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Second Harris school in cheating probe



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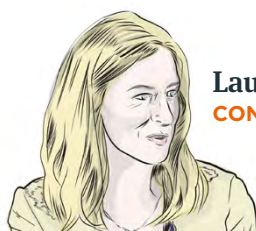


Schools shell out £3.8m as council academy conversion fees rocket

- Surge in number of local authorities charging schools to become academies
- Councils appear to flout rules over forced academisation fees
- Department for Education warns payments must be 'reasonable'

SCHOOLS
WEEK

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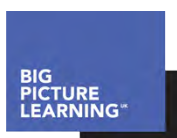
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Opinion



**JAMES
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Chair and acting director, Centre for
Education Economics

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**ANNE
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National director, Whole School SEND

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Jon Hutchinson

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**The school given
an 'unprecedented'
repayment deal**

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**Spielman: Ofsted
has increased
teach-to-test
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The national schools commissioner is here to stay



The government has announced it has "no plans" to scrap the role of the national schools commissioner, putting to bed rumours that a review of school accountability policies could see the job axed.

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Teacher pay deal leaves schools in the lurch

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

School leaders claim they have been left out of pocket under the government's method of doling out cash for teacher pay rises, despite assurances of full funding.

The Department for Education announced on Friday it will allocate additional funding for schools to cover teacher pay rises based on their pupil numbers, with uplifts for geographic location and school type (see box below).

It was announced in July there will be a 3.5 per cent pay rise for the main pay range, two per cent for the upper pay range and a 1.5 per cent rise for the leadership pay range.

Schools must meet the first 1 per cent, but the government said it will "fully fund" the remainder.

However some school business managers have calculated the amount they'll receive – and found they have a shortfall totalling thousands of pounds.

The Wyvern special educational needs school in Kent will fall about £3,500 short of covering pay rises this year.

Tina Button (pictured), school business manager at the Wyvern, said it was "difficult" to say why, but suggested that the government's higher rate for SEN schools was still not enough for their high staff to pupil ratio.

"I can only presume because we have a lot of staff, the figures don't work for our school."

Another school business manager, based in Surrey, tweeted that her school would be short of about £5,000 by March, asking "who are the gainers?"

Schools Week understands that schools with higher-paid, more experienced staff could be facing the biggest shortfall.

Schools in the same location, sector, and with the same number of pupils will get a similar-sized grant.

However one school could be staffed with teachers at the top of the pay scale, while the other school has mostly



teachers at the lower end.

As a result, a school staffed with more expensive teachers could end up short of funding while a school staffed with newly-qualified teachers could have a surplus.

Mike Cameron, a school governor, said: "The assumption is that schools will have a similar spread of experience to the whole population of teachers.

Many schools will, but some won't."

The shortfall could be sizeable at a time when "every penny counts," he added.

An academy trust chief operating officer, who did not want to be named, told *Schools Week* the shortfall will "make a difference" across larger schools, adding it could encourage schools to have "more newly-qualified teachers if your budgets are tight".

The DfE said this was the "simplest, most transparent and timeliest way to get the money to schools".

But Kevin Courtney, joint general

secretary of the National Education Union, said the fact schools will get pay rise funding based on pupil numbers "makes matters worse".

"The government should base the grants on teacher numbers and require schools to use the money for pay increases."

There will be £187 million available for the seven months until the end of the financial year in March this year, and then £321 million for the whole of 2019-20.

Matthew Clements-Wheeler, chair of the Institute of School Business Leadership, said the government's fully-funded pay rise "appears to mean fully funded in some cases, not fully funded in other cases."

The DfE has said the extra money for teacher pay rises will come from an underspend in its central budget, chiefly spare cash from lower-than-forecast pupil numbers.

How the government will fund teacher pay rises:

The government has taken the overall annual pay bill for teachers – including additional pension and national insurance costs – and applied the average percentage uplift for each year.

Officials then subtracted the 1 per cent ministers said schools must pay towards the rise.

The money is then divided between primary, secondary, and special schools based on the size of the teacher wage bill for each sector.

An Area Cost Adjustment has also been applied to consider higher teacher wages in London.

The amount was then divided for each sector between the number of pupils to generate a per-pupil rate.



News

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Be 'curious and sceptical', CEOs told

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Academy bosses must watch out for inappropriate behaviour in their organisations, the government's school funding chief has warned.

Eileen Milner, head of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, wrote to academy trust heads this week to remind them that as accounting officers they are responsible for using taxpayers' money wisely.

They must apply "a degree of both curiosity and scepticism" to ensure that budgets are used as parliament intended, she said.

It follows the Panorama investigation into the Bright Tribe academy trust earlier this month.

New trustees at the embattled academy chain are now investigating allegations of repeated false claims for building and maintenance grants.

Schools Week also revealed last week how two other academy trusts had misused capital funding.

Milner said a review of trusts' accounts from last year found the main areas of non-compliance were "related-party transactions" – in which there is a pre-existing connection with a company – procurement and tendering, financial reporting to managers and trustees and weak independent checks within the trust.

She highlighted changes to this year's Academies Financial Handbook.

From April 1 next year trusts will have to declare all related-party transactions in advance and ask the ESFA for approval of payments of more than £20,000.

The reasons for choosing suppliers must be recorded following a fair competition, and trusts will have to prove that no-one in their organisation had a personal interest in the deal.

Milner also reminded recipients they must be "transparent, proportionate and justifiable" in the way they set executive pay.

In March, *Schools Week* revealed the names of 87 academy trusts whose executive pay had been challenged by the government.

Trusts will have to report in their accounts return which employees received annual full-time equivalent pay of more than £100,000.

All trustees must see a trust's financial reports six times a year, while the chair must see them every month, Milner said.



EXCLUSIVE

Second Harris academy has SATs results annulled

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Pupils at a second academy run by the high-profile Harris Federation have had their SATs results annulled.

Schools Week revealed on Monday that former year 6 pupils at the "outstanding"-rated Harris Primary Academy Kent House, in south London, had some of their results wiped following an investigation into maladministration by the Standards and Testing Agency.

The Harris Federation would not confirm how many pupils were affected or which exam results had been annulled.

It follows a separate investigation by the STA last month that found teachers at another Harris school – Harris Academy Philip Lane, in north London – had "overaided" pupils in their SATs papers, and several papers were annulled.

