models.

Of course, MATs are a fairly recent phenomenon. In early 2011, there were under 400 MATs and fewer than 1,000 academies in total. Six years on, there are over 1,400 MATs containing in excess of 5,300 schools. They've grown from under five per cent of the market to over 25 per cent in less than the time it takes a child to complete a primary education.

As a result, things are changing. In the MIS sector for example, 44 per cent of the 860 schools which switched system last year were academies, meaning they represent an outsized chunk of the addressable market. Big MIS procurement contracts are also turning heads: the Bath and Wells MAT adopted Scholarpack across all its primary academies, Harris Federation has switched to Bromcom, and AET has moved to Advanced Learning.

So why the change? Well, aside from MATs being a growing part of the sector, five factors are at work:

MAT-focused suppliers are popping up. Specialist MAT products aren't new: for example, PS Financials has been offering MAT accounting software for years, but the last year has brought a bunch of new entrants to the specialist market. Data analysis is a particular growth area: suppliers like Groupcall, Novatia, Arbor and Assembly (where I work) all now have MAT-first analytics offerings.

MATs have procurement managers. While the role of LAs in software procurement has declined in recent years, in MATs it's an increasing area of focus. Many have turnovers of £50 million or more, and professional procurement can drive sevenfigure cost savings in such environments. The role of procurement manager at MATs is increasingly common.

MATs, in contrast to standalone schools, are a threat to existing business

EU regulations oblige MATs to procure properly. If you're making software worth £181,302 or more, you need to comply with the EU's OJEU procurement regulations. This compels you to advertise your procurement publicly, and adhere to strict guidelines on how you manage the process, creating a more level playing field.

MAT central teams expect to be partners as well as customers. If a single school asks for a new feature, it will struggle to be heard. If a MAT asks for additional functionality, and it's willing to work with the supplier to test it, there's a good chance it'll get built.

MATs are cost-effective commissioning entities. Suppliers are waking up to the fact that a central contract with one commissioning body for 10 schools is far more cost-effective than 10 contracts with 10 individual schools. Now, not all software can (or should) be purchased by a central team, but even where buying decisions are taken at school level, vendors are realising that if they offer an opt-in deal at discounted prices, the MAT may in turn do some of the heavy lifting to secure sales on their behalf.

So if you're looking for EdTech innovation, keep an eye on what MATs are up to. Increasingly, this is a MAT's world. EDITION 129

MAT CEO pay is in the public eye again and, given how high it is, it's right that trustees should think hard about how they work it out, writes Gillian Allcroft

T is the season to scrutinise academy trusts' accounts and, as ever, the hot topics are related-party transactions and executive pay. There are no prizes for guessing the winner in the latter stakes; Sir Dan Moynihan's salary is now reported as being between £440,000 and 445,000 (more if you include pension benefits).

Yes, the Harris Federation on a number of measures is very successful, but it's still an eye-watering amount of money. It is also the case that when it comes to MAT boss pay, Moynihan is very much the outlier. While it would be a fib to say I've scrutinised the accounts of every MAT, the next highest figure I've managed to find so far was £240,000-250,000, a not insignificant sum, but some way off those lofty heights.

So what is the appropriate salary for a MAT CEO, what should be taken into account, and when is it too high?

Setting the CEO's pay is entirely the responsibility of the board. Academy trusts are charitable companies, trustees are governing publicly-funded institutions and are bound by the Nolan principles of public life, which should give pause for thought when making decisions. Trustees need to be especially mindful that public service doesn't come with a golden salary goose.

There isn't a pay handbook because salary and conditions were one of the vaunted



## What is the appropriate salary for a MAT CEO?

original freedoms of academy status. So there are no rules, apart from a sentence in the academies financial handbook:

"The board of trustees must ensure that their decisions about levels of executive pay follow a robust evidence-based process and are reflective of the individual's role and responsibilities."

But it doesn't tell you how to do it. So it's over to you trustees, make it up as you go along.

Although academy trusts are not subject to the school teachers' pay and conditions document (STPCD), many have chosen to stick with it, partly because many trusts weren't all that bothered about the pay freedoms and were happy to use an established framework.

The leadership range in the STPCD makes specific references to headteachers in charge

of more than one school. So for the smaller MATs of between two and five schools, the STPCD remains a reasonable starting point.

Once a MAT gets larger it becomes more difficult to relate the pay of the CEO to the STPCD, and there is something of a question mark over whether we should. MAT CEOs are unlikely to be even the substantive headteacher of one of the schools in the MAT, let alone in the classroom. Once you get past 10 schools, it's a moot point if such a joint role is even possible.

