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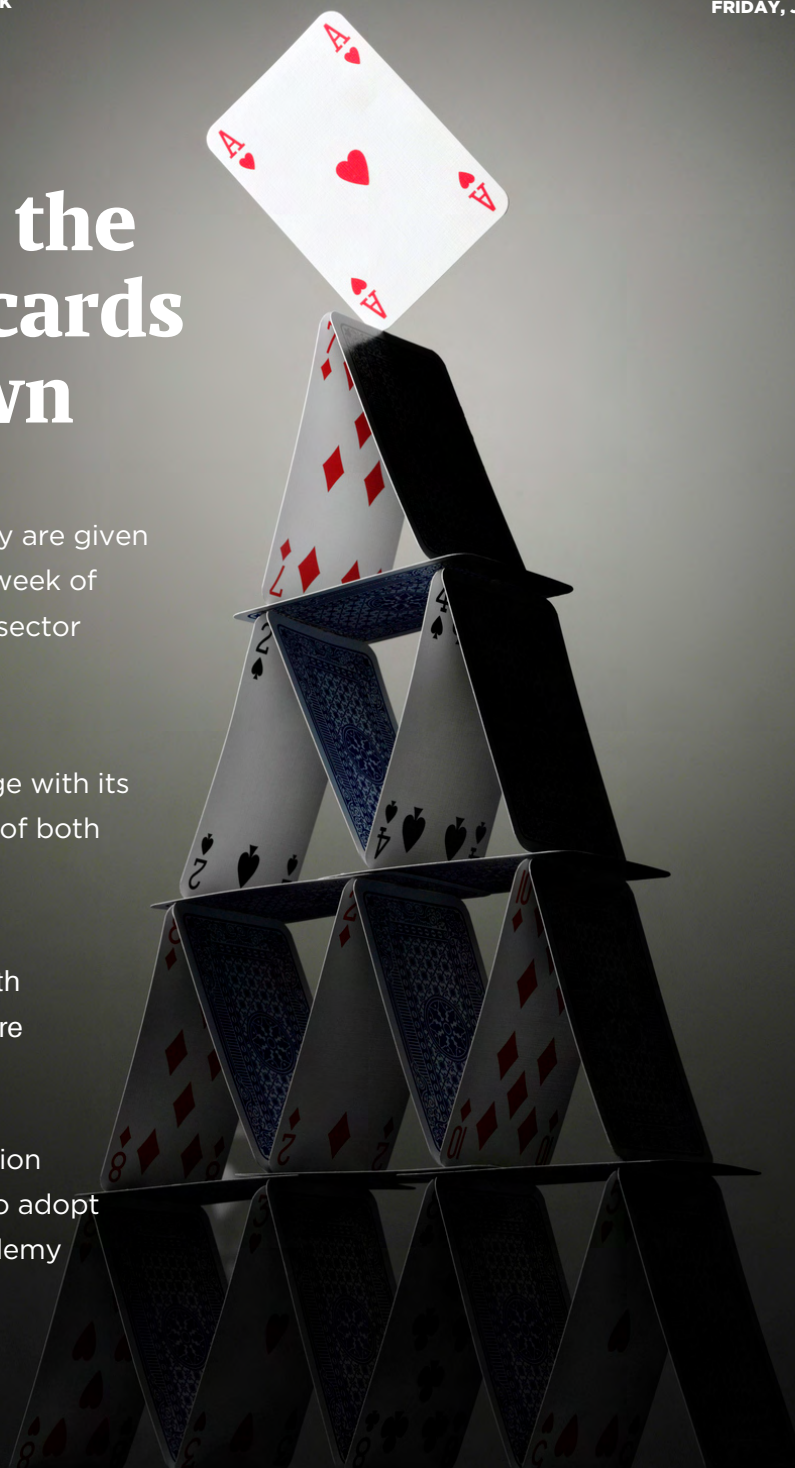
The week the house of cards came down

Schools across the country are given
up by their sponsors in a week of
shame for the academies sector

Bright Tribe shelves its
controversial plan to merge with its
sister trust and the future of both
chains is 'under review'

Free school becomes eleventh
nationally to announce closure

Prestigious Harris Federation
backs out of 'risky' deal to adopt
the troubled Durand Academy



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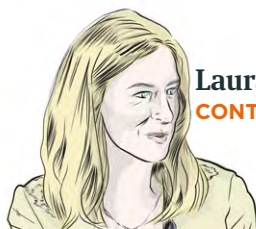
SCHOOLS WEEK

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News

No, teachers WON'T hear MI5 intelligence on potential extremists



MI5 has no plans to share sensitive intelligence information with teachers in a bid to combat terrorism despite reports to the contrary, the Home Office has confirmed.

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Harris declines to adopt troubled Durand Academy

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

A small London academy trust has been lined up to run Durand Academy after one of the nation's biggest MATs backed out of a sponsorship deal, citing concerns about legal agreements and the state of the school's buildings.

The government has agreed in principle that Dunraven Educational Trust, which runs the neighbouring all-through school Dunraven Academy, can take over at troubled Durand from September.

The school has been in limbo since plans to terminate the government's funding agreement with its existing sponsor, the Durand Academy Trust, were announced last July.

The Harris Federation, one of the country's largest academy chains with 44 schools in London, was touted as the Department for Education's preferred sponsor for the school last year.

But this week it decided it could not proceed with the sponsorship deal due to a spate of unresolved issues.

Harris pointed to "risky legal agreements" with Durand Education Trust – another organisation which owns the school's land – which it said "could not be untangled in time" for the school to transfer to a new trust this summer.

The trust's board was also concerned that meeting the "significant needs" of Durand's building would "depend too heavily on the resources of our other schools". This would "not be fair on our existing students, parents or staff", the spokesperson said.

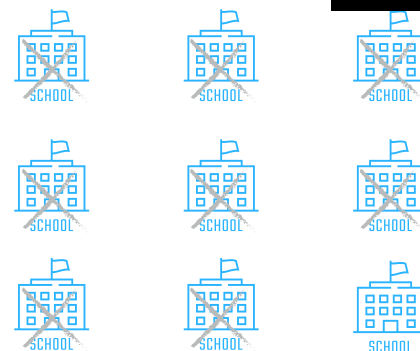
Harris will instead provide assistance to Dunraven as it prepares to run the school from September.

The announcement follows a long-running dispute between the Durand Academy Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency over the organisation's finances and management structure.

The government announced in June last year that it was seeking a new sponsor after the trust repeatedly refused to address finance concerns and potential conflicts of interest, or to sever ties with its former executive headteacher, Sir Greg Martin.

The school was criticised by MPs in 2015 after it emerged that a proportion of Martin's £400,000 salary came from a company that also runs the school's leisure facilities on a commercial basis.

Martin, who retired as the school's head in 2015 but quickly became the chair of its board, finally resigned at the end of August last year, following the school's High Court victory to overturn a damning Ofsted inspection report.



EXCLUSIVE

Collaborative Academies Trust will lose all but one of its schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Eight of the nine schools run by the Essex-based Collaborative Academies Trust are to be moved to new sponsors.

In March, local media reported that the trust, set up by the American for-profit school improvement company Edison Learning, will walk away from five schools in Somerset this summer.

Now *Schools Week* has learned that the trust will also give up its flagship Willow Brook Primary School & Nursery in Essex, as well as two other primary schools – Lumbertubs and Spring Lane – in Northamptonshire.

Willow Brook, which is rated as 'good' by Ofsted, will transfer to The Kemnal Academies Trust, while 'requires improvement'-rated Lumbertubs and 'good' Spring Lane will move to the Bourton Meadow Education Trust.

The trust will keep control of just one school, the 'good'-rated Kingsthorpe College in Northants, currently the chain's only secondary institution.

Robin Imms, the chair of the trust, said the changes are being made "following a full strategic review", in which the trust concluded that improvement to the schools would likely best be achieved through "stronger partnerships with multi academy trusts operating more locally within Somerset, Essex and Northamptonshire".

"The regional schools commissioners have approved the eight transfers, listening periods are underway and all schools will exit to their new trusts on September

1, on a financially sound basis," he told *Schools Week*.

The surprise rebrokerage has angered unions, which have been attempting to meet the trust about its future.

Jon Richards, head of education at Unison, said they had been "surprised at how the trust has been dismembered so quickly", and accused the government and trusts of playing "academy pass the parcel".

"The national unions have been trying to meet with them for months," Richards told *Schools Week*. "Then out of the blue they told us that the Somerset schools were going. Now they drop another bombshell with two Northants schools going."

Collaborative was the second academy trust to receive a focused inspection of its schools by Ofsted.

In 2015, the watchdog found that too many schools had not improved since joining the trust, and that its impact on pupils' achievement was "inconsistent and limited".

In Somerset, the 'requires improvement'-rated Manor Court Community Primary School will move to the Preston Primary Academy Trust, while the 'inadequate' Priorswood Primary School will join the Redstart Learning Partnership.

Willowdown Primary Academy and Woolavington Village Primary School, which are both rated as 'requires improvement' will transfer to the Clevedon Learning Trust. Wellesley Park Primary School, which is 'good', will be taken on by The Castle Partnership Trust.

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Small PRU trust stripped of all four schools

EXCLUSIVE

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

A multi-academy trust that presided over the deterioration of three pupil referral units and a secondary school has been stripped of all four.

The Schools Company Trust (SCT) will no longer run any schools from September following a litany of disasters including inadequate safeguarding and poor financial management.

The trust has sponsored three PRUs – Central Devon Academy, North Devon Academy, and South and West Devon Academy – since 2015.

In September, an Ofsted monitoring visit warned safeguarding was “not effective” at the Central Devon Academy.

Then, in December, inspectors rated North Devon Academy ‘inadequate’ across the board, identifying serious failings in safeguarding, leadership, and teaching.

South and West Devon Academy has not been inspected.

Between them, Devon county council and the Department for Education commissioned over £5.7 million in places at the schools during the last financial year.

On Monday, a council report said concerns about the trust’s “unacceptable performance” were raised directly with the regional schools commissioner in March last year but claimed not enough improvements were made.

A spokesperson for the DfE, speaking

on behalf of the regional commissioners, said trusts are all subject to a “rigorous system of accountability”.

They claimed the commissioner’s office had “worked collaboratively” with the local authority on the issues over a “number of months” which had led to a notice to improve and the confiscation of the academies.

It was the budgetary position of the schools, however, which prompted a financial notice, issued in July last year, due to “significant concerns” about finances, including “short notice and urgent requests for additional funding”.

In February, a further notice from the RSC warned that the trust may have schools removed due to a “deteriorating financial position” which meant it had “limited capability to support the academies”.

SCT’s accounts show it had an overall deficit of £943,118 in August 2016, against a deficit of £36,649 the year before.

An interim leadership team has been running SCT since January. Its chief executive Elias Achilleos was replaced in February, but remains listed as a person with significant control on Companies House. He is also the only listed director for education consultancy Schools Company Limited.

The trust had one mainstream secondary school, Castle Community College in Kent, which according to its accounts was “operated under a private contract through Schools Company Ltd” until

a full takeover by the trust in July 2016, when it was renamed as Schools Company Goodwin Academy.

Rated ‘outstanding’ in 2010, it merged with nearby Walmer Science College in 2013, and was deemed ‘inadequate’ six months later.

Schools Company Ltd began operating the school in 2014, with a school improvement role.

The school has not been inspected since its 2016 takeover. A new building worth £25 million opened in October.

A spokesperson for SCT said the interim leadership team had “stabilised the trust’s financial position” and confirmed that 15 people had been made redundant at Goodwin Academy, 10 of which were voluntary.

He would not comment on the trust’s future once all its academies have been rebrokered, but said the interim team is “focusing on ensuring the successful transfer of the four academies to new sponsors”.

In February, it was reported that Schools Company Ltd would be establishing the Royal Academy for Construction and Fabrication in Nigeria, but it is not clear if this is still in progress.

From September, the Goodwin Academy will be sponsored by the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, and this week the DfE announced that Wave, which specialises in alternative provision, will take over the three Devon PRUs.



£270k-a-year head quits academy trust role

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA_AK

A headteacher in Warwickshire who has been criticised for her £270,000 salary has left her role “with immediate effect”.

Lois Reed has quit as head of Ashlawn School in Rugby and as acting chief executive of the Transforming Lives Educational Trust, which also runs Ashlawn Teaching School and Henry Hinde Infant School.

Details of her salary, and a recent £50,000 pay rise, came to light in March, forcing the trust to review its pay policies. The chain says Reed’s successor will be paid less, and will

be “benchmarked against other schools of similar sizes”.

Stewart Jardine, the trust chair, said discussions with Reed “about the leadership at the school” had been ongoing “for a number of weeks”.

“Following a very successful period for Ashlawn, we have concluded that it is right that there is a fresh start for all of us,” he added.

The Rugby Advertiser reported that parents were notified of Reed’s departure on Monday,

following weeks of unexplained absence from the school. Deputy headteacher Liz Cheney will take over as interim headteacher until a decision is made about a replacement for Reed.

Reed was paid between £270,001 and £280,000, according to accounts published by the trust. Her salary was almost £200,000 higher than any of her fellow employees, with the other nine highly paid members of staff earning between £50,001 and £80,000.

News

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Doomed Perry Beeches academy trust worked up £1.5 million deficit

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The controversial Perry Beeches academy trust had a £1.5 million deficit in the year before it was wound up, it has been revealed.