The trust, which runs 47 schools in and around the capital, has promised an investigation into both incidents.

An academy spokesperson also apologised to parents and said it was determined to find out what happened.

"No stone will be left unturned by our investigation, and we will not hesitate to take the toughest possible action".

The latest investigation follows a huge rise this year in cheating probes.

Provisional key stage 2 data for 2018, published earlier this month, said 2,688 test results were suppressed while the government investigated, compared to just 723 in 2017.

Maladministration is any act that "affects the integrity, security or confidentiality" of exams

and leads to results that do not "reflect pupils' unaided work or actual abilities".

The STA said it has advised Harris Primary Academy Kent House on how to avoid future maladministration.

The Department for Education said the annulled results will not "adversely affect any of the pupils as the school can provide teaching assessments to show their progress in these subjects".

The STA concluded last month that year 6 pupils at Harris Academy Philip Lane were given too much help in their English reading and maths reasoning SATs papers.

The scores for those papers were annulled and pupils received scores only for their grammar, punctuation and spelling tests.

The Harris Federation has repeatedly been lauded by ministers as a top-performing trust.

In 2015, chief executive Dan Moynihan was invited by schools minister Nick Gibb to explain at a public committee how his takeover of Philip Lane academy had benefited pupils.

He responded that the number of children reaching secondary-ready standards in reading, writing and maths had improved dramatically, and they were "better prepared for secondary".

It is not the only trust to have SATs results wiped this summer.

Last month the STA annulled the maths results for all pupils at St Matthew's Church of England Primary School in north London, which was rated "outstanding" at its last Ofsted inspection in 2009.

A DfE spokesperson said they took cheating allegations very seriously and provide schools with comprehensive statutory guidance on test administration.

News

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Number of councils charging academy conversion fee rockets

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

INVESTIGATES

Schools have had to shell out £3.8 million to cover the legal costs of converting to academies after a surge in councils passing on the bill.

A *Schools Week* investigation has revealed that more than half of councils now impose penalty fees on schools that convert.

The charge varies from a couple of hundred pounds to £40,000 per school.

Some councils still maintain they are obliged to pay conversion fees, especially when schools are forced to become academies.

But 69 of 120 councils responding to a freedom of information request by *Schools Week* confirmed they now charge schools for the legal costs of conversion, raking in £1.7 million last year alone.

It marks a massive increase, as council budget cuts bite, since 2013 when seven local authorities charged schools for conversion costs, with fees totalling £336,000.

The total paid by schools in the last five years amounts to £3.8 million.

Karen Sayers, chief operating officer at the Partnership Learning Trust in Dagenham, warned that schools are at risk of digging into their core budgets if fees go too high.

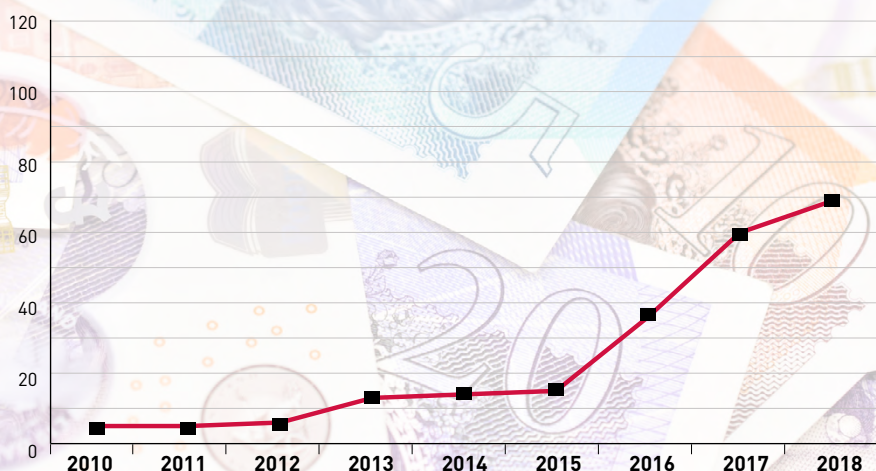
Her team has learnt to "negotiate tightly" with councils and managed to reduce charges by up to £1,200 per school. "Otherwise we'd end up giving councils money that should go on pupils," she said.

Schools currently receive a £25,000 government grant to aid conversion. But a spokesperson for the Local Government Association told *Schools Week* that councils are incurring "significant costs" to cover conversions.

Councils said the charges go towards the cost of transferring payrolls, management information systems and land to the new trust, as well as lawyers' fees.

Essex, for example, said they introduced a charge because of a

TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNCILS CHARGING A FEE



Graph: Based on figures from 120 of 152 councils

continued reduction in funding, adding that schools receive a start-up grant.

Thurrock said charges were introduced to make up for funding cuts and allow conversions to happen in a timely manner.

There are also big differences in how much councils charge schools.

Medway council, in Kent, charged Barnsole primary school £289 to convert – while Derby council charged three schools £40,000

because private finance initiative agreements meant additional legal and contractor costs.

Oxfordshire council charges a flat rate of £6,000, but estimates each conversion costs them £12,000.

Others, such as Cheshire West and Chester council, aim to recoup 100 per cent of costs.

A total of 24 councils started charging for conversion costs last year and 21 introduced the policy in 2016.

However, 51 councils still do not charge.

Buckinghamshire said it has spent £260,000 on conversions, recognising that "school budgets are under significant pressure already."

Oldham said it does

not believe it should levy a fee, particularly on schools forced to convert.

Some councils, such as Newcastle, charge for all conversions except forced ones. But some, including Kent, for example, have a standard rate irrespective of "conversion route".

The latter appears to flout government guidance that no charges should be levied on schools forced to become academies after being rated inadequate by Ofsted.

Russell Dalton, chief operating officer at the Diocese of Worcester multi-academy trust, said much greater transparency was needed. His council introduced a £7,000 flat fee in April.

He said that if academies must be transparent about how public money is used, local authorities should be too.

"What I find really hard to grasp is how a school with about 70 pupils can cost the same as a school with 1,800 pupils," he said.

The LGA said its research shows primary school conversions cost £6,400-£6,900 and secondaries £7,300-£8,400.