A number of our members have asked if benchmarking data exists. It doesn't – other than this annual exercise of scouring accounts to find the highest figure. The NGA has been asking the Department for Education to provide more guidance on executive pay for some years, and a plan to provide salary benchmarking data unfortunately fell by the wayside a while ago. It isn't a straightforward exercise, but while there is no handy salary ready-reckoner, there are indicators trustees can easily look at: MATs of similar size and complexity, and the numbers of sites and pupils within the MAT for instance. Annual salary reviews should take into account the performance of a MAT, but remember the Nolan principles, so don't get carried away. Benchmarking is a tool, not the answer, especially if it fuels a race to the top.

A plan to provide salary benchmarking data unfortunately fell by the wayside a while ago

Last but not least, the CEO is but one member of staff. What is the differential between the CEO's pay and that of other employees? If that stretches too far you just might find an exodus on your hands. Trustees could consider putting in place a ratio between the salary of the CEO compared to the lowest paid members of staff.

#### FIRST HEADLINERS CONFIRMED

AMANDA SPIELMAN Chief Inspector, Ofsted

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MATTHEW SYED Journalist, Writer, Broadcaster

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## REVIEWS

## TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

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



Our reviewer of the week is Andrew Old, a teacher and blogger @oldandrewuk

MFL could easily become the preserve of independent schools – despite the Ebacc @thefish64

A teacher of languages notes a decline in the uptake of languages and suggests that the problem is Progress 8. He argues that this is because the subject is difficult, but that should not count against it. "It annoys me that, thanks to an obsession with data, MFL could once again become the preserve of rich people who can afford independent schools, or pupils whose parents tell them to opt for it," he writes.

When 'observing' crowds out teaching @iQuirky\_Teacher

This post by a primary teacher notes that teachers of early-years children often have to spend a lot of their time on "evidence gathering" which can include, and this seems bizarre, annotated photos of what children have been up to. The author argues that this is wasted time and is a distraction from teaching and asks why it is necessary for EYFS but not for year 1.

#### Primary literature: Telling stories @AnthonyRadice1

A secondary English teacher, who is now working with primary teachers, writes about "content-focused literature teaching". This is where teaching "has as its goal the retention in long-term memory of the content of literature: its plots, characters and themes". This is not in place of other elements of reading, but is intended to encourage an appreciation of the stories and also indirectly improve comprehension.

#### Why can't boys be... well, more like girls? @HuntingEnglish

This post suggests that when schools start looking for explanations for why their girls might outperform their boys academically, they don't jump to conclusions based on stereotypes, such as the innate superiority of girls, or that boys need a "boy-friendly" curriculum. It emphasises that some differences in data can be down to chance, and that there may be many other factors to look at.

#### Why are teachers invisible? @greg\_ashman



the involvement of any practising teachers. It's not that academics, policymakers and politicians should have no role to play, but that an important perspective is being missed. The author of this post argues that teachers are often prevented from expressing their views in public, and that this has led to the impression that it is normal and acceptable to exclude them from debate.

#### Mixed ability, sets, and streams – a teacher's perspective @Kris\_Boulton

A former maths teacher describes his experiences of teaching mixed-ability classes. His initial enthusiasm and appreciation of some advantages was worn out by being unable to meet the needs of the full range of abilities, despite excellent behaviour and small classes. "I felt that I couldn't teach the top end to the limits of their potential, and I was consistently failing the bottom end, while the middle sorta chugged along relatively unnoticed," he writes.

#### Hidden classroom routines @missdcox

An experienced RE teacher explains how lessons go far more smoothly where students have been trained in routines that will enable learning. Routines may need to differ between subjects, and they will need to be enforced, but they make a huge difference. Trainee teachers may not even realise that the behaviour of students in classes they observe has been supported by training in invisible, hidden routines that they now follow automatically.

#### Are most classic theories on education fundamentally flawed? @thebandb

In this post, educationalist Pedro De Bruyckere discusses whether educational theories have a flaw in common with some economic theories in that they assume the existence of theoretical individuals who behave like nobody would in real life. Can theories be built on "an image of perfect children while the children in your classroom don't seem to be so perfect but human, widening the gap between theory and practice"?

## BOOKREVIEW

'How to survive in teaching without imploding, exploding or walking away' By Dr Emma Kell Published by Bloomsbury Reviewed by Joanne Crossley, English teacher



My husband works harder than anyone else. He is more tired, more stressed, just... more. This is why he cannot put the bins out or take anyone to the dentist.