According to its latest accounts, the now-defunct Birmingham trust managed to reduce the deficit across its schools from £2.5 million in August 2016, but still had a £1.5 million shortfall last summer.

Much of the deficit related to Perry Beeches The Academy, which was in deficit by over £1.1 million. Perry Beeches III The Free School had a £621,000 deficit, while Perry Beeches V The All Through School had a deficit of £472,000.

Perry Beeches II and IV had surpluses of £313,000 and £30,000 respectively, while the trust's central office had a surplus of £392,000.

These balances were not handed to the schools' new sponsors when they transferred earlier this year, and it is not known whether the Department for Education will try to claw back the funds or simply write them off.

The trust's accounts for the year ending August 2017 have only just been published on Companies House, months after the December 31 deadline for chains to submit them. The delay has been blamed on the process of rebrokering the trust's five schools.

When Perry Beeches The Academy and Perry Beeches II, III and IV moved to the CORE Education trust, and Perry Beeches V to Ark Schools in January, the trust, which was the subject of a government

investigation into financial irregularities, was wound up for good.

It had funnelled £1.3 million to a private company which paid Perry Beeches "superhead" Liam Nolan a second salary without following proper procedures.

The investigation was embarrassing for the government. David Cameron had opened one of the schools, and ministers heaped praise on Nolan, who had received a second salary of £160,000 over two years, on top of the £120,000 he got as head.

Meanwhile, Perry Beeches' five former schools continue to pay back money overpaid to the trust on the basis of overestimated pupil numbers.

A *Schools Week* investigation into pupil number adjustments in January found that Perry Beeches II, III, IV and V all appeared on a list of schools which had funding taken back in recent years.

The total amount overpaid to the trust between 2014 and 2017 for which recovery was discussed with the DfE was over £1.6 million.

A Department for Education spokesperson said the government is working with new trusts Ark and CORE "to ensure that the schools will repay any pupil number adjustment repayments owed, as any other school would in this situation".

But she would not say whether the trust's £1.5 million deficit would also be written off.

According to the trust's accounts, "certain liabilities and assets" of the chain were transferred to the Department for Education, CORE and Ark on March 1, and the remaining assets held by Perry Beeches will be used to "bring the current operations to close over the next year".

1.5
MINUTE
READ

Newcastle free school is the third to close in 2018

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A specialist science and technology free school in Newcastle will close this summer, three months after one of its pupils was left behind on a school trip.

The £9 million Discovery School is the third free school scheduled to close this year. It will shut for "capability and capacity issues" that have concerned ministers, according to *The Newcastle Chronicle*.

Last July, the school was rated "inadequate" at its first inspection by Ofsted, three years after it opened. Inspectors singled out the "unacceptable" absence of humanities, arts or foreign language subjects. The watchdog also noted low pupil numbers.

Discovery also launched an urgent review of its safeguarding procedures two months ago after a pupil was left in London following a school trip to the capital. The 14-year-old was left at King's Cross station when the rest of his group boarded the train.

Now the government has announced it is withdrawing the school's funding in anticipation of another damning Ofsted report. The school expects to be rated "inadequate" for the second time.

It brings the total number of mainstream free schools to have closed or announced closure since 2010 to 11.

In a statement, the school said the decision had been taken "based on well-documented issues at the school including safeguarding problems, poor teaching and leadership and the results of a recent Ofsted which is expected to deem the school 'inadequate'".

"We realise this will be upsetting for pupils and parents – and for staff who will be made redundant – however we cannot allow the situation to continue and believe that in the long term this will be for the best," a spokesperson said.

The Department for Education said the school had "let down" pupils, parents and teachers, and was not capable of making the required improvements quickly enough.

The school has continued to struggle with low pupil numbers. According to the *Chronicle*, the school has just 218 pupils on roll, despite having space for around 700.

2
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BrightTribe
learn grow prosper

Bright Tribe shelves plan to merge with sister trust

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

Plans for the beleaguered Bright Tribe Trust (BTT) to merge with its sister chain are now on hold – as the future of both trusts is under review.

The 10-school BTT revealed plans to merge with Adventure Learning Academies Trust (ALAT) in May, in a move that would have seen the former chain cease to exist.

ALAT, which runs one secondary and four primary schools in Cornwall, was to take over BTT's six schools in Suffolk, Essex and Oldham. BTT is currently in the process of walking away from four other schools in the north of England.

However, the proposal was met with fierce resistance at ALAT's schools, where parents and governors proved unwilling to take on the ailing chain.

Following a consultation period over the past month, both trusts have released a joint statement stating: "Given the strength of feeling evident in the volume of questions and concerns raised by parents in a number of our schools, the board has determined that it will now take the time needed to reflect on next and future steps concerning the organisation and operation of both trusts."

The original merger target date of September 1 has now been "withdrawn" and a BTT spokesperson confirmed the plan is indefinitely postponed.

The future of both trusts "is currently being reviewed".

Originally, the merger was envisaged

to help schools "pool resources and skills to ensure the best possible provision and education for pupils".

But this week, Philip de Grey-Warter, chair of the local governing board at the ALAT-run secondary school Fowey River Academy, described the announcement as a "positive interim outcome".

"The trust issues – especially a lack of financial transparency, lack of support and flawed governance – still remain. So we will continue to press the trust and authorities for a better solution for our school," he said.

Bright Tribe has faced numerous setbacks in the past two years, finally announcing at the end of 2017 that it would walk away from four schools – Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria, Grindon Hall School in Sunderland and Haltwhistle upper and lower schools in Northumberland. The trust also backed out of a deal to sponsor Haydon Bridge High School in Northumberland, for which it was given extra resources.

Both trusts were set up by property mogul Michael Dwan and have seven trustees in common, including education support services company Adventure Learning Schools and Dwan's charity Helping Hands Trust, which are both also listed as "persons with significant control" of both trusts.

Dwan, a former chair of Bright Tribe, is listed as one of the directors of Adventure Learning Schools, as is the consultancy firm North Consulting Limited, which is run by Dwan, his brother Andrew and his daughter Jessica.

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Inspectors praise improvements' at turnaround school

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

Leaders of a school run by the doomed Education Fellowship Trust have been praised for "considerable improvements" which raised their Ofsted rating from 'inadequate' to 'good' in less than two years.

But the academy chain, which is in the process of giving up all of its schools, received stinging criticism from inspectors for failing to support the Wrenn School or hold its leaders to account during this period of improvement.

The academy, in Wellingborough, was rated 'good' across the board after an inspection in May. In the report, not yet published but seen by *Schools Week*, inspectors lavished praise on the school's leaders, while admonishing the trust for its inaction.

The future of school, which was warned early last year that it faced closure over its performance, is now "secure", according to principal Steve Elliott. It will join a new sponsor, the Creative Education Trust, this summer.

It follows a tumultuous two years for the Northamptonshire school, which was issued with a termination warning notice last January following its 'inadequate' rating in October 2016.

The government soon announced that all 12 schools run by the Education Fellowship Trust (TEFT) would be rebrokered to new sponsors.

Despite the upheaval, pupils now make good progress and feel "valued and extremely well supported". Behaviour is good and pastoral care is "strong".

However, "considerable improvements" in all areas of the school are the result of the hard work and dedication of leaders and staff, rather than the actions of TEFT, which has not provided "effective support or challenge".

Leaders take "swift and effective action" to tackle areas needing improvement, and were committed to ensuring "continued and sustained improvements to the school".

The academy's advisory board, which has "filled the gap in governance left by TEFT", has provided "effective support and challenge" to leaders.

In a letter to parents, Elliott said the improvement was "testimony to the brilliant staff, students, governors and parents that we have at Wrenn".

"This is the reward for the hard work, dedication, passion and belief in our values. All our stakeholders have played their part, it has been a huge team effort.

The Education Fellowship Trust was approached for comment.

DfE declines period poverty assistance in English schools

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

The Department for Education will not follow the Scottish Government's lead and provide free sanitary products for pupils in all English schools.

Scotland will begin distributing sanitary products to pupils in every school, college and university from August, as well as to almost 20,000 adult women from low-income families.

But *Schools Week* understands that ministers in London have already ruled out extending the policy to English schools, despite concerns that "period poverty" is affecting pupils' education.

A survey of 1,000 women aged 14 to 21 carried out by the charity Plan International UK last October found 15 per cent struggled to afford sanitary products, while 10 per cent could not afford them at all. Twelve per cent have been forced to "improvise" to create their own sanitary wear.

Campaigners say girls who can't afford sanitary towels and tampons have lower attendance, educational attainment and emotional wellbeing, and had hoped that Scotland's move, which followed a successful pilot in Aberdeen, would prompt action from Whitehall.

But a spokesperson for the DfE said it would continue to be left up to schools whether to spend their own cash for sanitary products "if they identify this as a barrier to attendance or attainment".



The department also pointed to its own analysis, published in March, which found that although absence rates for girls increase after the age of 13 and exceed those of boys, this is true both for girls who are eligible for free school meals – and therefore more likely to experience period poverty – and those who are not eligible, suggesting that period poverty does not have a significant national impact on school attendance.

However Tina Leslie, who founded the Freedom4Girls charity, which provides free sanitary products to women around Leeds and in developing countries such as Kenya, said period poverty is "difficult to pin down with educational attainment and truancy because it's such a taboo subject".

"They aren't going to put their hands up in the classroom and say they missed

two days off school last week because their mother couldn't afford sanitary towels," she said, adding that girls who cannot afford sanitary wear are risking infection by not changing regularly or being forced to cut up "socks and T-shirts and bits of cloth".

Freedom4Girls launched last year and already delivers to more than 30 schools every week.

"Every week we're getting asked to do more," she said. "It's the same around the country. We're supposed to be developed country, an educated country, but austerity is crippling our women and our girls."

The Red Box Project also started last year when three friends began offering boxes of sanitary wear to secondary schools in Portsmouth. It has now become a national movement with dozens of groups across England, Scotland and Wales offering the boxes to local schools. The project was backed last month by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who has set up a donation point for sanitary products at City Hall.

"We know that school staff are on the case. Again and again we hear that they buy sanitary items out of their own pocket. This isn't fair," a spokesperson said.

The government has a £15 million "tampon tax" fund, paid for with the VAT charged on sanitary products. Of this £1.5 million has been allocated to the Let's Talk. Period project, which will distribute sanitary products to girls and young women in need across England. However, the scheme is

yet to announce a start date and it is not known how many schools it will reach.

2.5
MINUTE
READ

90% of heads support compulsory PSHE lessons

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

There is "overwhelming" support in schools for the introduction of compulsory PSHE lessons, according to a new report from a coalition of education unions, charities and teaching groups.

The National Association of Head Teachers, the National Education Union, the NSPCC, the Sex Education Forum, the PSHE Association and several other high-profile groups found that 90 per cent of school leaders support the idea of making all schools teach personal, social, health and economics education.

MPs voted last year to give the government the power to introduce compulsory PSHE, but did not set a deadline. Backers want it to become mandatory from September 2019, so it can be delivered alongside the new relationships and sex education syllabus.

"It's important that PSHE is given statutory status," said Sarah Hannafin, NAHT's senior policy adviser.

"The school curriculum is overstretched but it is vital that we give space to preparing pupils for their lives in the real world, not just

for exams."

Jonathan Baggaley, the chief executive of the PSHE Association, said the findings of the report show the "way is clear" for the government to take the "vital step" of making PSHE compulsory.

Other organisations to have put their name to the report include charities Young Enterprise, the British Heart Foundation, St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross, Brook, Mentor UK and Economy.

Ministers' school visits showcase 'ideological obsession' with academies

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER



The education secretary has visited more than twice as many academies and free schools than maintained ones – and just one special school – in the first four months of his job.

Details of Damian Hinds' visits were released to *Schools Week* as part of a Freedom of Information request.

Between January and the end of April, Hinds visited 13 mainstream academies and five maintained schools. He also visited one community special school and a pupil referral unit.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, had the same ratio during this period, visiting eight academies and three maintained schools.

Lord Agnew, the minister for the school system, visited a specialist maths free school sixth-form, a UTC and two academies, but no maintained schools at all.

Only 35 per cent of schools are academies, according to the National Audit Office.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said an "ideological obsession" with academies was in "in danger of skewing ministers' professional duties and responsibilities for all schools".

"It is unacceptable that ministers do not visit all types of schools in equal measure so that they can fully understand the range of the work that goes on and the good practice across all school types," he told *Schools Week*.

"This is nothing new," added Janet Downs, from the Local Schools Network, which campaigns against academies and in favour of more local oversight of schools.

"Ministers in successive governments have prioritised visits to their favourite types of schools: academies and free schools. Such visits are then used to praise these schools to give the impression they are superior to 'council run' schools.

"But the majority of schools are still under the stewardship of local authorities.

Damian Hinds

St. Andrew's CE Primary School
Curwen Primary School
Sandon Primary Academy
Hawes Side Academy
Fairfield Primary School
Featherstone High School
Bluecoat Apsley Academy
Dame Alice Owen's School
St Silas C Of E Primary School
Woodberry Down Community Primary School
Barrow Hill Junior School
Whitehall Primary School
St Werburgh's Primary School
Rosehill School
The Bedford Free School
Stepping Stones Short Stay School
Highfield Leadership Academy
Wilberforce Primary School
Paddington Academy

Nick Gibb

Roe Green Infant & Junior Schools
Platanos College
All Saints Catholic High School
Northampton School for Boys
St Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy
St Thomas More Catholic Academy
Lilian Baylis Technology School
Churchfields Junior School
The City Academy, Hackney
City of London Academy (Southwark)
Malcolm Arnold Academy



Lord Agnew

King's College London Mathematic School
Winterbourne International Academy
Fairfield High School
UTC Reading



It appears ministers have little interest in visiting these."