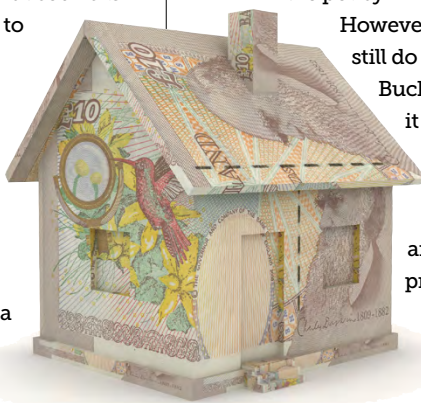
The DfE said it was "clear that councils cannot charge for any costs relating to converting failing schools".

"We are working with the sector to minimise these costs and have published guidance on this for schools and academy trusts."

They warned any council fees must also be "reasonable".

£336,400
CONVERSION
FEES 2013-14

£1.7M
CONVERSION
FEES 2017-18



Academies watch

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Struggling academy gets 'unprecedented' repayment deal

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

An academy trust has been given seven years to repay a government bail-out to shore up its budget shortfall – a timeframe experts have suggested is unprecedented.

The Teddington School in Richmond-upon-Thames has been told by the Education and Skills Funding Agency that it has until August 2025 to repay the advance funding.

The schedule was specified in a financial notice to improve published last week over the single academy trust's "weak financial position".

Not all financial notices to improve specify a timeframe for any repayments of advance government funding, but when they do the period tends to be much shorter.

Neither the trust nor the Department for Education would say how much extra cash the school was given.

Andy Jolley, a former school governor and education blogger, said it was a scandal how the government hands out "significant sums with no accountability".

"There is usually something seriously amiss before a trust receives this funding, making it fairly likely it will be rebrokered or be taken over within seven years, and the money written off," he said.

In a different case the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust was given a financial notice to improve in August 2016 which revealed that advances of grant funding had been issued.

But last year *Schools Week* reported the DfE had to write off more than £500,000 it was owed by the now defunct trust.

Pam Tuckett, head of academies at accounting firm Bishop Fleming, told

Schools Week seven years was probably the maximum time allowed to repay extra funding.

"I've never seen that length of time, it is unusual" she said. "I can only suggest that anything shorter would be an unrealistic repayment schedule."

Micon Metcalfe (pictured), an academy trust chief operating officer and a fellow of the Institute for School Business Leaders, said trusts are typically given three to four years to achieve a balanced budget after an advance, with maintained schools only allowed a licensed deficit for up to five years.

Other financial notices to improve – also issued to single academy trusts – have set just two years for money to be paid back.



Accounts for Teddington School say it faces "significant financial challenges", citing funding not keeping up with inflation and pressure in Richmond to reduce spending on special educational needs.

The trust refused to comment directly on its debt repayments, but chair of governors Juliet Hartridge said the board was confident it could "ensure the school regains its previous high financial standards".

She said the governing body is working with a national leader of education and Kathy Pacey, acting headteacher, is being supported by an "experienced professional partner" from a high performing trust.

The school has also recruited a financial adviser, a school improvement partner and a resource management advisor.

The Department for Education refused to explain why Teddington School had been given seven years to repay its debts.

A spokesperson said: "The FNTI will be in place until we are satisfied that the trust has taken effective action to address our concerns."

DfE 'revises' financial warning to Engage trust

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

The government has revised a notice ordering a struggling academy trust to improve its financial management and re-issued it with an extended deadline, *Schools Week* can reveal.

The Engage multi-academy trust, which runs nine schools in Norfolk, was issued with a financial notice to improve by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in March this year. But, unusually, it received another one six months later.

A Department for Education spokesperson

said the most recent notice was a "revision", because the first notice could have been "better targeted" and "a bit more tailored".

In the latest letter the trust has been given until the end of this month, rather than April, to deliver a draft action plan.

Dennis Freeman, chair of trustees at Engage, said the second notice "outlines the criteria that the board need to address in order to get the notice removed".

Although it is unusual for a trust's funding

to be ended because it failed to meet the conditions of an FNTI, it can add weight to the case for rebrokered or closing a school where academic performance is also a concern.

Another trust, E-ACT, was issued with a notice in March 2013 and then re-issued with another in September 2014.

Sue Baldwin, then director of academies at the ESFA, said the notice had been amended to account for the loss of nine academies from the trust.

Academies watch

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Delta steps in to sponsor former Wakefield City Academies Trust school

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

The last of the 21 schools abandoned by the Wakefield City Academies Trust 12 months ago has finally secured a date to transfer to a new sponsor.

Mexborough Academy in South Yorkshire has proved the toughest WCAT school to rebroker due to its hefty private finance initiative (PFI) contract.

Mexborough pays £1.6 million a year as part of a contract between Doncaster council and Vinci, a French construction firm that built the school in 2009. The contract has 16 years left to run, and repayments often rise each year with interest.

But the government has now confirmed the school will be taken on by Delta Academies Trust in November.

In March, Sean Gibbons, chair at the nearby Montagu Academy, another former WCAT school taken over by Delta, told *Schools Week* that Mexborough's PFI contract meant "nobody will touch it with a barge pole".

Schools Week has also previously reported how failing schools with hefty PFI repayments have been left in limbo because new sponsors are put off by the costs.

However the DfE refused to say whether it had to offer any additional financial incentives to entice Delta to take over the school.

The trust also refused to comment, despite repeated enquires.

Meg Hillier, chair of the parliamentary public accounts committee, criticised the "inflexible" and "exorbitantly expensive" contracts earlier this year, after a National Audit Office report revealed that there are currently over 700 operational PFI deals across the public sector, with a value of around £60 billion.

Two other WCAT schools joined a new sponsor earlier this month. Balby Carr Community Academy was rebrokered to the Astrea trust and Carr Lodge Academy joined Exceed Learning Partnership.

Schools Week reported in September last year that WCAT was set to shut down following a "robust period of review". The trust said it did not have the "capacity to facilitate the rapid improvement our academies need and our students deserve".

An earlier government investigation found concerns about payments to its former chief executive, Mike Ramsey, and forecasted budget deficits.

If not now, Wrenn?



EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

An academy run by the doomed Education Fellowship Trust has still not been transferred to its new sponsor, 20 months after the government first threatened it with intervention.

The Wrenn Academy in Wellingborough is the last school left on TEFT's roster after 11 others were rebrokered to new trusts following financial problems and concerns over poor outcomes for pupils.