But he is not a teacher. I have tried to

explain to him what it is like to be a teacher: it's like someone asking you to walk to London from Leeds - in two hours. Then, when you're halfway there, saying "I meant Newcastle". This is how I felt when I first started in the classroom. I was overwhelmed. I could see what had to be done, and it wasn't necessarily that difficult. but time constraints and misdirection made it feel like an impossible task. I know I am not the

only one to feel like this. Recognition of this feeling, and concern about its implications for the future of the profession, is at the heart of Emma Kell's book.

Kell has two decades' experience in the classroom and is currently head of English at a London secondary school. She describes this book as "a celebration and a call to action". Its premise is that while the teaching profession may be in crisis, there are practical steps teachers, leaders and policymakers can take to stem the tide of teachers imploding, exploding and leaving the profession in their droves.

This isn't simply a polemic or a trite set of tips about how to manage your marking. Kell has collected data from a large (3,684) and diverse sample of teachers, which allows her to present an illuminating snapshot of how we currently feel. The results are presented as clear infographics: "If UK schools had 100 educators, 54 would say they experience depression directly related to their job, 91 would not consider becoming a headteacher, seven would say they feel their job is respected in society."

Not many of the statistics are surprising

to anyone who has recently spent time in a staffroom, but some are shocking and others deeply troubling. Similarly, some of the stories Kell relates from her interviews are heartbreaking, particularly one involving a miscarriage during the school day.

The first three chapters identify the nature of the crisis, examining the problem from national, institutional and personal perspectives. The three standout issues are, inevitably, workload, leadership and the myriad pressures created by the need to feed the data beast. The remaining chapters explore ways in which the challenges might be ameliorated, if not overcome. I particularly liked the suggestion that we should spend more time in our departments working out what went right, and not just where we

> went wrong. Much of her practical suggestions apply to any profession: all young professionals need to be supported and mentored so that they can learn how to be firm about work/life boundaries by managing expectations on all sides. Likewise, the best leaders in any profession will be bold, concerned about wellbeing and genuinely appreciative of those who work with them.

Kell reminds us that "we are not alone", advising us to ditch

the Messiah complex, kill off the martyr and get rid of our guilt. She implicitly identifies a conflict at the heart of this crisis. Most teachers want autonomy, creativity and to be able to express their individuality and passion for their subject. Most teachers also want to be brilliant teachers and to make a difference to the young people that they teach. Many of the strategies that might resolve the workload crisis (consistent planning, routine lessons, textbooks, leaving on time) are anathema to teachers.

The book's perspective is sometimes muddled: at times it seems addressed to leadership, at others to trainees. Whilst this might make for a more rounded view, it's hard to understand who exactly the intended audience is, who might put the suggestions into effect. It is too short to be able to speak effectively to "all teachers, everywhere" as advertised.

My favourite solution to the crisis was one I recently saw on Twitter: reduce teacher workload by giving teachers less work. If you don't want to implode, explode or walk away, heed Kell's call to arms: just say "no".





## Week in Westminster

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

## FRIDAY:

We spied with our little eyes an unusual line in Ofsted's accounts today. At the end of last year, the schools watchdog gave £45,000 for "research and evaluation" to a company called Public First. You may not have heard of it, but it's a boutique run by Michael Gove's former communication team, James Frayne and Gabriel Milland, alongside Rachel Wolf, another of his favourite people, who ran the New Schools Network for much of his reign.

Its website says organisations need to think about how they "they protect and enhance their brand reputation" and "how can they change the way decision-makers and influencers think". If Ofsted wants to know how to enhance its reputation, however, we suspect a few of you out there might be happy to tell them for free...

Schools minister Nick Gibb was out and about today promoting a teaching resource about "the Commonwealth". Presumably this is to take the place of teaching the EU in citizenship lessons once we've all Brexited: "Here children, put today's newspaper down and look at how we used to be important in the world..."

## MONDAY: Shhhh. Sleeping. TUESDAY:

A debate in Parliament today about PSHE and sex education descended into the usual chaos, with every MP trying to shoehorn their favourite idea for a lesson into the new curriculum.