This trend was set by former education secretary Nicky Morgan who visited twice as many academies as maintained schools in her first year in office.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of school leaders' union ASCL, wants ministers to visit a "broader range of schools".

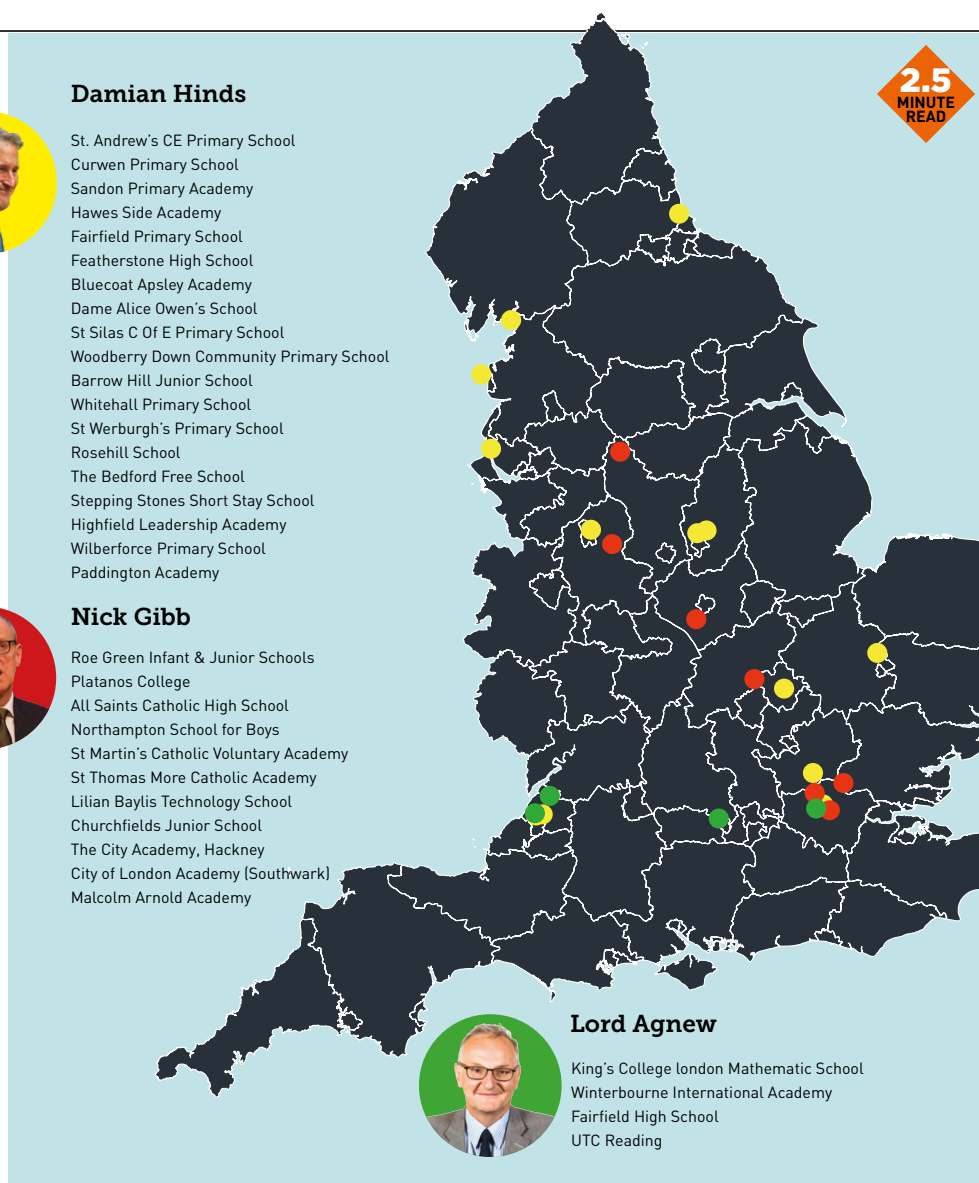
"Nothing will be of more use to them than listening to the first-hand experiences of a broad range of school leaders, teachers and students," he continued. "Ministers will be able to see for themselves the brilliant work being done in so many schools as well as the challenges they face".

Most of the 25 academies visited by

ministers in the first four months of the year were members of single-academy trusts or very small multi-academy trusts, including Bedford Free School, part of the two-school Advantage Schools trust, which was already visited last year by former education secretary Justine Greening.

A Department for Education spokesperson said Hinds had "repeatedly made clear" his priority is to deliver "world class education, training and care for everyone, whatever their background".

This has been underlined in major announcements on technical education, good school places and better early years education over the past few months, "and any suggestion otherwise is completely false", she said.



Beware informal SEND 'learning plans', experts warn

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Pupils with special educational needs are being issued with informal learning plans in place of official plans that come with guaranteed funding.

Some local authorities are giving out documents called 'my plans' or 'learning plans' if they believe pupil's needs do not warrant a proper education health and care plan (EHCP), SEND experts have warned.

EHCPs were introduced under the government's 2014 SEND reforms to replace the old special needs statement system. Many councils have struggled to find the resources to convert them to meet the deadline for switchover.

These new ersatz plans include information from specialists conducting EHCP assessments which subsequently found a pupil did not meet the bar for a statutory plan.

But pupils, teachers and parents can confuse informal plans for statutory ones, and not realise any funding is unprotected.

Eleanor Wright, a SEND solicitor, told the FestABLE event on special educational needs last Saturday that she had come across several such plans which outlined funding for the pupil.

"Schools may not be aware of the danger of these plans – the council can just take them away at a moment's notice, and you can't appeal it in court," she added.

"It would be better for the child to have an



EXCLUSIVE

EHCP, because of the security and ongoing funding."

But some local authorities find informal plans attractive as they can be produced faster and more cheaply than the 20-week process of getting an EHCP.

Schools Week understands that two local authorities, Kent and Hackney in north London, have issued non-statutory plans.

Roger Gough, Kent's cabinet member for children, young people and education, said the council tells schools about a pupil's EHCP assessment if they do not qualify for a formal plan, as recommended in government guidance.

"There is no requirement as to the format in which this should be shared, or what that collated information should be called," he said.

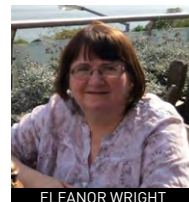
In Hackney, "support plans" are issued if an EHCP is not granted, according to a council spokesperson.

These informal support plans identify the aspirations, needs and outcomes for pupils, but do not have funding attached.

Daisy Russell, a manager at the Information, Advice and Support Services Network, which offers free advice to SEND pupils and families, said councils should avoid calling the documents "a plan".

"They are in and of themselves a useful thing, and should be used positively to support pupils," she conceded, but she told FestABLE delegates that she knew of one family who had sought to appeal a plan without realising they had not been issued with a formal EHCP.

"There is significant scope for confusion if a 'plan' is issued, and it is not made absolutely clear it is not an EHCP."



ELEANOR WRIGHT

2
MINUTE
READ

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

DfE launches impact review of the Baker Clause

The impact of a new law which forces schools to allow training organisations the chance to speak to pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships is to be reviewed.

The government has commissioned the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, a sector body that represents training companies, to carry out the review, launched to help the DfE "understand more" about the effect of the duty, which came into effect in January.

Under the new law, dubbed "the Baker Clause" because it was orchestrated by former education secretary Lord Baker, every school must give training providers and colleges access to every pupil in years 8 to 13, so they can find out about non-academic routes.

Schools must also publish a policy statement on their websites, detailing how to arrange access, which premises or facilities can be used, and the grounds for granting or refusing requests.

Ministers have pledged to take action against schools which flout the new law. In March, Anne Milton used her column in *Schools Week's* sister paper *FE Week* to urge colleges and training companies to report non-compliant schools, and last month, Lord Baker told this newspaper that interventions in schools had already begun.

The AELP is asking colleges and training companies to fill in a survey about the impact of the new law by June 12.

News

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Schools are employing more foreign teachers 'out of desperation'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Schools are being forced to employ foreign teachers the face of a growing recruitment and retention crisis, but not for the benefits they bring to the classroom.

Leaders are warning that the advantages of recruiting internationally, including greater diversity in the workforce and introducing pupils to different cultures, are "secondary" compared to the urgent need to combat teacher shortages, even in the short-term, according to a new report.

Schools face difficulties attracting enough good English candidates for vacant posts despite spending thousands of pounds on advertising campaigns. The cost of using an agency to recruit an international teacher is usually no more expensive and sometimes even cheaper.

However, the report, commissioned by the Department for Education and carried out by Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Brighton, also reveals that most international recruits leave within two years because of visa restrictions or because of "negative experiences of English schools" and "unsatisfactory pay and conditions", further exacerbating difficulties with recruitment and retention.

Fifty-six per cent of international teachers working in English secondary schools described their experience as either "fairly negative" or "very negative". Of those who had left England to teach elsewhere, 38 per cent said bad experiences in English schools was a reason for leaving and 35 per cent cited unsatisfactory pay and conditions.

Researchers carried out telephone interviews with 44 school leaders, 27 of whom had employed international teachers in the past three years. They also spoke to 3,350 international teachers based in England and elsewhere, and used data from the school workforce census.

Many school leaders have been forced to recruit internationally because of a lack of domestic recruits, using phrases such as "desperation", "having exhausted all other possibilities", "last resort" and "I would avoid if I could".

International teachers are often "dynamic, energetic and capable teachers" who bring specialist training and diverse experiences to schools, but many heads worry that foreign recruits take a long time to get used to living and working in England.



National teaching job site shrouded with secrecy

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

The Department for Education has finally launched its free teacher vacancy website – but it somehow didn't manage to include a link to it in its publicity materials.

The site was first promised more than two years ago and will let schools freely advertise job vacancies in their schools.

Diligent *Schools Week* research found the site at teachingjobs.education.gov.uk. It is currently being piloted in the north-east and Cambridgeshire, with a "view to rolling it out nationally" by the end of the year.

But an MP has criticised it for arriving too late for teachers looking for new jobs in September. Ian Mearns, a Labour MP for Gateshead, said few schools would be advertising over the summer as the teacher resignation deadline passed at the end of May.

The website will not therefore be "properly tested" before reaching a wider audience, he added.

The DfE has been unusually secretive about access. It did not provide a link in its press material, and refused to tell *Schools Week* where to find the site when we asked.

Officials also refused to share screenshots or explain how schools should submit job information, though a spokesperson claimed schools in the pilot areas were aware of the process.

Newcastle city council confirmed that emails had been sent to schools showing them how sign-up for the pilot website.

However one large secondary school in Sunderland, which is also covered in the north-east pilot, said it was "unaware" of the jobs portal and had not seen an email about it.

Schools in Cambridgeshire have had more luck. Cambridgeshire county council has been "actively involved" in developing the site and at least 74 primary and secondary schools are signed up.

But one newly qualified teacher tweeted that they were invited to try the site, only to find there were "barely any jobs on there".

As this edition went to print, there were 22 jobs listed, five in Cambridgeshire and the rest in the north-east including Teeside, Hartlepool and County Durham.

The idea of a government-run teacher vacancy website was first mooted by former education secretary Nicky Morgan in March 2016 and was promised in the Conservative Party election manifesto last year, as a way to help schools save on the £75 million spent each year on commercial advertising.

The pilot had been due to launch this spring, but academies minister Lord Agnew admitted last month it "had taken much longer than it should have".

Teachers responded with dismay on social media, with one lamenting that the site had "limped into view: late and local".

The DfE insisted it had been "very clear" that schools involved in the pilot "have been given their own access to the website" and claimed that "more information will be available in due course".

2
MINUTE
READ

Rural LGBT teachers have worse mental health

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans teachers working in rural areas are nine times more likely to experience mental health issues related to their job than their peers in cities, research has shown.

Forty-six per cent of LGBT+ teachers working in villages reported taking time off work due to anxiety or depression linked to their sexual identity and role as a teacher, in a survey carried out by Dr Catherine Lee, head of education and social care at Anglia Ruskin University.

The figure for LGBT+ teachers working in towns and cities was just five per cent.



Around 40 per cent of teachers at village schools believe their sexual or gender identities have been a barrier to promotion, compared with 15 per cent at urban or suburban schools.

Lee conducted an online questionnaire between April and July 2017 to gather information about LGBT+ teachers' engagement with school communities. She received 105 responses.

The results showed that the experiences in primary and secondary schools are broadly similar, but there

is a stark difference between teaching in villages and towns or cities.

Thirty per cent of teachers in rural schools have left a role because of homophobia, compared with 17 per cent in towns or cities.

Respondents from village schools reported feeling their sexual identity is "incompatible" with their identity as a teacher, and cited fears of being perceived as "predatory".

Lee referenced the findings at LGBTed, a new network established to offer support and information for the LGBT+ community in teaching.

She used the workshop to sign candidates up to 'Courageous leaders', a free two-year coaching and

mentoring programme to help LGBT+ teachers achieve promotion.

Lee herself is a mentor on the scheme, which is run by Jane Robinson, teaching school director at the Wickford Teaching Schools Alliance in Essex, and funded through the Department for Education's leadership equality and diversity fund.

"No one should experience barriers that prevent them from progressing in their career because of their identity," said a DfE spokesperson.