Schools Week understands the delay is due to negotiations over the school's £1.3 million deficit.

Figures released for the first time last year revealed the government handed academy trusts sweeteners totalling £7 million to take over struggling schools abandoned by their previous sponsors.

It came amid an increasing shortage of willing school sponsors, leading to warnings about failing institutions, dubbed "schools no-one wants", being left in limbo.

Wrenn, a 1,400-place secondary school and sixth form, was threatened with having its funding terminated and being rebrokered to a new trust in January last year after Ofsted rated it inadequate in October 2016.

TEFT, founded by Sir Ewan Harper, an architect of academies policy under Tony Blair, subsequently announced plans to walk away from all 12 of its schools in March 2017 amid the ongoing financial troubles.

The trust, which ran schools across Northamptonshire, Wiltshire and Maidenhead, had previously been ordered to closely monitor its finances following an investigation by the Education Funding Agency in 2016.

In May this year, Ofsted heaped praise on the

school's leaders and raised its rating to "good", but savaged the trust for failing to provide enough support while it was being turned around.

Inspectors said that despite the upheaval created by the rebrokerage process, pupils were making good progress and felt "valued and extremely well supported". Behaviour was good and pastoral care "strong".

But they said the "considerable improvements" in all areas of the school were the result of the hard work and dedication of leaders and staff rather than the actions of TEFT, which had not provided effective support or challenge.

At the time, principal Steve Elliott told parents the school would join the Creative Education Trust in the summer.

He said the school's future was secure and it would soon continue to thrive as part of its new trust.

However, the government has this week confirmed that Wrenn Academy remains part of TEFT.

"Our priority has been to transfer all academies from TEFT, as smoothly as possible, to strong trusts that will be able to give these pupils the best possible education," a spokesperson said.

"We are working closely with all parties involved to transfer Wrenn School out of TEFT to Creative Education Trust, the confirmed new trust, as soon as possible. The Creative Education Trust is carefully liaising with the school ahead of transfer to ensure minimal disruption for both staff and pupils."

According to TEFT's latest accounts, Wrenn Academy had a deficit of £1,357,000 in the year ending August 31, 2017.

Wrenn Academy and the Creative Education Trust were approached for comment.

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SPIELMAN: OFSTED IS TOO FOCUSED ON OUTCOMES

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Ofsted has promised to make the curriculum a central focus of its new framework after admitting inspectors have placed too much weight on test and exam results.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman (pictured) said this week that a renewed focus on curriculum should reverse the current incentives that come from inspection being too focused on outcomes.

As a result Ofsted has increased pressure on school leaders, teachers and pupils to deliver test scores above all else, she added.

In a commentary released on the watchdog's website, Spielman said: "Providing a more rounded picture of the curriculum is where inspection can play its part."

The comments were published alongside the latest findings from Ofsted's

curriculum review.

Inspectors visited 23 schools between January and March this year, handpicked from inspection reports, media articles or suggestions from Ofsted's advisory panel for having "particularly invested in curriculum design". The inspectorate would not reveal the names of the schools when asked by Schools Week.

Ofsted divided the curriculums into "knowledge-led", found in about a third of schools, "knowledge-engaged", in around half of schools, or "skills-led", identified in a small number.

Findings included weaknesses in some leaders' descriptions of their curriculum intent across all the groups, but also that teachers recognised the importance of progression through regular curriculum reviews.

Spielman added: "Ultimately, the curriculum is the yardstick for what school leaders want their pupils to know and to be able

to do by the time they leave school."

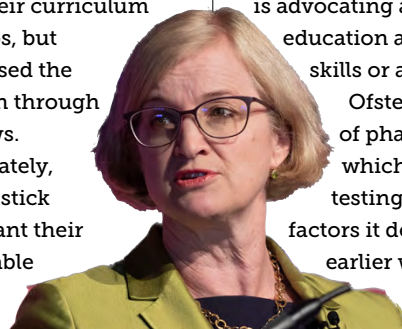
She said it was now imperative that the new inspection framework has the curriculum as a "central focus".

She suggested a successful curriculum should be implemented through "well-taught and appropriately sequenced content, thoughtfully designed assessment practice and consideration of an appropriate model of progression".

Spielman added that there "need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in exams".

She also hit back at suggestions that she is advocating a "pub-quiz" approach to education at the expense of developing skills or a deeper understanding.

Ofsted will publish the findings of phase three of the review, which involves "thorough testing" of the curriculum quality factors it devised following its earlier work, alongside the new framework consultation.



University language students sought to mentor year 9 pupils

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

EXCLUSIVE

The government is turning to university students in a bid to plug the falling number of GCSE pupils taking modern foreign languages.

The Department for Education is offering a £100,000 contract for a company to run the 'languages mentoring project', part of a new push to encourage pupils to "think globally".

Under the scheme, modern foreign language students at English universities will mentor and discuss with year 9 state school pupils the opportunities that languages could offer.

In year 9 pupils must make a choice about which subject to study at GCSE, but according to the British Council's 2018 language trends survey over a third of state schools now allow pupils to opt out of studying a language at this age.

While the English Baccalaureate, introduced in 2010, requires pupils to take at least one language at GCSE, it has not



been enough to significantly increase MFL entries.

Figures from the Joint Council for Qualifications showed MFL GCSE entries were up by 0.4 per cent per cent in 2018, but this marked the first time they had risen since 2013. Entries dropped by 7.3 per cent in 2017.

The Association of School and College Leaders has also challenged this year's

figures, suggesting the rise was due to some schools switching from iGCSEs – which no longer count in school performance tables – to the new GCSEs.

Suzanne O'Farrell, curriculum and assessment specialist at ASCL, said the union is pleased the DfE is "looking beyond the lever of the English Baccalaureate to encourage uptake of modern foreign languages".

"Anything which helps to enthuse young people about the considerable benefits of learning languages is to be welcomed.

"We need more ideas about how to boost language uptake as part of a national strategy to reverse the decline in these important subjects."

JCQ statistics showed entries for French were down by 2.9 per cent in 2018, while German entries were up by 2 per cent and Spanish by 4.4 per cent.

But when iGCSEs and GCSE entries are counted together, French fell by 5.9 per cent and German by 3.5 per cent, while the rise in Spanish was only 1.7 per cent.