Week in Westminster kept track of requests for lessons on: mental health, cancer, first aid (a lot of this), gang crime, knives, drugs, life skills, confidence, resilience, grooming, safer internet use and cyberbullying. This looked set to continue until Patricia Gibson of the SNP read back the same list (she'd obviously been writing them down too) before going on to state more that she'd heard elsewhere including "financial education, careers education with work and CV skills, road safety, self-awareness, positive thinking, mindfulness, gambling awareness, awareness of eating disorders..." and so on.

"I could go on for about half an hour, but I will not. I think I have made my point," she said. "Nobody here would say that any of those topics is not important. They are all important, and they are all considered essential in the PSHE curriculum, but they cannot all be accommodated unless young people have a PSHE lesson every single day. As far as I am aware, no school does that. What would it remove from the curriculum to do that?"

Applause! She saved us making the exact same point.

Elsewhere in the debate two MPs had a lovely debate about whether sex and relationships education, in fact, ought to be called relationships and sex education. Frankly, as any teacher of 12-year-olds will tell you, once the word SEX is mentioned at all to children, it really won't matter what order it was said in, that's the only one they'll hear.

### WEDNESDAY: We spent much of the day wondering how

it is that the DfE has managed to decide that the new free schools meal eligibility criteria will mean an extra 50,000 kids get food when the Children's Society thinks it means a million fewer will get it. That's quite a big difference. Anyone know the truth?

## THURSDAY:

The Office of the Schools Adjudicator put out its annual report today. Joy of joys, people are complaining less about admissions, with the caseload dropping by about half this year. The simple conclusion is that the baby bulge is easing its way through schools now and parents feel more confident about getting their kids a place. We actually suspect it's that the British Humanists Association – which has been fearsome in putting in multiple rounds of complaints over the years – has quietened down a little in the past 12 months after one of its leading education campaigners, the indefatigable Richy Thompson, got a promotion to another job!

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Herminder Channa JP Age 39 Occupation Principal and lead Ofsted inspector Location Birmingham Subscriber since September 2015

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...

## FLY ON THE WALL

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

During the summer months in my garden, and the winter months in front of my log fire – and always on a Sunday morning with a cup of masala chai.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most? A Week in Westminster: it continues to highlight the disconnect

### between policy and practice. I learn how not to do things.

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

Any education policy which chooses to label a child. Whatever the background of a child, love, time and confidence from teachers will ensure success.

#### Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

It is hard to name one. However, Michael Gove has made the education system far more robust by focusing on a broad and balanced curriculum and by focusing on qualifications that were meaningful, though the execution was poor and fragmented.

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

Stories that share the positive work of MATs, and the impact they have, especially on failing schools by adding capacity and expertise.

## What do you do with your copy of *Schools Week* once you've read it?

I give it to my husband to read as a non-educationalist. I know when he has reached the Week in Westminster page as there is always laughter.

#### What would you do if you were editor of Schools Week for a day?

Dedicate the week to highlighting how the role played by site, finance, administration, HR, and catering teams support schools to deliver an excellent standard of education.

#### Favourite memory of your school years?

Milk turning a different colour on Halloween and then been told by my teachers it was the witches. Also the warm feeling I had in the afternoons when it was story time; I loved being read to by my teacher.

#### If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing? I would have been a lawyer.

#### Favourite book on education?

Teaching character through education by James Arthur, Tom Harrison and Dan Wright; Taught not caught by Nicky Morgan. Character development must hold the same importance in schools as educational outcomes.

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

'Teacher of the week': our teachers are amazing, so let's share the things they do.

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

The queen in her session giving wise counsel to the PM. Intelligence, wisdom and an uncompromising focus on routine and standards. A lot to be learned.

#### SCHOOLS WEEK

etin with Sam King

### The sky's the limit for students at Heathrow UTC

tudents at Heathrow UTC are building a plane from scratch in a school project with a difference. Since January 2018, a team of year 13 students from across the UTC's A-level and vocational courses have been working together to start building a two-seater Sherwood Ranger Light biplane, which they hope to fly when it's completed.

Seven of the students have been trained as project leaders for the first phase of the project, leading smaller groups who will manufacture various parts of the aircraft, which meet the standards required by the Light Aircraft Association.

Estimated to take around two and a half years to build, numerous students will be involved with the project as it progresses, and a representative from the Light Aircraft Association will come in weekly to check the quality of each part.

"The opportunity these students have got is quite unique. It's not like a normal school project – it has to be perfect," said Ian Wilkins, the assistant principal at the UTC. "The level of commitment and the work ethic these students have to show is second to none. It's a professional piece

they've got to produce." Currently, students are cutting

out the parts that will make up the plane and sanding them down so they're smooth. Once work is completed on the plane, there is discussion as to whether their creation could be used by students who are learning to fly.