"We want to see teaching become one of the most inclusive professions to work in. We are supporting schools to increase the diversity of leaders from underrepresented groups."

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READKeeping our
nation safe

SAJID JAVID

No, teachers WON'T hear MI5 intelligence on potential extremists

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

MI5 has no plans to share sensitive intelligence information with teachers in a bid to combat terrorism despite reports to the contrary, the Home Office has confirmed.

Instead, the job of teachers in fighting extremism will for the moment remain "limited to the important role they already play in all forms of safeguarding".

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, announced the government's latest counter-terrorism strategy on Monday, which included new multi-agency pilots to allow the security service to share intelligence on persons of interest "with a broader range of partners".

Several news outlets, including *The Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail*, reported that this would include revealing the identities of terror suspects to teachers.

However, the Home Office has clarified that the sensitive information will not be shared with schools but rather with local authorities and government departments.

A spokesperson said the pilots, which will take place in London, the west Midlands and greater Manchester, would be focused on "a small number of specific individuals" who are known to police but not currently under investigation in order to "build a more detailed understanding of an individual's needs and risks" and improve coordinated interventions.

"The pilots are experimental so will evolve. However, any involvement of teachers is likely to be limited to the important role

they already play in all forms of safeguarding," she added.

The updated counter-terrorism plan, launched following attacks in London and Manchester last year, also renewed the government's commitment to the controversial Prevent strategy.

The strategy says the education sector plays a "vital role" in "safeguarding vulnerable people against radicalisation", and that protecting pupils from becoming radicalised is "part of the wider safeguarding duties of teachers, tutors and academics".

"The Prevent duty requires education providers to have clear policies in place to safeguard students and build their resilience to radicalisation," it adds.

Javid recognises criticisms of the policy but warned that "misapprehensions around Prevent are often based on distortions" and a "lack of understanding" of the work being carried out to "protect vulnerable people".

"We have a moral and social obligation to safeguard vulnerable people from the twisted propaganda of those seeking to radicalise them," he said. "And Prevent is about doing just that."

In February 2016, David Anderson QC, then the government's independent adviser on terror legislation, warned that the use of Prevent in schools had become a "significant source of grievance among British Muslims, encouraging mistrust to spread and to fester".

A month later, the National Union of Teachers passed a controversial motion asking to withdraw Prevent and replace it with new guidance for schools.

2
MINUTE
READ

Collapsed Carillion made healthy profits from schools contracts

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

The collapsed construction firm Carillion made profits of up to 15 per cent on its work for schools in England – a margin far higher than in its other government contracts.

The firm reported revenues of £79 million for its education activities in England in 2016, and made much larger profits on its work in 312 schools than it did for its central government contracts, according to a damning report by the National Audit Office.

Councils and schools across England were forced to implement emergency contingency plans when the outsourcing giant collapsed in January. It had provided facilities maintenance, cleaning and catering services to hundreds of schools.

Advisers to Carillion's creditors reported that it was achieving operating profits of between 13 and 15 per cent on its work for schools. This compares to a forecast profit on the firm's central government contracts, such as the six it held with the Department for Education, of around 1.4 per cent.

The spending watchdog's investigation also revealed that the DfE has allocated an estimated £3 million to deal with the fallout from the collapse.

The DfE was one of 26 public bodies that provided contingency plans to the Cabinet Office in advance of the firm's fall. Others included Oxfordshire county council, which was forced to put the fire service on standby to feed school pupils as part of a contingency plan that cost an estimated £3.4 million.

The Cabinet Office was "still seeking improvements" to contingency planning in schools and local authorities by the time Carillion went into liquidation.

Overall, the firm's untimely end is expected to cost the public purse £148 million.

Now the NAO is demanding better oversight of large government contracts.

"When a company becomes a strategic supplier, dependencies are created beyond the scope of specific contracts," said Sir Amyas Morse, the body's head.

"Doing a thorough job of protecting the public interest means that government needs to understand the financial health and sustainability of its major suppliers, and avoid creating relationships with those which are already weakened. The government has further to go in developing in this direction."

Mainstream trusts pass on new secure school bids

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Academy chains that cater for excluded pupils are keen to open new secure schools for young offenders, but the response from mainstream trusts has been muted.

The government is encouraging trusts to bid for facilities for imprisoned pupils aged 12 to 17, two years after the idea of secure schools was first proposed by the Taylor Review of the youth justice system.

The TBAP multi-academy trust, which runs 10 alternative provision academies, helped the Department for Education and Ministry of Justice develop the secure schools plan.

Seamus Oates, TBAP's chief executive, said his organisation had a "wealth of experience" supporting challenging cohorts, and "would welcome the opportunity to be part of an innovative solution".

Rob Gasson from Wave multi-academy trust in Devon, which has six AP academies and is taking on three more, said his trust would "be in a prime position" to set up a secure school in the south-west if needed. Sarah Gillett, chief executive of the ACE Schools academy trust, which runs an AP academy in Plymouth, said the same.

Draft guidance says bidders must plan a full schedule of activities during the week

and weekend and provide pupils with three meals a day. Each school must also recruit a top headteacher.

Existing chains that set up secure academy trusts will also need a separate board and funding agreement with the DfE. Because the schools will be registered as both academies and children's homes, they will have a complex funding model. A financial handbook and inspection framework are still in development.

Schools Week approached the 10 largest academy trusts in England to ask if they planned to open secure schools. Ark, the Academies Enterprise Trust, the Harris Federation and the Greenwood Academies Trust

said they had no plans to join the scheme at present. The rest did not reply.

Matt Morris, headteacher of the North East Derbyshire Support Centre, a pupil referral unit, warned that a lack of detail, and a concern that secure schools may fail like many UTCs and studio schools have done, may put off large trusts.

For example, pupil numbers, and therefore funding, will be hard to predict. There are currently 900 12- to 17-year-olds in custody, a drop from 2,900 in 2007.

The MoJ must develop a model for the schools, rather than "hoping someone comes up with one", he said.

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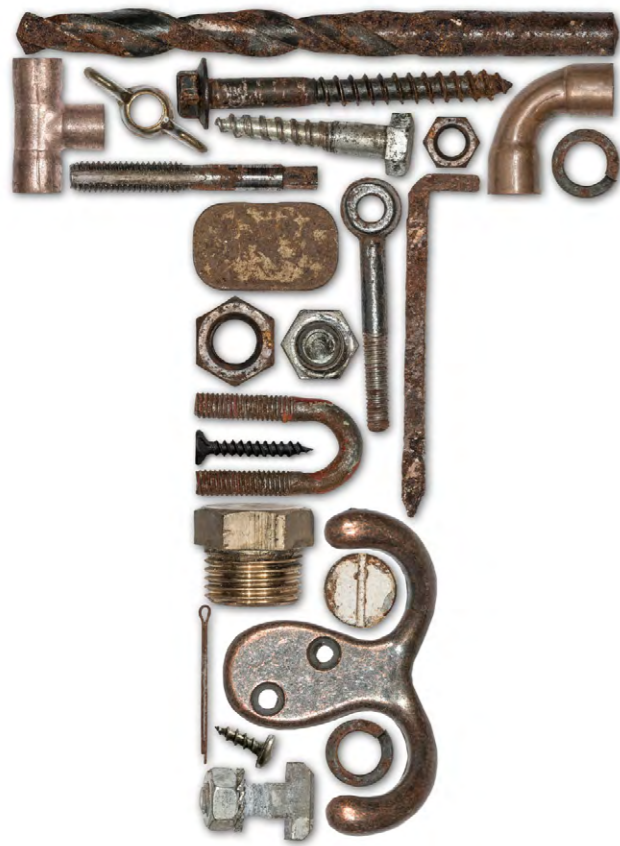
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FIFTEEN SCHOOLS CHOSEN AS T-LEVELS PIONEERS

ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4



Fifteen schools are among the first 52 providers chosen to deliver the government's new technical qualifications.

These new T-Levels are designed to have "parity of esteem" with A-levels, and will give young people the option of a vocational route from the age of 16.

Three so-called "pathways" will be taught from September 2020, involving courses in design, surveying and planning for the construction industry, software application development for the digital industry, and education for the education and childcare industry.

Further courses will be rolled out in stages from 2023, covering areas such as design, accounting, and engineering.

While most of the 52 pioneering providers named by the education secretary Damian Hinds on March 27 are further education colleges or independent training providers, 15 are schools, including two university technical colleges and one studio school.

Schools Week contacted these 15 to ask which of the three courses they would be offering and how they were preparing to teach the new material.

Salesian School in Surrey is planning

to deliver all three T-level routes.

Its headteacher James Kibble said that while plans are in their infancy, the school had "designated an existing staff member with a passion for technical education to lead the project and looks forward to developing the implementation plans over the coming weeks".

Archbishop Holgate's School in York will deliver the education course, as it is an area "the school is extremely confident in executing well in the initial roll-out stage", according to Jo Kitney, its T-level lead.

In the future, the school hopes to offer T-levels in engineering, catering and hospitality, and health science.

"We recognise that all pupils have different aspirations, not every child wishes to move into further education to take purely academic based subjects," Kitney said.

T-levels will give pupils the chance to follow "a more practical syllabus", as opposed to one which is "based 100 per cent on exam outcomes".

Pupils will be required to undertake an eight-week placement and complete components in "core skills" and "occupational specialism".

The project has been plagued with delays, and the head civil servant at the Department for Education, Jonathan Slater, even wrote to Hinds last month imploring him not to go ahead with the 2020 start date, and delay until 2021.

This was the first letter of its type, known as a ministerial direction, ever to be issued by the education department. Hinds overruled it and asked the civil service to continue with the 2020 target.

Hinds insisted that naming the providers leading the project was "an important step forward" in the government's plans.

"T-Levels represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reform technical education in this country so we can rival the world's best performing systems," he said. "For too long young people have not had a genuine choice about their future aged 16.

"While A-levels provide a world-class academic qualification, many technical education courses are undervalued by employers and don't always provide students with the skills they need to secure a good job – that has to change."

Originally the government planned to scrap other applied general qualifications, such as BTEC nationals, which cover similar subjects and are popular in schools and sixth-form colleges, but it soon reversed this decision.

FULL LIST

15

- Archbishop Holgate's School
- Bordesley Green Girls' School & Sixth-Form
- Cranford Community College
- Durham Sixth-Form Centre
- La Retraite RC Girls School
- London Design & Engineering UTC
- Lordswood Girls' School & Sixth-Form Centre
- Painsley Catholic College
- Salesian School
- Sandwell Academy
- St Thomas More Catholic School
- The Leigh UTC
- Thorpe St Andrew School and Sixth-Form
- Ursuline High School
- Walsall Studio School

OVER TO THE STUDIO

Dan Parkes, the principal of Walsall Studio School, which opened in 2013 and is rated 'good' by Ofsted, said that the school would pilot the digital course with 20 students.

He expects numbers to increase to 200 once other courses are available and intends T-levels to become "a very significant part" of the school's offer.

He will recruit one additional teacher for 2020, and further staff as the course

range grows.

T-levels are "in tune" with the school's existing "pedagogical approach", he said, as it already employs teachers with "proven skills in the relevant technical vocational area".

The courses will provide pupils with "a competitive advantage" by offering "real-world experiences for students that prepare them for the world of work".

IT'S UP TO UTC

Geoffrey Fowler, the chief executive of the London Design and Engineering UTC, believes introducing T-levels will enable students to "make informed progression choices, knowing that a technical route will now be on par with A-levels".

The UTC's "employer-led ethos", working with companies like Fujitsu, will be helpful as it builds T-levels into the career pathways it offers to students, he added.

It opened in 2016, and is sponsored by

the University of East London, Thames Water, construction and engineering companies Costain Group and Skanska, and the Diocese of Chelmsford Educational Trust.

"With our employer partners we will now develop our T-level offer around design, surveying and planning with our first cohort starting in September 2020, complementing our existing offer of technical mainstream education and higher-level apprenticeships," Fowler continued.

Inaugural FestABLE becomes a celebration of SEND

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



BARNEY ANGLISS AND SALLY PHILLIPS



“Everyone’s always saying how you can overcome anything if you have disabilities, but actually people often forget that for parents, it can be an ongoing fight”



Founders of the first ever festival celebrating special educational want to “bring teachers and families into the same space” and hope more mainstream teachers will attend their next event.

Barney Angliss, a SEND consultant, has spent two years planning FestABLE, which took place in Cheltenham last weekend. He had the help of Elaine Gisby, director of staff at the specialist National Star College, where the festival was held.

Around 400 attendees listened to expert speakers, attended workshops on everything from language acquisition to storytelling, and took part in activities including a “circus-themed immersive sensory space”, and sports like boccia and polybat.

The festival had three main aims: firstly,

to bring teachers, therapists, solicitors and other SEND experts into the same space as families and pupils.

“There are lots of conferences for professionals, but nothing which seemed to include the young people and families,” Gisby told *Schools Week*.

“Everyone’s always saying how you can overcome anything if you have disabilities, but actually people often forget that for parents, it can be an ongoing fight. If they can get together with professionals and feel positive, that’s great.”

Secondly, organisers aimed to scrutinise the impact of policy, including the Children and Families Act 2014, which brought sweeping changes to the way SEND support is delivered four years ago. In order to facilitate debate about policy, the event will now take place every two years, with the

next in 2020.

“We want to allow those issues to develop across the country, and then we’ll be the place for leading-edge debate,” Angliss said.

In Cheltenham, opinion was divided on the reforms, which saw education, health and care plans introduced to replace statements of SEND.