School investigations

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TV HEAD UNDER INVESTIGATION RESIGNS

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Drew Povey, the headteacher featured in the hit TV series *Educating Greater Manchester*, has resigned, publishing an open letter accusing the council of waging a "personal vendetta" against him.

Povey (pictured) was suspended from Harrop Fold School in July along with three other staff members when Salford City Council launched an investigation.

The council refused to say why the staff had been suspended, but Povey – in a letter published on Twitter on Tuesday – said it was over administrative errors relating to 11 pupils.

He said that while he "will always take full responsibility for what happens in school and for the work of the team", he thought Salford council had been "determined to pursue me personally, with the end goal of removing me as executive head".

"I am at a loss to understand the heavy handed approach adopted by the council, which appears to have completely ignored the best interests of the students, staff and school," he said.

Povey also claimed it had been suggested that he should resign and walk away with a financial settlement which would include a gagging order – a confidential contractual clause meaning



he could not speak about the investigation.

He said the "vast expense" would be better spent paying off the school's outstanding debt. As reported by *Schools Week* last year, Povey nearly halved the school's £3 million debt through fundraising and revenue from leadership development training.

His resignation letter said the school had been accused of "off-rolling" students, coding attendance incorrectly, inappropriately coding students who were sent home early for poor behaviour, and deliberately encouraging parents to home school difficult children.

Councillor Lisa Stone, Salford City Council's lead member for children's and young people's services, said she was disappointed that Povey had publicly disclosed details of a confidential governor's investigation.

She added that the council "completely refutes" the allegations of a personal vendetta or that Povey was offered money to walk away.

"In my experience governors do not launch investigations and suspend senior members of staff for mere administrative errors," she said.

"This is an in-depth and wide-ranging investigation into many serious allegations and it will continue in the interests of the school, pupils, parents and the members of staff who remain suspended."

A spokesperson for Salford council said it would be for the school's governing body to decide whether to release any information about the investigation when it had been completed.

But they added that findings over allegations against individuals would generally not be published, even through freedom of information requests.

This contrasts with the government's rules on academy investigations, where findings are published online in all but the "most exceptional" cases (see page 15).

Povey added: "This feels very much like a personal vendetta and I hope that by removing myself from the situation, that some semblance of normality will return to the school, for the benefit of all."

He has offered to work free to support the school two days a week and provide a "stable hand during transition".

But Stone said temporary leadership support was in place, adding that the governing body was trying to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible.

ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

Questions remain over departure of best-paid primary head

Lambeth council has refused to confirm whether it will publish the outcome of an investigation into the former executive headteacher of a federation of south London schools who left his role this summer.

Sir Craig Tunstall, formerly England's best paid primary headteacher on £330,000 a year, was suspended in May last year from the Gipsy Hill Federation amid a council investigation.

But when asked by *Schools Week* whether the investigation had concluded and when its outcome would be published, the council would

only say: "For legal reasons Lambeth council and the Gipsy Hill Federation will not be giving any further details about this at this time."

In the case of an academy investigation, the Department for Education publishes its findings in all but what it classes as "the most exceptional circumstances".

Sir Craig, who was awarded a knighthood for his services to education in 2014, took home £330,394 pay in 2016.

In May 2017 newspapers including *The Sun* and *The Guardian* reported that he had been

suspended in relation to allegations of fraud.

The *Education Uncovered* website reported in July that parents were told Tunstall was "no longer employed" at the federation of six schools.

It had been given permission to convert all its schools into academies in 2016, but *Schools Week* understands the process was abandoned.

There were also plans to open a secondary free school but the project was halted in the last academic year, costing the DfE £355,000.

School investigations

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DFE KEEPS ACADEMY PAYMENTS PROBE UNDER-WRAPS

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

EXCLUSIVE

The government has said it will not publish the results of an investigation into payments made by a failed Cambridgeshire academy trust to two private companies.

The St Neots Learning Partnership was issued a financial notice to improve in August over ten-year "grant advances" it had made to the unnamed companies.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency said the payments were in breach of academy funding rules and requested SNLP to investigate.

But a letter seen by *Schools Week* reveals that the ESFA does not intend to make the outcome public.

Responding to a freedom of information request Mike Pettifer, director of academies and maintained schools at the ESFA, confirmed that the investigation was completed last month and a confidential



report shared between trustees and the ESFA, but there were "no plans to publish".

Government rules say investigations into academies must be published except in the most exceptional cases where it could, for example, prejudice a police investigation or have an acute detrimental impact on a person or group.

The ESFA also does not publish reports carried out "as part of routine business" or "routine self-assessments undertaken by an institution".

But Labour shadow education secretary Angela Rayner said the information was "a clear matter of public interest".

"Once again, the government has failed to ensure either transparency or accountability about a clear matter of

public interest," she said, "leaving the strong suspicion that when their system fails, ministers would rather cover up than own up."

Karl Wainwright, chairman of trustees at SNLP, told local paper the Hunts Post in August: "As far as we are concerned they were not loans but were contractual arrangements to bring extra services to the school."

"We believe what we did at the time was correct."

In February the SNLP received a pre-termination warning notice from the ESFA saying it faced closure over "unacceptably low" standards at its school Ernulf Academy.

Ernulf and the trust's other school, Longsands Academy, subsequently transferred to the Astrea Academy Trust in September.

The SNLP will be wound up when it has met the conditions of the financial notice to improve.

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News

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Bright Tribe founder leaves private school role

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Michael Dwan, founder of the Bright Tribe academy trust, has resigned as chair of governors at a private school in Cumbria after eight years at the helm.

Dwan's departure from Windermere School, which charges up to £31,335 a year for boarding pupils, comes after a recent BBC Panorama investigation into his role at Bright Tribe.

New trustees at Bright Tribe are investigating allegations that the chain claimed public money for building work, lighting upgrades and fire safety improvements that were either not finished or never started.

A spokesperson for Dwan said: "He does not want Windermere School to suffer because of recent unbalanced and ill-informed coverage and feels now that he is free of any connection he is able to respond in a more direct and concentrated manner to completely false allegations."

Dwan became chair of governors at Windermere, which his own children attended, in 2012.

A spokesperson for the businessman, who donated more than £27,000 a year to the school on top of the fees for his own children, said he was pleased with the progress made during his time on the board.