"It does have its own plane number so we're able to fly it. We'll speak with Heathrow and see if we can store it there, but the wings fold up so we could have it in the building here," said Wayne Edwards, the UTC's principal. "There is a great sense of energy and enthusiasm about this project."



**FEATURED** 

Students get to work



#### NFL kicks off English university scholarship

university scholarship programme has i commitment to the community and been launched in the UK for young players of American football.

The Gridiron Grant is being run by NFL team, the Jacksonville Jaguars, in partnership with LGT Vestra US, and will offer university scholarships each year to two students involved in the sport in their community, or students participating in a JagTag programme in school – a simplified, non-contact version of American football.

Students interested in the opportunity have until April 20 to apply via the Jaguars' website, and applicants will be judged on criteria including academic achievement, participation in American football,

demonstration of personal endeavour.

"Linking together sport and business with education is a powerful partnership – one that breeds development and progress; the skills and discipline that American football players learn in terms of the importance of team work will benefit the recipients of the Gridiron Grant," said Sir William Atkinson, a headteacher who sits on the panel of judges for the grant.

To mark the launch of the scholarship, former Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Mark Brunell, a winner of the Super Bowl, played a game of JagTag with aspiring professional players on the banks of the Thames.

## **Charity pairs** state and private schools

new national scheme pairing state and independent schools has been launched in an effort to boost social mobility

The 'Counterpoint' initiative, set up between the Achievement for All charity and the City of London Freemen's School, aims to link 20 independent schools with state schools and businesses in small hubs across the country, to share best practice and improve pupils' social mobility during a two-year pilot.

Pupils will have the chance to develop employability skills through the participating businesses, and teachers will receive CPD in leadership and teaching techniques.

"A large proportion of the children we have worked with over the last six years at AFA are missing aspiration, the inner self belief that 'I can do something'," said Sonia Blandford, the charity's founder. "Social mobility is about changing the way people think, act and engage. It is about understanding that there is an alternative way to live, one where everyone can succeed."

The scheme will begin in September 2018. Interested primary and secondary schools can find out more and register their interest by contacting enquiries@afaeducation.org.



### **GOVERNORS' CHARITY GETS SNAZZY REBRAND**

he School Governors' One-Stop Shop, a national education charity, has rebranded itself as Governors for Schools, and launched a new website and range of online resources to mark the occasion.

The charity, which pairs aspiring governors and trustees with schools across England was originally a DfE pilot project, but has since become independent, placing 10,000 governors in schools over the last five years.

The new resources include FAQs for governors, a governance handbook and guides to overseeing the financial performance of a school, as well as advice for schools on how to prepare for inspections.

"The new identity is based on the principles of what we do – each governor creates an impact in a school, which then ripples out to the wider community and our future workforce," said Louise Cooper, the chief executive. "We wanted a name that could convey what we are about very auickly.'

You can access the resources at:

www.governorsforschools.org.uk/resources/



**EDITION 129** 



#### JENNA POTTER

Headteacher, Richmond School and Sixth-Form College

**START DATE: January 2018** 

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy head, Richmond School and Sixth-Form College

**INTERESTING FACT:** Jenna had her first trainee teacher job at Richmond School teaching French and German, and she now returns as head.



#### MARK WOODHOUSE Principal, the Nicholas

Hamond Academy

START DATE: April 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy headteacher, Harwich and Dovercourt High School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Mark is a keen runner, and has even represented England.

future

## MOVERS 💦 SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



## MARK

Executive head and schools improvement lead, Lingfield Education Trust

START DATE: January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Headteacher, Cheveley Park Primary

**INTERESTING FACT:** Mark's favourite place to go is England's oldest tourist attraction, Old Mother Shipton's Cave in Knaresborough.

#### 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



#### REBECCA HALLAM

Head of careers and higher education, King Edward's Witley

START DATE: January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Senior careers consultant, the Careers Group

**INTERESTING FACT:** Rebecca is descended from Sir Henry Morgan, a famous pirate after whom Captain Morgan's rum is named.



#### VICKY MARSH Executive headteacher, Unity Academy Trust

START DATE: : January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Headteacher, Upland Primary School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Vicky is a self-taught butcher, having worked at a butcher's shop whilst taking her A-levels.

## future

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#### SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

1										1
	5		8	1	4					Difficulty:
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			4		6	5	2	9	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

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

EASY

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

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.