Simon Knight, director of Whole School SEND, acknowledged that some of its intentions were admirable, such as bringing together the educational, health and social care needs of an individual into one plan.

But André Imich, SEND professional adviser at the Department for Education, provoked a backlash when he claimed the reforms enabled parents to be involved in decision-making. Delegates warned that participation had involved them leaving their own jobs to navigate the lengthy

referral system.

The third aim of the festival was a celebration. As George Fielding, a director with cerebral palsy at SEND charity Adjuvo said, the best thing any reform can do is “give people with disabilities a blank piece of paper, to decide how to define themselves”, because that is “true empowerment”.

Festivities were led by the comedian and actor Sally Phillips, famed for her roles in sketch show *Smack the Pony*, the *Bridget Jones* films and sitcom *Miranda*. She has been an outspoken campaigner of SEND services as a result of her son’s Down’s Syndrome.

“She was perfect, because although Sally

is a celebrity, she was there as a parent of a child with complex needs, on stage but directly connecting with the audience,” said Angliss.

However, both organisers wished more teachers from mainstream schools could attend.

“We tried to contact the SENCo in most schools, but I suspect a lot ended up in inboxes and people feel they’re too busy,” said Gisby.

“Lots of mainstream professionals will think ‘that looks fantastic, but I’ll never use that degree of specialised knowledge’. It’s our job to challenge that, and encourage those teachers to come along,” Angliss continued.

Inaugural LGBTed conference



ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

A network established to offer support, information and ideas to LGBT+ teachers has put on its first ever conference.

A network established to offer support, information and ideas to LGBT+ teachers has held its inaugural conference.

The first LGBTed was held in London last weekend, and even received the backing of schools minister Nick Gibb.

Co-founders Daniel Gray, a teacher at Harris Academy South Norwood where the event was held, and Hannah Jepson, director for assessment and selection at Ambition School Leadership, welcomed delegates by sharing their own experiences.

"At school I was bullied for being gay before I even knew that I was," Gray told delegates. "All I knew was I was different and I was slowly made to hate myself for it."

"LGBTed exists so that staff feel empowered to be themselves and support young people who are like I was."

"There's still so much more to do to make a change for ourselves and our colleagues and our children," added Jepson.

LGBTed's motto, "let's be the role models we needed when we were at school", resonated throughout the day, with delegates discussing how to make a



difference in their schools.

Gibb sent his support in a video in which he said he will work with the new body and hopes to see it "thrive".

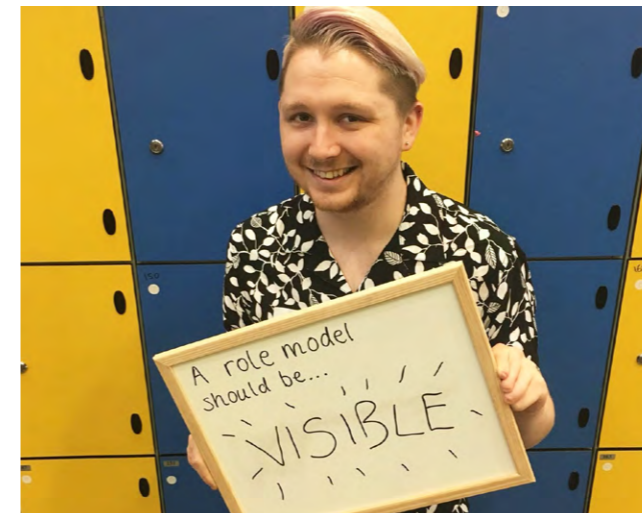
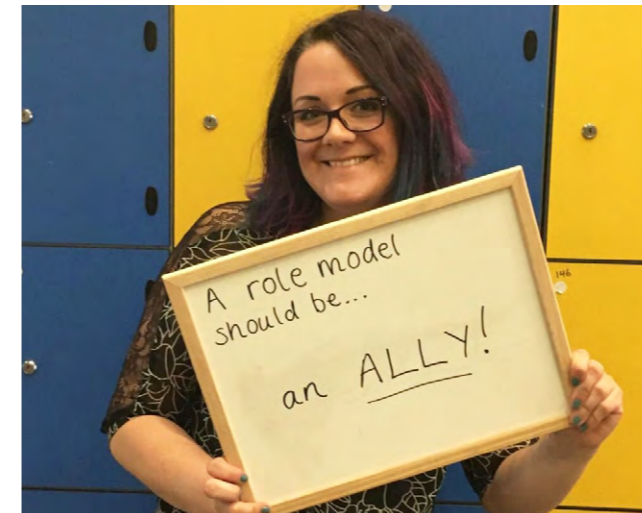
"By creating the conditions that allow LGBT staff to be themselves in the workplace we also create the role models that promote greater understanding of what it is to be LGBT to the wider community, and to challenge social norms and stereotypes," he said.

Alex Shaw, the Department for Education's lead on equality and diversity, also attended. She said the DfE is gathering information about LGBT teachers' experiences to learn how it can

provide support.

Presentations included tips from Nick Bentley, from Sarah Bonnell School, on how to embed representation of LGBTQ identities across the curriculum and a vibrant discussion with Lukasz Konieczka, the co-founder and director of services at the Mosaic LGBT Youth Centre, on how to prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

Claire Birkenshaw, a former headteacher who transitioned from male to female while leading her school, talked about nurturing a sense of belonging for young trans and non-binary people and explained how being a visible role model



gives confidence to others.

"Every child should feel they belong in their school environment and nothing should hold them back. They should never be ashamed of who they are," she said.

Birkenshaw joined Gray, Bennie Kara, deputy headteacher of Aureus School in Didcot, and David Lowbridge-Ellis, deputy headteacher of Barr Beacon School in Walsall, to explore future action, such as encouraging schools to get involved with Pride events across the country.

The day closed with a passionate speech from David Weston, chief executive of the Teacher Development Trust, who supported Jepson and Gray in establishing LGBTed.

He emphasised the importance of breaking down myths and modelling how to accept and respect others.

"We're the champions of inclusion for the future, we're building on the shoulders of courageous giants," he said. "I'm incredibly excited to see how we fuse what has been and what is going to be."

Speaking to *Schools Week* after the event, Jepson said the day had been more than she had imagined, but was still "just the start of the conversation".

"We want to really start a movement and create a national network."

Gray added: "We have a duty as teachers to make the world a better place for our young people, the next generation, and to be inclusive and make them feel welcome and safe."

"Having all these LGBT teachers here who are willing to be part of that movement means so much."



EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Michael Gove's pigeons are coming home to roost

When Michael Gove initiated his rapid expansion of the academies programme, he envisioned a golden age of autonomy. This week, a litany of failures across England has reminded us that his vision was folly.

Durand Academy, which came to epitomise the largesse of the programme when its head Sir Greg Martin's whopping £400,000 paycheck and involvement in commercial companies run from the site was revealed in 2014, has earned a new sponsor, but not the one ministers wanted it to have.

Even though the DfE pushed it towards the school, the prestigious Harris Federation ultimately couldn't take the risk. Dunraven, a small but successful single-school trust in Lambeth, has been left to

pick up the pieces, and we wish them well.

Elsewhere, another deal, this time to merge the troubled Bright Tribe Trust with its more successful sister chain, has also hit the rocks, creating yet more uncertainty for the staff, pupils and parents who have already suffered so much.

In Devon, the Schools Company Trust is walking away from all of its schools, most of which cater for incredibly vulnerable pupils, amid safeguarding and leadership failings. Meanwhile, the Collaborative Academies Trust, one of a handful in England run by a for-profit provider, will also give up all but one of its academies.

We learned that Discovery School, the free school in Newcastle that managed to leave one of its pupils in London after a school trip

earlier this year, will close, and that in Warwickshire, a headteacher criticised for her £270,000 salary and a £50,000 pay rise has resigned.

And just when you thought the scandal of the once-golden Perry Beeches academy trust was over, the trust's accounts revealed a £1.5 million deficit which will likely now be written off by the government.

It's not all bad news, though. The previously 'inadequate' Wrenn School in Northants is now 'good' in Ofsted's eyes. However, this is no thanks to the Education Fellowship Trust, the school's outgoing sponsor, which was slammed for its lack of support.

In reality, there can be no golden age of academies when the system remains so opaque and unaccountable as to let failures like these occur over and over again. The education of our children is at stake, and this government will be judged on its actions, or lack thereof, to end this misery.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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Opinion ^{LM}



LAURA
MCINERNEY

Contributing editor

Without more money now, the ECHP dream will become a nightmare

How much does it cost to educate a child? Schools are allocated roughly £5,000 per pupil, depending on location. But is it enough? And, specifically, where is the limit if it isn't enough?

This question particularly matters when thinking about special-needs funding. The new system involves an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Introduced several years ago, these have now almost fully replaced the old-style statements. Their aim was a nothing short of a revolution: instead of parents dealing with different providers for their child's needs – such as hospitals, schools or social services – the plans would bring together everything a child needed in order to flourish into one simple document.

Even more excitingly, the plans involve children's "aspirations". Each assessment considers what a child wants to achieve in the future and works backwards to help them achieve it. In doing so, it pretty much states what support each child needs if it wants, say, to go to university.

But there is a substantial problem:

the first £6,000 of costs must be met by schools, even though they receive no extra cash to do so. Given squeezed budgets, and the pressure on schools not to get any

“ **Central government sits on its hands waiting for somebody else to conjure up the cash**

further into deficit, one can see why school leaders may increasingly feel that they simply cannot meet the requirements of children with special needs without more financial help.

Furthermore, local councils are now responsible for the education of children with special needs up to the age of 25. This is a good thing. Previously, too many young people with additional needs were left high and dry at 18 without access to the job market, and not yet ready to step out into the world unsupported. But, again, the additional liability did not come with additional cash.



Beyond this, there are also thousands of children who don't meet the bar of an EHCP but whose parents are still told they need some additional school support, as we report on page 13. Funding for these

needs is entirely reliant on the local council, and schools increasingly receive no help whatsoever.

All of which has turned the EHCP revolution into an unfair and unrealistic promise. It verges on cruel to tell a parent that their child's future aspirations rely on a specific service, and yet central government sits on its hands waiting for somebody else to conjure up the cash and make it happen.

Everyone is talking about the affordability of healthcare on the NHS. National guidelines dictate how much will be spent on drugs.

They outline who will get them and the circumstances under which they can be prescribed. No-one is pretending the NHS limitless. A tonsillectomy might improve your quality of life, but you may not get one now unless the need is life-threatening. When cash is tight you might get a hip operation, but it won't be for a while, and not until you really need one. These are the compromises of austerity.

If the Conservative government wishes to continue with its budget cutting for local government and education, then it needs to come clean. As with the NHS, it needs to accept that not everything can be done. And then it needs to look into the eyes of the parents of children with special needs and tell them that the government has not made funds available to cover all the services that will help their child's aspirations.

They need to cross out the line in the education plan that says "Nathan wants to go to university" or "live an independent life" or "have a job", and replace it with a line that says "your life's aspirations will be limited by what we can afford". Because that's what is really happening in the many local authorities and schools which are finding that even the most basic ways of managing resources – for example, shunting it in from the mainstream schools – are rapidly being closed down.

In the end, the question is simple. How much does it cost to educate a child? However much the chancellor's empathy will allow.

You may have missed



DfE announces £50m to expand special schools, but the money isn't new

Ministers will hand councils £50 million to expand special schools and improve existing facilities for pupils with special educational needs.

[FOR MORE INFO CLICK HERE](#) +

Gibb 'open to' a British sign language GCSE



The Department for Education is now "open to considering" a British sign language GCSE after previously warning that it would require a "huge number of steps".

[FOR MORE INFO CLICK HERE](#) +



Thousands of looked-after children moved 20 miles or more mid-year

[FOR MORE INFO CLICK HERE](#) +

Most free schools open in areas of need, and 4 other things we learned

[FOR MORE INFO CLICK HERE](#) +

Private alternative providers get worse Ofsted ratings than council provision, and 4 other findings

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Academy trusts invited to set up 'secure schools' for pupils in custody

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How to close the vocabulary gap in the classroom

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Profile

CATH MURRAY
@CATHMURRAY_

Sabrina Hobbs, principal, Severndale Specialist Academy

7.5
MINUTE
READ

A nine-year-old boy in a wheelchair is delightedly pressing the large button on a battery-powered speaker that calls Betsy the dog by name. Every time he does, a chocolate sprocker spaniel comes bounding across to a small circle of children.

This all happens under the watchful eye of Sabrina Hobbs, the executive principal of Shropshire's only special school. She's striding down corridors in a business suit and heels, engineering an impressive operation that includes getting me to a variety of classes before they've gone to lunch, whisking me to another site in time for a student tour, and being pulled out at my photographer's whim to pose for the camera.

In this class of six – with three permanent staff and three part-time assistants for feeding and toilet support – the puppy is being trained to help the children, who all have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), to develop their communication skills in different ways. Ahmed, who cannot stop grinning and giggling, is slowly learning to make eye contact with whatever his hand is touching. Rachel is learning to associate photos of reference with the days when Betsy is coming to visit.

Pre-visit communications have clearly been slick. Every single teacher and pupil who is able to comprehend the concept that a journalist/special visitor is visiting, knows who I am. Students wave, shake my hand, introduce themselves.

With over 400 students and 300 staff, Severndale Academy is one of the largest special schools in the country, catering for children aged two to 19. Predicting how many people it will be able to employ from one year to the next is their biggest challenge, says Hobbs, given that the budget can fluctuate by "hundreds of thousands" of pounds.