According to the Education Uncovered website, Dwan's departure was announced to parents in a letter from interim chair Jason Dearden, who is managing director of the Windermere Marina Village holiday park.

Dearden said Dwan "now feels it is right that he focuses his attention on his business interests and family".

He said: "Mike leaves a wonderful legacy. In the six years that he has led the governing body we have seen the school go from strength to strength."

Companies House records show that Dwan was appointed as a director at Windermere in December 2008, under the name Alfred Michael Dwan.

He remains a director of more than 50 organisations registered at Companies House, including several education charities and a number of asset management firms.

Lord Nash's Future Academies trust launches expansion outside London

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The academy trust established by former academies minister Lord Nash is expanding outside the capital with the confirmed takeover of a secondary school and rumours it is also eyeing a primary in the region.

Future Academies currently runs six schools, five of which are in London. The most recent addition, the Laureate Academy, opened its doors in Hertfordshire this month.

Now *Schools Week* has learned that the trust will take on another secondary school in Hertfordshire – Barclay School, Stevenage – which was originally pledged to a different sponsor.

A spokesperson for Hertfordshire County Council told *Schools Week* that Future Academies has also been named as sponsor for the secondary Mount Grace School in Potters Bar, which is in special measures, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Barclay School, a small community school with a sixth form, was rated "requires improvement" by Ofsted after an inspection in April.

It failed to meet the government's minimum standards for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of year 11 in 2016-17.

The school announced in a newsletter in February last year that the Herts for Learning Multi Academy Trust had been chosen as its new sponsor.

However the plans fell through and Future Academies was chosen by the regional schools commissioner instead.

Alex Thomas, chief executive officer of the Herts for Learning trust, told *Schools Week* he had been in discussions with the RSC, Martin Post, about taking over Barclay School "in the early stages of setting up the trust", but did not explain further.

The final decision on which trust sponsors a particular school "is a matter for the RSC and headteacher board", he said.

The Laureate Academy is a recent acquisition for Future Academies and its first school outside London. It was



previously The Cavendish School, a Hemel Hempstead comprehensive that was placed in special measures by Ofsted in May 2017.

Paul Smith (pictured), chief executive officer of Future Academies and a former regional schools commissioner, said the trust was "delighted" to have been chosen as the sponsor for the two schools.

"We look forward to working with school leaders to raise outcomes in these schools and enhance the life chances of the students who attend."

He added that all Future Academies schools that have been visited by Ofsted since joining the trust are rated good or outstanding.

A Department for Education spokesperson said Future Academies had been chosen because "it has an excellent track record of school improvement, particularly at secondary level".

"We are confident it will deliver the improvements that both staff and pupils deserve and ultimately provide an excellent education."

Nash, who stood down as academies minister in September last year, is listed as a member and chair of the trust.

Teachers face paying to park at their own schools

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Teachers face paying hundreds of pounds to park at their own schools as councils consider introducing new charges.

Nottingham City Council is currently the only local authority in England running a workplace parking levy with employers paying £400 for each space.

More than 100 schools in Nottingham fall within the scheme, but the tax has been passed down to teachers who have to shell out up to £500 a year to park at work.

A *Schools Week* investigation has found at least four more councils – Bristol, Cambridge, Oxford and Reading – are considering introducing a similar levy.

All four said the plans were part of wider considerations to reduce traffic and improve air quality.

Any future levy income could be reinvested in public transport projects and reducing congestion.

They said no final decisions had yet been taken and further consultation would be sought.

However Robert Halfon, chair of the parliamentary education select committee, said it was unacceptable to charge public sector staff to park at their own workplace.

He told *Schools Week*: "This seems to me pretty outrageous behaviour by councils. The government should do everything possible to stop this practice – it is a stealth tax on teachers."

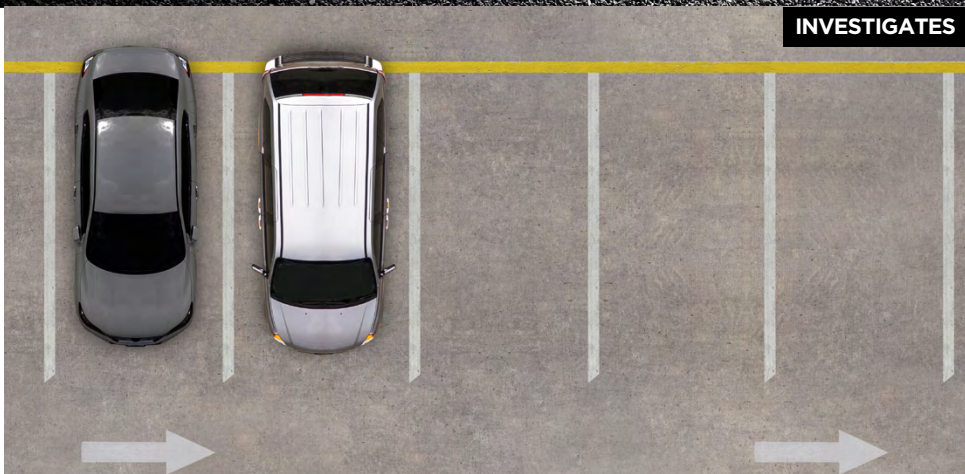
"We live in a car economy and people depend on them. It's unacceptable, and I'll look at raising it in parliament."

Nottingham, which has been running the scheme since 2012, charges employers £400 per parking spot if they have more than 10 on site.

A yearly permit for school staff varies between £130 and £500 a year depending on their salary while monthly charges range from £12 to £45 or £2 a day.

The council expects to raise an average of £12 million a year from the levy which has been reinvested in improving its public transport including a tram expansion, electric bus network and railway stations.

INVESTIGATES



Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary at the National Education Union, said it was another reason for schools to cut down on marking workload.

"For many teachers the reason they travel by car is the huge number of books they must carry. Schools facing recruitment difficulties will also be concerned if they aren't well served by public transport".

A survey by Teacher Tapp this week found 84 per cent of teachers are able to park in a school car park. Only one per cent said they had to pay.

However the regional breakdown of the 2,692 respondents shows the vast majority of those paying appear to be from the east Midlands.

Luke Burton, a teacher in Nottingham, said the scheme was "ridiculous" and "not

particularly useful when you're carrying 90 exercise books plus library books".