"Because of the nature of the ad-hoc admissions," she explains, "there's no way of

Sabrina Hobbs

knowing who's coming through and what needs they have, and therefore the top-up values can range from zero for our MLD [moderate learning difficulty] students to just under £15,000 for our most complex students.

"One PMLD student may make the difference between whether we need to

open up a new classroom or restructure the departments all together."

This means the staffing has to be fluid, and the school is dependent on expensive agency staff as recent changes to employment law mean it can no longer employ people directly on fixed-term contracts. The logistics are problematic,

"Education should be about developing the future generation into making a different society"

too: "Fridays are really hard to get supply staff in, because they don't want to work on a Friday", she says with a forced smile, her exasperation perceptible.

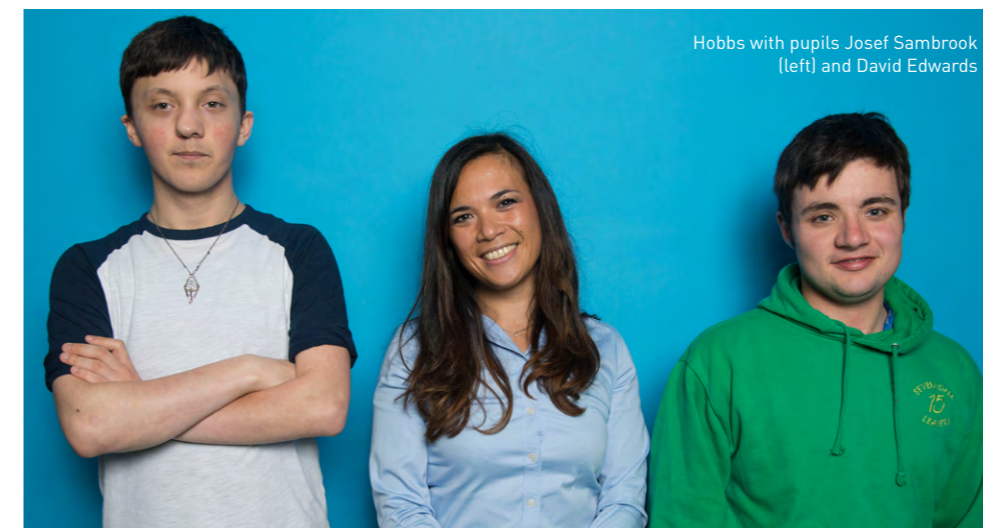
Unwilling to accept a status quo that in her mind makes little sense, this 39-year-old has been plotting to revolutionise how special schools are funded. Having started by lobbying her local authority, she is now preparing a joint proposal for the Department for Education.

"It's not impossible to think outside the box, and anything can happen," she declares, with an air of insouciant optimism. "We've got a track record of changing legislation. We got an exemption for the post-19 work that we do with the FE college, because it's appropriate, and it's right, and it's quality. Ofsted came and had a look at it, and promoted it, and that helped the ball roll when we were having discussions with the ESFA."

She speaks with the kind of self-assurance that makes you wonder whether the Education Skills and Funding Agency isn't going to regret its decision to make an exception for her last time.

"I think for us to have achieved that, it sets a precedent that any form of legislation could be relooked at. It's about the reality of the situation, not the theoretical background only," she continues. "We can make a difference, and it is quite inspiring when organisations work together to formulate a solution to something that sometimes can feel too big or too difficult to solve."

For someone so young with such ambitious plans to flip the system, Hobbs has a calm self-assurance that starts to make more sense when she gets into talking about her yoga obsession. "It gives you the skills to think of things in a different perspective," she explains, "and think about such things as 'are these problems now? Are these real problems? Or are they just perceived problems?'"



Hobbs with pupils Josef Sambrook (left) and David Edwards

Profile

She has a Dutch passport, she tells me with a certain pride, having been born to an Indonesian mother in a Dutch compound in Saudi Arabia, where her Indian father was working as an oil tanker engineer. She has a physiotherapist sister and another who's a fingerprint expert with the Manchester police – "a cool job. It's all like CSI," she jokes.

When she was seven, her father decided to join the family business in England and they relocated near Heathrow airport, where she did most of her schooling, before going on to Durham University to study environmental management with geography, followed by a PGCE in Newcastle.

She became interested in SEND in her first teaching job in a school in south-west London, where her tutor group had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs: "I was very interested in how I would engage them in learning. Where was their motivation? Why do some children learn quicker than others? What are the approaches that work?"

She soon applied for a deputy SENCO position in another large comprehensive nearby. From there, she relocated to Shropshire to teach at Severndale, where she worked her way up to an assistant head position over the next six years, before securing a deputy headship at a Birmingham special school.

Although similar to Severndale in size and structure, working in an urban environment as one of 26 special schools was a "very different dynamic". For example, "for children with really complex health needs, they were well supported in Birmingham – and I believe they still are – in terms of getting one-to-one support for health needs for those critically ill children who have continuing health care plans".

This kind of support is not available in rural areas. Mental health services are also a growing concern. Her own CAHMS support has been "non-existent" now for about 10 months and she's not getting answers.

So Hobbs has been networking. She's recently joined the Headteachers Roundtable, as well as the West

"We hope that the next society would be more inclusive"

Midlands SEND Forum, coordinated by Wolverhampton University.

She has also built new partnerships with local schools and organises regular pupil exchanges, aimed at social as well as academic inclusion. In addition to the main Severndale Academy, the trust also has two sites that allow for various levels of inclusion in mainstream: Futures, a site adjacent to the local FE college, and a 30-place SEND base on a local secondary school site.

"For our students to get jobs in the future, or to do something of worth, to be included in something within society, they need the help of mainstream students who will then grow up into adults, who have then had that experience of what's possible, and that people with special needs can achieve. And the hope is that new exciting opportunities will develop from that, that don't exist currently," she explains.

"Those young people growing up in mainstream schools are going to be our future leaders and policy-makers. They're going to be the future doctors, nurses, employers, social workers, teachers – they're the ones with the keys to the future.

"I think that's what the basis of education should be. It's about developing the future generation into making a different a different society. And we hope that the next society would be more inclusive."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

Probably *Shantaram* [by Gregory David Roberts]. It's a book about a convict who escapes from prison and goes on this journey to hide from the authorities. He's in an Australian prison, and he escapes, and ends up in India to hide, and he just meets loads of really interesting people on the way. I like that because I like meeting new people. It just takes you through a journey of his life.

If you could escape somewhere for a month, where would you go to?

I'd like to go to Hawaii. Because it's really warm and you can surf. I've surfed in Portugal and in Wales. I love it. I like adventurous sports.

What's your favourite sport?


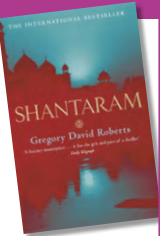
I ski. I really enjoy skiing, and I'll have a go at anything, really. I've done a bit of climbing. I enjoy biking, on- and off-road. I also enjoy yoga, particularly hot yoga. I love the heat. This country's way too cold!

What were the main lessons you've learned from your parents?

Just to be the very best you can be. Whether that be a cleaner, or a teacher or whatever I am, I've had quite a few different jobs in my time as a student. And no matter what I did, I just did the very best I could. I suppose that's the philosophy behind what I do.

What's your life philosophy?

I think as you go through life, you realise what's important and what's not so important. And it's not sweating the small stuff. It's just realising you can let quite a lot go, and go with the flow, because you'll find opportunities later. You don't have to do everything today.



CV

2016 – present:	Principal, Severndale Specialist Academy
2012 – 2015:	Deputy head, Calthorpe Academy
2006 – 2012:	Assistant head, Severndale Specialist Academy
2005 – 2006:	Deputy SENCO, Greenshaw, London
2003 – 2005:	Geography Teacher, Broadwater, Surrey
2003 – 2004:	PGCE, Newcastle University
1999 – 2003:	Geography and environmental management BSc, Durham University

Opinion



ROB WEBSTER

Senior researcher, UCL Centre for Inclusive Education

How to make sure itinerant pupils don't get left behind

Schools could do considerably more to support in-year admissions and high-mobility learners, explains Rob Webster

The lives of many vulnerable children and young people are defined by turbulence and instability. For those living in care, the much-needed but taken-for-granted steadiness and normality their peers experience is in short supply. Announcing last week's annual Stability Index, the children's commissioner Anne Longfield revealed that more than 3,000 "pinball kids" as she called them moved home at least four times in the past two years, and about 2,500 children moved five or more times in three years.

As these moves are usually some miles apart, relocation often means transferring to a new school during the school year. Looked-after learners and other regular movers, including children from gypsy, Roma and traveller communities, refugees, and those with parents in the armed forces, are disproportionately represented in the statistics for in-year admissions. Sixty-one per cent of in-year movers are either eligible for the pupil premium, are identified as

having special educational needs, or both.

Children in care who move school mid-year are twice as likely to move again the following year. Some moves are, of course, necessary and successful, but research

suggests the impact of repeatedly relocating and moving schools at non-standard times is acute. High-mobility learners are less likely to achieve in their formal key stage one assessments, compared with children who stay put. And only 27 per cent of pupils who move schools three times or more during their secondary school career achieve five good GCSEs, compared with the national average of 60 per cent.

Whenever admission takes place, schools can unwittingly compound the effects of being a high-mobility learner by treating them as guests to be hosted before they move on again and become someone else's responsibility.



Uncertainty over their length of stay may cause schools to withhold efforts and resources to address the educational, emotional and social effects of constant uprooting and resettlement.

So what can schools do to support high-mobility learners and ease the process of mid-year transfers?

1. Own the transfer process

Take responsibility for overseeing transfers. Create a checklist of essential documentation you require from the child's current

“ Schools can unwittingly compound the effects by treating learners as guests ”

school and a timeline against which key actions must be completed. Develop a similar handover process to assist the transfer of children from your school to another setting.

2. Be proactive

Relocation means families can go temporarily off grid. It takes time to sort out a new landline and redirect post. Get as many means of contact as possible early in the transfer process. Make regular contact with any updates.

3. Appoint a transfer champion

Establish a principal point of contact for everyone involved in the transfer: the family, the pupil's current school and, where appropriate, social services. Clusters

of schools could share someone and co-fund their time using pupil premium.

4. Acclimatisation

Where possible, organise frequent pre-transfer visits. Begin by meeting the child in their current setting. This is important for those who experience anxiety, have an autism spectrum condition or who may have difficulty trusting new adults. Consider making a short video introducing your school to share online. Ensure newcomers can access well-being support and maybe buddy them up with another pupil who can show them the ropes.

5. Build the learning and support package

Ask the child's current school for workbooks and assessments so you can construct a learning package to meet their attainment profile. Move anxiety can affect outcomes, so if you need to carry out any formal assessments, allow time for settling in. Take advice from your staff about how new starters are coping and plan accordingly. Make provisions for secondary-age learners to continue studying qualifications they have already started.

School is an essential constant in the lives of disadvantaged learners. It is important to recognise that high mobility means even these environments can become unstable. Every day these pupils do not attend school is as critical to their life chances as the days that they do. Robust routines can limit the worst effects of relocation and ensure these learners thrive and achieve – however long they stay.

3
MINUTE
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Banning the hijab is actually a liberal act, suggests Dr Alka Sehgal Cuthbert

I consider myself a liberal. For instance, I publically supported Ofsted when it backed the head of a primary school in east London who wanted to ban the hijab.

On the other hand, I can't support the Danish government's decision to join France, Germany and Austria in banning burqas, niqabs, balaclavas or false beards; nor would I support any attempts of the British government to do likewise.

So, am I confused or a hypocrite? I believe that my apparently contradictory views are a legitimate liberal position. Schools have a unique role as educational institutions, and that for the most part of the 20th century in Britain, they have been intimately tied to the cultivation of liberal cultural values.

These values include concepts as tolerance and commitment to equality, but the ways they play out end up differently according to who is deciding what, and for which intentions.

Government bans are a different kettle of fish to the attempted ban at St Stephen's Primary School in Newham. As a head teacher, Neena Lall is in a position of public authority; she is invested with the task of ensuring all pupils at the school are educated. True, this job usually entails a host of secondary commitments on the broader development of pupils.

One of the central tasks of schools is to treat all pupils as moral equals, irrespective of their individual talents, and irrespective of their social position outside school. Parents from the majority of faiths



DR ALKA
SEHGAL
CUTHBERT
Author, educator and researcher

What role should schools take in a liberal society?

generally consent to having their chosen schools decide on their own educational ethos, including uniform policies, on this basis.

Campaigners eventually collected over 19,000 signatures on a petition which forced the school to

A school is not there to meet a particular group's demands for forms of recognition, which stem from a new consumerist ethos in education, rather than sociopolitical progress. Nor should education policymakers allow schools to help

“A state-funded school should be committed to a universalist approach”

reverse its decision, and the head of governors resigned in a heated, social media-fuelled controversy.

Was this a victory for liberal values and democracy? I think not. A state-funded school should be committed to a universalist approach which grounds moral equality while allowing for differentiation in other aspects. When a society's institutions are guided by this principle, the resulting cultural values tend to be marked by a greater commitment to cultural liberalism, with a wide range of tolerance for both difference and offense.

fight proxy wars in wider political or religious battles. Leave those to equal adult citizens, and keep heads, teachers, parents and children out of it.

Unfortunately, the government's Equality Act of 2010, which chimes with the EU Equal Treatment Directives, does just this. It claims to represent the interests of particular groups deemed worthy of special treatment by public institutions.

To justify this, the law parcels people up into nine “protected characteristics” according to age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and



maternity, sex, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. It places schools under a duty to “eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act”.

If a pupil belongs to a protected category and their school is thought to be treating an offense less seriously than it would if it had been committed against a non-protected pupil, school authorities can face legal consequences.

It means that in effect, while pupils from a non-protected group can complain to the governors if they are not satisfied about an offense against them, pupils from protected groups can claim illegal discrimination, and the school can be found to have committed a crime.

In this way the Act endorses inequality and exacerbates a corrosive element of fearful self-surveillance in schools.

Dr Sehgal Cuthbert be discussing this issue alongside Ofsted's director of corporate strategy, Luke Tryl, next Monday, at an Academy of Ideas event entitled ‘Muscular liberalism: Hijabs and schools’.

For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/2sCjVKn>

3
MINUTE
READ

Opinion



EMMA
KNIGHTS

Chief executive,
the National Governance Association

Governors are the unsung heroes of the school system

Unpaid volunteers, school governors are now often giving up as many 20 full days a year to make sure children get the best chances, writes Emma Knights

Governors do not volunteer for plaudits or public acclaim. For them, their reward is helping ensure that children in their community get a good education. However it is not an easy role, particularly at the moment.

Many of the education issues currently in the public eye – difficulties in balancing the budget, stretched provision for children with special education needs, the rapid pace of change to curriculum and assessment, the subsequent workload burden on teachers and a mounting recruitment crisis – end up on the agenda of the average school governing board.

We are at the end of volunteers' week, held every year from June 1 to 7 to celebrate the contribution of time freely given by citizens across the UK, the glue of our civil society. Here in England there are quarter of a million volunteers governing state schools, doing their part to make sure our children all have real opportunities to flourish. This is a

huge number of people and a huge number of hours donated, but it's all going towards one of the least known and recognised voluntary roles.

All of the National Governance Association's (NGA) contact with

“ But who's looking out for the welfare and workload of those who govern?”

governors and trustees confirms the same thing: they are very much concerned for the welfare of their schools' employees, and conscious of the workload their staff are burdened with.

For some years now, the NGA has been encouraging governing boards to ask questions to monitor workload and ensure the decisions they make do not lead to increasing hours. This is not simple at a time when costs of running a school are increasing at a much higher rate than resources, but it is imperative if we are to maintain a healthy culture and retain our workforce.

We are pleased the secretary of state has decided to put the issue

of staff workload at the top of his agenda too.

But who's looking out for the welfare and workload of those who govern? We know many governors and trustees, particularly those who chair a governing board, are

giving more than 20 days a year. Our most recent case studies of multi academy trusts show the time commitment can be even larger as a trust grows. Two years ago we carried out some research on how chairs use their time and we plan to return to this topic next term. There are ways of making the role more doable using distributive leadership, such as delegating fully or even sharing the chair. But even so, we are asking a lot of our volunteers.

We shared our findings with the Department for Education and this Saturday we are pleased to be welcoming the education secretary to address the NGA's summer conference. Since its 2010

white paper, the government has been saying it intends to raise the profile and status of school governance; we hope that Damian Hinds may have more to say on this at the weekend.

Being part of the school community is what keeps people governing, but we can't risk making the role one that only those who are not in full time employment have the time to commit. Much effort is being made to spread the word that we need more volunteers, especially outside London. The NGA is part of the Inspiring Governance support service, but finding people to volunteer is not easy.

The word "overlooked" is often applied to school governing, which is why I am so pleased that today the general secretaries of the two leadership associations – Geoff Barton of the Association of School and College Leaders, and Paul Whiteman of the National Association of Headteachers – have joined me to express their appreciation of the huge amount of time, skills, care and attention governors and trustees give to support and challenge school leaders in the interests of children.



3
MINUTE
READ

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

Most schools are now too poor to buy all the necessary learning resources, which Patrick Hayes believes is a shocking state of affairs

Schools are increasingly being forced to use Amazon wishlists to persuade parents to stump up the cash for much-needed classroom resources, as was reported in last week's *Schools Week*. The news comes as little surprise to us at the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA). With schools seeing cuts in real-terms, their budgets to spend on vital resources are one of the areas that have been hardest hit.

Working with the National Education Research Panel, BESA has monitored school resources expenditure for decades, and the country is currently in a trough so deep that it's comparable only with the great recession. Last year, the average amount spent by a primary school on resources dropped by 3.4 per cent, and the average secondary school spent 3.6 per cent less. At a time when the volume of pupils at schools is increasing, this is a severe drop coming after several consecutive years of more gradual decline.

No wonder, then, that parents are being asked to pay for resources that range from "scientific slime" to textbooks and glue sticks.

But let's not shoot the messenger. Amazon just happens to have developed some innovative tech that makes it easy for parents to chip in and help. Their wishlists work as well for weddings as they do for school resources. And schools are using a wide range of initiatives to encourage parents to contribute



PATRICK HAYES

Director, the British Educational Suppliers Association

No school should ever be forced to rely on Amazon

– from Nesta's Rocket Fund, which helps schools purchase the latest technology by fundraising from businesses and their community, to old-fashioned paper begging letters.

But what really beggars our belief is the a representative from the

national insurance contributions since April 2016, as well as increased employee pension contributions and auto-enrolment for a wider variety of staff since April 2015, mean that schools do not see any benefit.

“Less than 30 per cent of schools have enough funding to provide an adequate learning environment”

Department for Education who claimed in response to last week's *Schools Week* article that “we provide schools with funding to buy the resources they need”.

Whoever said this must either be extremely estranged from the situation that cash-strapped schools are facing on the ground, or simply in denial.

It is not an overstatement that schools are facing a funding crisis. While the overall education budget may be rising in cash terms, rising costs to schools, such as higher

The Education Policy Institute shows that, for the majority of schools, any cash increases to their budgets are wiped out by the one-per-cent pay settlement awarded to teachers last year. The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates that schools will have experienced a 6.5-per-cent real-terms cut by 2019/20.

These budgetary pressures are keenly felt by schools. Our own research shows that less than 30 per cent of primary and secondary schools believe they have enough funding to provide an



adequate teaching and learning environment and, even with the new funding formula, less than a quarter of schools are optimistic about funding for the next school year.

Schools are already starting to miss out on essential resources, and it's not just parents who are being asked to pay. A recent sector survey found that 94 per cent of teaching staff have paid out of their own pockets for essential classroom materials.

This is why we have launched the Resource Our Schools campaign, working with subject associations and representative bodies such as the NAHT, Naace and the Association for Science Education, to ensure every school has access to the resources they need to deliver the education that our children deserve.

While there are doubtless efficiencies to be made, the impact of cutting back resources upon a child's education should not be underestimated. There is powerful evidence to show that resources matter – from the size of the furniture, to the quality of the science equipment.

It is, of course, understandable that the school funding debate has focused largely on increasing staff salaries and removing the cap on public sector pay. However, it is paramount that resource funding not be overlooked.

3
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Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



The Teacher Gap

By Rebecca Allen and Sam Sims

Published by Routledge

Reviewed by James Noble-Rogers, executive director, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers

In their very readable, wide-ranging new book, Rebecca Allen and Sam Sims draw on their expertise in economics, education and psychology to explain what is not working well in how we recruit, train and develop teachers, and why it is not working.

This is a timely book, covering retention, hiring, teacher motivation, workload and professional development. The recommendations on teacher education have direct relevance to the government's proposals for strengthening QTS and improving career progression. But it is not only a book for policymakers. Indeed, it is interspersed with suggestions about what school leaders can do, without waiting for politicians to act.

The authors argue that, despite the huge amounts invested in various education initiatives over the years, standards in schools have not improved. The overriding message to policymakers is that the priority for funding should be on teacher professional development. It is generally accepted that teacher quality and effectiveness is the most important in-school factor affecting pupils' performance. Yet when it comes to investment, teacher development is placed at the back of the queue. This is "the teacher gap": the disparity between what is known about the importance of teachers, and how they are treated.

The key chapter, which does include specific recommendations for policymakers, is on how teachers are trained. The authors are quite

right that the current state of teacher education, in terms of career-long professional development, is far too front-loaded. Most new teachers in this country receive QTS after a nine-month postgraduate programme and will quite possibly not receive any subsequent meaningful professional development.

This front-loading does not however mean, as the authors seem to imply, that the quality of postgraduate ITE programmes is wanting (they are silent about undergraduate QTS programmes). In fact, according to all objective indicators, postgraduate ITE programmes are very good, especially considering the time and financial constraints they operate under. But new teachers do need to engage in self-determined and autonomous professional learning and receive effective coaching.

I think the authors are misguided, however, in proposing that the ITE pre-qualification phase should be extended to two years to receive an initial qualification, and a further four years before being deemed to be fully qualified.

At a time of teacher shortage, I would be worried that such a protracted qualification period would deter people from entering the profession.

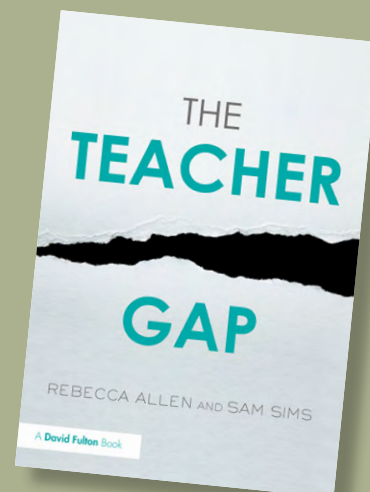
There are interesting suggestions on the organisation and funding of initial teacher education, such as varying the amount paid to schools hosting trainee teachers according to supply and demand. I would have preferred greater emphasis on the importance of genuine partnerships, although to be fair they

do refer to the possible blurring of what is done by schools and HEI partners.

There also seems to be some confusion in their funding proposals, with reference to schools buying in support from universities, and to universities operating as the funding channel for schools (assuming it is universities that would fill the role of the "regional teacher training institution").

The suggestion that we should be more selective about which schools are allowed to participate in ITE is an interesting one, although it would carry risks in terms of leaving some schools out in the cold, as the authors themselves acknowledge. And I would have liked more on how, in a system in which teachers frequently move school, consistency could be maintained across the whole country.

In short, this is a very important book which simply cannot be done justice in a review, and despite my reservations about some of the recommendations, I would strongly encourage people to read it.



3
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READ



Our blog reviewer of the week is Iesha Small, an educational researcher, teacher and commentator

@IESHASHMALL

Let them pee

@debrakidd

I didn't ever think I'd be reviewing a blog about letting children go to the toilet, but life surprises you sometimes. Debra Kidd is firmly of the view that children should be allowed to go to the toilet during lessons, but seems to have been challenged by other teachers who see it is an erosion of order and authority. To her detractors, Debra writes: "I would argue that in our role as teachers and safeguarders of children, our first duty is to do no harm."

Sometimes I come across situations that I honestly hadn't given much thought to until I realised how much they appeared to matter to other people. This is one of those things. In schools I've taught in, the expectation is that children go to the toilet during break and lunch, though they can go during a lesson at the teacher's discretion. My current school has a page at the back of the pupil planner that we sign, time and date so it's clear that pupils have permission to be out of lessons and, if necessary, we can notice any patterns. It seems to work well.

TOP BLOGS of the week

Getting research into policy: The role of think-tanks

@lkmco

I entered teaching via the Teach First scheme, and a few weeks ago I was asked to speak at a participant conference in Peterborough. It was for current teachers who were deciding what to do next. At these kinds of events there are always a few people who say they would like to work in policy or for a think-tank, but when you probe further they don't entirely know what that involves. Loic Menzies set up the LKMco educational think-tank (where I work part-time) accidentally about 10 years ago and this blog helpfully explains what think-tanks do and how they can affect the educational landscape.

"The role of think-tanks is not just to describe what should happen in an ideal world, but to propose applicable steps that will move the system towards it," it reads. If you work in schools or care about education you should read this to find out how think-tanks work to affect policy. Some of Michael Gove's most influential reforms started off as ideas in papers written by Policy Exchange, for example.

Why aren't children reading in schools?

@bcb567

Barbara Band is a school librarian, and in this post she explores the key factors that turn children into readers. "Creating readers is a long-term mission; there isn't a simple formula that can be applied and it will not happen overnight," she writes.

She outlines the importance of teachers, the school ethos, a good librarian and the students themselves, while she also touches on the impact of the home environment. There is an interesting point about many teachers lacking of knowledge of young adult books; I have recently read *Noughts of Crosses* by Malorie Blackman and realized that good young adult books are as gripping and well-constructed as books aimed at older adult audiences.

Doing a PGCE with a chronic health condition – an experience and some advice

@chevalier_cygne

Sometimes I don't realise how ignorant I am about certain topics until I read about them, and this blog was one of those times. As somebody who is able-bodied and generally healthy, I'd never given any thought to how somebody training as a teacher would be affected by a chronic health condition. I know that my training year was fairly intense – and I was in full health. Mel is an SEN teacher who outlines her experience of doing a PGCE with a chronic health condition and offers advice for others in a similar situation: "If we can find institutions that will back us we are doing a great thing by being there."

3
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READ

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



Troubled UCAT trust to shed four schools after finances warning

Matthew Elton Thomas @MatAndElTho

Businesses do this. Walk away when the profits dry up. Stage/Virgin. Only THIS SHOULDN'T BE A BUSINESS

Chris Sainsbury @sainsbo1967

Another MAT shambles. Keep stacking em up! At what point will the emperor realise he isn't wearing any clothes?