"The money funds transport links and should be paid by employers, but they can – and, in this case, do – reclaim it from employees."

But Anthony Breach, an analyst at independent urban policy research unit Centre for Cities, has said the levy is a good option for councils to raise cash, but needs careful planning and consultation.

He said it extends prosperity to more people by improving public transport and frees up land for other uses as some employers shed parking spaces.

"In cities with lots of congestion, the workplace parking levy is a fair and efficient way to raise the money needed to improve the local economy."

The four regions looking at parking taxes:

Bristol

A parking levy is mentioned in the Bristol Transport Strategy – due to be published next week. It says a "robust business case must be made before progressing implementation of any scheme".

Cambridge

Cambridge city and Cambridgeshire county councils are both undertaking "initial investigations" into the levy as part of wider congestion plans. Any proposals will go to public consultation. No dates have been set.

Oxford

Oxfordshire county council is considering the levy among other options. There is no preferred option yet, and businesses and schools will be consulted before any final decision.

Reading

Feasibility studies are being run for a number of schemes, including a parking levy, which would "largely follow the Nottingham model".

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'NO PLANS' TO SCRAP NSC ROLE, DFE INSISTS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The government has announced it has "no plans" to scrap the role of the national schools commissioner, putting to bed rumours that a review of school accountability policies could see the job axed.

The move to appoint Dominic Herrington (pictured) to replace Sir David Carter as the new NSC on a part-time, interim basis earlier this month had fuelled speculation over the future of the role.

It came after ministers clipped the wings of the eight regional schools commissioners, banning them from sending education advisers to inspect schools and removing their ability to convert schools based on their academic results alone.

But the Department for Education this week confirmed that the NSC, and eight RSC roles, are here to stay.

"The national school commissioner and regional schools commissioners play a key role in the academies system and we have no plans to remove them," a spokesperson told *Schools Week*.

The NSC role was created in February 2014 and went on to include oversight of the eight RSCs subsequently recruited in September of that year. The first NSC was Frank Green, who held the post until 2016,



when Carter, a former RSC for the south west, took over.

Civil servant Herrington was promoted to the role earlier this month after Carter – a former school leader – announced his retirement.

However, Herrington was appointed on a six-month interim contract, and will continue his work as regional commissioner for the south east of England and south London.

The DfE is yet to advertise for the role.

Tim Coulson, former regional schools commissioner for the east of England and north east London, told *Schools Week* that under Carter, the NSC role had grown in importance.

"What David did was create a role the DfE hadn't envisaged," he said. "He created a role with a national profile. He was the

best-known DfE official, and he spoke credibly as a practitioner as well."

Earlier this year, education secretary Damian Hinds announced sweeping changes to the school accountability system.

He told the National Association of Head Teachers annual conference in May, that coasting schools would no longer face the threat of forced academisation or change of sponsor.

He pledged to end the "spectre" of multiple inspections by making it clear that "the only people who should go to schools for inspections are Ofsted".

The changes mean that RSCs are now focused mainly on the academisation of schools rated inadequate by Ofsted and the rebrokering of existing academies that fail.

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was helpful to have clarification over the NSC role.

But she added: "What is now important is that this role, and those of the regional schools commissioners, are clearly defined to ensure there is clarity between what they do and what other bodies, such as Ofsted and local authorities, do.

"This 'middle tier' is currently too cluttered with a number of agencies all having a role in overseeing schools, a situation which is creating additional and unnecessary pressure that benefits nobody."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Bids open for altering tests to meet needs of hearing-impaired pupils

The government is inviting bids for a £5 million contract to help modify primary school tests for children with visual and hearing impairments.

Organisations are being sought to deliver a new modified tests framework, which will set out how different versions of the tests will be developed and delivered, between January next year and February 2023.

The successful bidders will be responsible

for recruiting and managing a team of specialist modifiers, who will then be required to produce versions of materials in Braille, modified large print and other formats and stimulus material to support pupils with hearing impairment and pupils who use sign language.

Modified versions are required for all national curriculum tests, including the phonics screening check, key stage 1 and 2 SATs and

key stage 2 science sampling tests. However, the government said this is "subject to change depending on government policy".

The selected suppliers will also have to run a helpline to provide specialist advice to schools, along with a past paper service.

The deadline for applications is October 15, and the contract will start on January 31.

Call for certainty on EU teachers after Brexit

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Schools need urgent clarity about the work restrictions teachers from Europe will face in Britain after the country leaves the EU, the National Education Union has said, amid confusion following a landmark report.

The migration advisory committee has published its recommendations for the Home Office on how migration to the UK from the European Economic Area should be handled after Brexit.

The report recommends that unless a UK immigration policy is included in any agreement with the European Union, there should be no preferential treatment for EU citizens.

This means EU citizens wanting to work in the UK would have to find a school to sponsor them and prove they will earn more than £30,000 a year – similar to teachers outside the EEA.

However the committee has also recommended the shortage occupation list – a list of professions that qualify for easier admission to the country – be “fully reviewed”, with the possibility of extending it to other professions, which could include teaching.

Only teachers of maths, physics, general science, Mandarin and computing are currently on this list.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the MAC’s recommendation to make migration easier for higher-skilled workers will be “of little comfort to our EU citizen members”.

“There is still no guarantee that EU citizens already in the UK will retain their existing rights in any Brexit deal, including a ‘no deal’ scenario.

“Whatever the migration system adopted following the UK’s withdrawal from the EU, what NEU members want most right now is certainty regarding their legal status. The sooner that’s confirmed, the better.”

It is not the first document to cause concerns about the future of EU teachers, who make up 2.6 per cent of primary teachers and 3 per cent of secondary teachers in the UK.

Last year, a draft Home Office memo leaked to the Guardian revealed plans for a new visa system that would deny all but the most skilled workers from the EU the right to stay in the UK for longer than two years.

Under the current immigration system, teachers from outside the EEA wanting to work in English schools must find a sponsor and prove they will earn more than £30,000 a year.

Under the MAC’s recommendations, these restrictions would be extended to EU citizens.



There is a particular concern about the impact changes to immigration policies post-Brexit will have on the supply of modern foreign language teachers, a third of which are estimated to be European nationals.

A spokesperson for the Home Office said the government was “clear that EU citizens play an important and positive role in our economy and society” and wants that to continue after Brexit.