LocatEd expands remit to include 'site optimisation'

JSM @inclusive_head

This makes my blood boil! So sell off your playing fields (or as we call them, our *classrooms* for PE!) And if you have no land, rebroker your energy bills. That will do the trick. This really is delusional...

Ofsted attempts parental charm offensive

Kojo @anthonyssappong

Am I the only one who thinks an @ofstednews report is not a reliable source of evidence for the quality of education and experience your child will have access to in a school? After all it is mainly based on a day or two's snapshot of school life.

Leyton Mark @SerLeighton

Aren't the most important educational stakeholders the students themselves?!

Helen Keenan @hbkeenan

Perhaps schools could teach Ofsted how to communicate with parents instead of patronising heads, teachers, parents and governors with their inconsistent and flawed inspection system?

Steven Connor @connstevie

How about teachers?

Make a wish: The schools forced to use Amazon to ask parents to buy pens

Stuart Rowntree @stuart_rowntree

Has it really gotten to that stage!? Whilst that would

REPLY OF THE WEEK Mark Watson

Make a wish: The schools forced to use Amazon to ask parents to buy pens

I have an Amazon wishlist, and it's public. Did I do this because I was "forced to"?

Of course not. I don't need anyone to buy me anything on my wishlist, but if one of my friends wants to buy me something they can see what it is I'd like. Seems like exactly what's going on here.

Most schools have summer fetes and other fundraising events that raise money for them to spend on education related activities. What's the real difference between that and using Amazon?

I can't see anything in the above article which supports the sensationalist headline that schools have been forced to use Amazon. Indeed all of the quotes used are from schools who have made it clear that this is all voluntary and relates to additional resources.

If the author of this piece has respect for the readers she will clarify the names of the schools who she claims are "forced to use Amazon to ask parents to buy pens".



promote a beautiful community spirit and I totally commend the idea and those parents for being involved, it's sad to see that the government are forcing us to that stage and won't take responsibility for their schools.

TAs miss out on training as funding plummets

Alex beauchamp @al_beauchamp

This is awful. They make up half the workforce in some schools. We should be investing in them not neglecting them.

RedBarney @RedBarney

CFO asks CEO: "What happens if we invest in developing our people and then they leave us?" CEO: "What happens if we don't, and they stay?"

James Taylor @Teaching_Mr_T

TAs are educators – they are the best value for money resource a school has – they need high-quality CPD in order to build their effectiveness.

Book review: The working class: Poverty, education and alternative voices by Ian Gilbert

Sandra Leaton Gray @drleatongray

But being working class isn't some kind of pathology.



WIN!

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

FRIDAY

For anyone hoping Amanda Spielman would turn Ofsted inspections into a breeze, we have disappointing news.

The chief inspector of schools told the annual conference of the Pre-school Learning Alliance that inspection is "never going to be a completely relaxing experience", and insisted that "like it or not, we need accountability so children get the high standards of education and care they deserve".

But she also agreed with recent claims from the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years that inspection "doesn't have to be stressful".

So... not a walk in the park, but perhaps a stroll through a fairly dull town centre?

SUNDAY

At the end of a quiet half-term, the Department for Education wanted fanfare for its much-anticipated new teacher vacancy website.

But far from making it easy for schools in the pilot areas to access it, it failed to mention what the site was called in its own press release, and then refused to give it to *Schools Week* when asked.

It's almost as if the DfE doesn't actually want a website that it would have to run in future for free to become a success...

Monday

It's official. The fate of Durand Academy in south London lies not with the academy chain behemoth Harris, but with Dunraven, a tiny single-academy trust up the

road from the ailing school.

As expected, the DfE spin machine sprung into action claiming that ministers had "mutually agreed" with Harris that it was "not best placed" to take over at Durand.

But in a strongly-worded statement, Harris said it was walking away because of "risky legal agreements" with the company that owns the land on which the school sits, as well as concerns about the state of its buildings.

All of which leads *Week in Westminster* to wonder how plucky little Dunraven is going to cope with such risky arrangements. Is the Department going to slip it some extra cheese? Or has it been told by that such things are only minor matters – even though they've caused headaches for everyone else for years and years?

We couldn't possibly comment.

TUESDAY

Dame Rachel De Souza, head of academies minister Theo Agnew's Inspiration Trust and a favourite of ex-ed sec Michael Gove, has shrugged off rumours that she put herself forward to challenge Amanda Spielman for the leadership of Ofsted.

In 2016, it was reported that De Souza, whose chain has a reputation for strict behaviour policies, was one of those competing for the chief inspector job, up against the likes of ex-NAHT general secretary Russell Hobby and Spielman, who was at the time Ofqual's chair.

But in a recent Guardian interview, De Souza denied she applied.

In the same interview, the well-known

head also defended Ofsted's decision to reinspect one of Inspiration's schools just four months after reaching a damning verdict.

Schools Week revealed in May that inspectors had revisited Cobholm Primary Academy after the trust complained to Ofsted about a critical report. The second attempt was much less scathing, which gave rise to claims the chain had received special treatment.

As *Schools Week* pointed out in original the story, around 40 schools have return visits every year due to complaints.

THURSDAY

The government may have dashed Robert Halfon's hopes of rebranding the Social Mobility Commission as the Social Justice Commission, but that isn't going to stop him.

At the annual conference for multi-academy trust TBAP, Halfon proudly said "I do not like the phrase 'social mobility'". It sounds like a Vodafone advert. Yes, it describes moving up the ladder of opportunity (BINGO), but social justice is about helping the most disadvantaged reach the ladder of opportunity, and supporting them should they fall".

This is the man who was so excited about his pet "ladder of opportunity" phrase that he had badges made, so we can only wait for SJC merch to make its debut.

In other news, it's the Queen's birthday honours this weekend meaning a new slew of sirs and dames. Perhaps they should all get together to discuss educational disadvantage. We could call it the Social Nobility Commission. Arf.





SENIOR PRODUCTION OFFICER

Open 5th June 2018
Closes 19th June 2018
Salary £31,000 to £36,000
Permanent - Coventry

Communications Directorate

The Communications Directorate comprises three teams: internal communications; strategic communications; and, media and public enquiries. We are seeking a Senior Production Officer to support communication with our staff, the media and the general public.

The Communications Directorate manages all of the organisation's digital, social media and hard-copy production activities, from establishing and maintaining digital communication platforms, to creating videos and infographics, and publishing a range of corporate documents. It is a creative team that plays an important role in educating key stakeholders. It also has a responsibility to help inform our staff of what is happening within and outside the business.

Further information

We are looking for a self-motivated and creative Senior Production Officer who has experience of working across a range of media. You will have a proactive approach and be used to leading the creation of high quality graphic design, photographic, film, sound and motion graphic outputs for internal and external audiences. You will have experience of managing relationships with external suppliers of creative content, and be able to work with internal colleagues to ensure assets are delivered on time and budget. Reporting to the Senior Manager, Strategic Communications, your role will involve planning and delivering hard-copy and digital outputs in support of Ofqual's activities and policies. You will contribute to the development of educational materials for members of the public, and you will help to deliver internal staff communications.

This is an exciting and varied role within an organisation that plays an important role in the education sector. You will have the opportunity to develop your skills to enhance Ofqual's work in the qualifications and examinations sector, the role of the regulator and the importance of maintaining standards.

- To be considered for this role, you will need to have the following skills and experience:
- Good knowledge of the latest design and multimedia production approaches, with the ability to distil complex requirements and develop a creative solution.
- Experience of graphic design and filming, and video and sound editing.
- Experience of management and negotiation of external agencies in deliverables.
- Experience of managing and developing corporate brand, style and visual assets.
- Demonstrable experience in graphic design, photography, filming and audio recording including a successful track record in engaging a wide range of different audiences, and demonstrating an understanding of the challenges with project management and delivery of materials.
- Experience of awareness of accessibility, equality and usability issues.
- Excellent attention to detail, and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with the audience.
- Experience of successful working in customer-led environments.
- Experience of delivering work within strict deadlines.
- Experience of co-ordinating multi-disciplinary work to achieve objectives.

Ofqual regulates qualifications, exams and assessments in England. We're here to secure the standards of qualifications, to promote confidence in them and to ensure that the system works well – that standards are maintained.

We have a big job to do in a dynamic and changing sector and we are seeking an experienced individual to join our Communications team to ensure we engage effectively with our staff and external stakeholders.

SUPPORT OFFICER MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENQUIRIES

Open 5th June 2018
Closes 19th June 2018
Salary £22,000 to £25,500
Permanent - Coventry

Communications Directorate

The Communications Directorate comprises three teams: internal communications; strategic communications; and, media and public enquiries. We are seeking a Support Officer to assist the public and press with their queries, concerns or complaints.

The Communications Directorate manages all enquiries from the public and handles the organisation's media liaison activities. It monitors traditional and social media coverage and provides advice and guidance to staff. The team plays an important role in educating key stakeholders, and has a responsibility to help inform our staff of what is happening outside the business.

Further information

We are looking for a self-motivated Support Officer who can ensure all calls and emails are handled in a way that maintains or enhances public confidence in the regulated qualifications system. You will have a proactive approach and have the ability to assist with a wide range of issues, sometimes complex, that may be troubling customers. Reporting to the Associate Director for Communications, your role will involve providing a professional and effective frontline service for all first contacts into Ofqual. You will also contribute to the development of educational materials for members of the public.

This is an exciting and varied role within an organisation that plays an important role in the education sector. You will have the opportunity to develop your skills to enhance Ofqual's work in the qualifications and examinations sector, the role of the regulator and the importance of maintaining standards.

To be considered for this role, you will need to have the following skills and experience:

- Knowledge and experience of operating in a customer service and/or helpdesk environment
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Experience of dealing with complex enquiries and using a range of communication methods to respond
- Experience of working as part of a team to deliver against targets
- Understanding of digital and social media and its role in communications
- Ability to use appropriate IT applications effectively (including Outlook, SharePoint, Word, PowerPoint and Excel)
- Ability to work flexibly and apply good time management skills, to respond to changing needs and priorities of the team and the organisation

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Academy Trust

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Kibworth Primary School

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This is an exciting opportunity to join a large and thriving semi-rural primary school. Our school is a place of discovery and friendship, where all children develop a genuine love of learning, achieve to the best of their ability, and are prepared for the next stage of their education. opportunity to join a large and thriving

The successful candidate will work with many of our school improvement experts such as subject lead professionals, executive Headteachers and other cluster leaders to improve outcomes for children.

We would welcome applications from experienced Headteachers, aspiring leaders such as those who are currently in a Deputy headteacher or Head of School role.

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- A peer network of like-minded professionals
- Recognition that all schools are unique, with an approach that encourages local accountability and governance that is responsive to community needs
- A commitment to excellence in education, grounded in a shared moral purpose of ensuring high quality provision for all learners
- An established track record of high quality education and experience of leading rapid school improvement
- An employer committed to offering all staff high quality professional development opportunities
- Shared resources and expertise
- Effective business management systems, ensuring that our academies are able to focus on delivering inspirational teaching and learning



We would encourage potential applicants to arrange an appointment to discuss the role informally and visit our school. Please contact **Sam Adams**, to arrange a visit before the application deadline – sadams@dsatkibworth.org

For an application pack, please contact **Emma Perkins** – eperkins@discoveryschoolstrust.org.uk or telephone **0116 2793462**

Closing Date for applications: 25th June 2018

Interviews will take place on: 4th & 5th July 2018

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Our ambition is that during their time with us students will develop the skills, insight and independence that will consolidate their plans beyond university. We will be tasking ourselves with an aspirational level of skills development and wrap around support that will distinguish us from other A Level providers.

Closing Date: Midnight 11th June 2018

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You will be based at one of our main sites (Stourbridge, Matthew Boulton, James Watt or Sutton Coldfield) but may be required to travel to other College sites.

Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) is a great institution, home to thousands of bright and enthusiastic students and many talented and experienced staff. We are passionate about providing the qualifications and training that local employers and communities need.

Our goal is to prepare all of our students for the world of work, both now and in years to come. Our facilities are world class: with many employers helping us to invest in the latest equipment so that our students gain the most up-to-date skills possible. This offers them an enhanced learning experience, one which better prepares them for their chosen employment and careers.

At BMet we are ambitious for our learners and the employers and economies we serve. Our staff and governors are committed to a relentless focus on quality and continuous improvement to further drive up standards and deliver even greater success.

Closing Date: Midnight 20th June 2018

To apply for these vacancies, please visit:
www.bmet.ac.uk/work-at-bmet/

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Southway is on a campus that includes The Regis School (secondary); Arena Sports Centre; Stepping Stones Nursery; The Phoenix Youth Centre and the West Sussex Adult Education Service (Aspire). Good collaborative working between these groups already exists to serve local people and is developing fast. Southway's Principal would have the opportunity to contribute to that cooperative growth.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to visit the school by contacting Caroline Smith on 01243 810202, who will arrange for you to meet with Diane Willson, the Chair of the Local Governing Body.

To apply please go to

<http://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/vacancies>

For more information about United Learning click here

<http://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/leadership>

Closing date: 22 June 2018, Midnight.

Shortlisting date: w/c 25 June 2018.

Interviews will be over two days, 12 and 13 July 2018.



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SCHOOLS WEEK

We hope you've enjoyed
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Let us know what you think of this week's edition on twitter
(@schoolsweek) or email the editor Shane Mann,
shane.mann@lsect.com.