“Our future immigration system will consider the findings of the MAC and engagement with stakeholders up and down the country.

“The government will have sufficient time to take account of the MAC’s advice when making any final decisions about our future immigration system, which will be implemented from 2021.”

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Migration does not impair school choice or outcomes, committee finds

There is “no evidence” that migration to the UK from Europe reduces the educational outcomes of non-migrant children or the choice of schools on offer to parents, according to an influential committee that advises the government.

Research by the Migration Advisory Committee found there is “no statistically significant relationship” between a higher proportion of migrants in an area and the percentage of parents getting their first

preference of school.

Furthermore, the committee also found that in areas where the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) increased, the proportion of non-EAL pupils achieving their target level in their SATs and GCSEs also rose.

The findings form part of the MAC’s report on migration to the UK from the European Economic Area, or EEA, which found that

migrant children and the children of migrants make up a larger proportion of the school population than of the school workforce.

“However, we find no evidence that migration has reduced parental choice in schools or the educational attainment of UK-born children,” the report stated.

“On average, children with English as an additional language outperform native English speakers.”

DfE will keep using measure branded 'too political' by minister

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The government says it will continue to measure the success of its reforms on Pisa scores despite schools minister Nick Gibb hitting out at the organisation that produces them for becoming "too political".

In an interview this month Gibb accused the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which publishes the international rankings, of pushing a "progressive" curriculum.

Pisa's architect Andreas Schleicher favours a "competence-based" approach to learning that doesn't work, Gibb wrote in researchEd magazine.

His more critical stance towards the OECD contrasts with the top status given to Pisa tests by former education secretary Nicky Morgan.

When asked by the Commons education select committee in 2015 how the government's reforms would be judged, her department said "by reference to international tables of student attainment, such as Pisa."

English pupils will sit the Pisa tests, which take place every three years, this autumn. Results are due at the end of 2019.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education insisted the results will be "one of lots of ways" by which the government's education reforms are measured.

Other measures include Pirls, which tests reading and literacy, and Talis, which surveys teacher working conditions, they told *Schools Week*.

Gibb's shot at the OECD also contrasts with his own use of Pisa findings to justify reforms in the past.

Last year he cited a Pisa report which found that enquiry-led learning was

associated with lower science scores to justify "direct instruction" methods. He has also cited Schleicher's support for greater autonomy in schools.

In global Pisa rankings published in 2016, the UK lagged behind other countries at 27th in maths, 22nd in reading and 15th in science. A Pisa wellbeing test also showed UK 15-year-olds are some of the unhappiest in the world.

In Pisa's collaborative problem-solving tests last year, the UK came 15th.

But Schleicher has criticised the UK for coming out with a top score for too much rote-learning.

He said at a speech in New York this year the UK is losing ground to far eastern countries because too much focus is placed on memorisation and a core curriculum and not enough on creativity.

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US researchers to study knowledge networks in north-east England

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

Three US academics will travel thousands of miles across the Atlantic to run a research project in the north-east of England to map how teachers share knowledge.

Michigan State University was invited by schools consultancy firm Evidence Based Education, located near Darlington, to replicate studies in the US on the information networks of teachers.

The Michigan School Programme Information project will now send three researchers to work alongside the Shotton Hall Research School, near Durham, for a year.

Stuart Kime (pictured), director of education at Evidence Based Education, said the new research should help make the north-east much better connected.

"There's certainly a perception in the north-east that there is a London and south focus that leads to policy which doesn't take into account the massive physical differences people have to travel here."

News of the cross-Atlantic project, funded to the tune of more than £20,000 by the university, comes after academies minister Lord Agnew excused his government's track record at a school in the north because of its "remoteness".

In a letter to a union leader, Agnew



said helping the beleaguered Whitehaven Academy, based in Cumbria in north-west England, had been "very challenging due to its remoteness".

The academy had been at the centre of a row with parents and local officials over the state of the school buildings and failing standards by the trust's former sponsor Bright Tribe.

School leaders in the north – particularly the north-east – have long highlighted how they feel some regions have been neglected by the government.

For instance, the north-east does not have an Opportunity Area – 12 regions awarded £6 million each to tackle entrenched inequality.

Others have also pointed out that no schools in Northumberland and only two in Cumbria were successful in the government's latest strategic school improvement funding round. The funding

mostly went to northern cities such as Manchester, Sheffield and Newcastle.

Michael Merrick, deputy headteacher at St Cuthbert's primary school in Cumbria, said: "We have excellent educators in our region but also some significant challenges, and research which can help us map our practice and identify strategies for improvement will be welcomed."

Geography was a big challenge in the region, and stronger networks to help overcome this will prove more useful than "finger-wagging criticisms from afar", he added.

The Michigan project will launch in October and report back in the summer. Shotton Hall Research School has identified three issues – literacy, numeracy and pastoral care – that teachers in the north-east want more information about.

Researchers will contact heads of teaching and learning in the region to collate a list of experts they call on for help, called "knowledge brokers" and "influencers".

Shotton Hall Research School will also produce infographics and videos to explain who schools can contact for information on a literacy, numeracy or pastoral issue.

Kime said the project will reveal where the "dead ends" for information and connectivity are in the region.



Ofsted taskforce targets 420 'illegal' schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

The number of potentially illegal schools identified by Ofsted has risen to 420, up from 359 in March.

However, only 55 schools have been closed or ceased to operate illegally since the watchdog established a special team to deal with the issue in 2016.

Of the 55 settings that have closed or ceased operating illegally, 10 have closed and 45 are complying with the current legislation, Ofsted told *Schools Week*.

Under current government guidance, if five or more pupils attend an institution for 18 hours a week, it must be registered as a school and subject to inspection.

The latest data shows that by the end of July Ofsted had conducted 274 inspections of suspected unregistered schools, up from 192 in March, and issued 63 warning notices, up from 50 earlier in the year.

Warning notices are issued at the end of an inspection if the inspector believes the setting is

operating illegally as a school.

The number of schools to have closed or changed their ways rose from 38 to 55 between March and July.

The figures are from the latest management information published by Ofsted's £1 million-a-year illegal schools taskforce.

The team was set up to clamp down on settings that educate children without being properly registered.

Labour conference

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Labour calls halt to illegal off-rolling

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

The Labour Party will tackle the "national scandal" of off-rolling, an illegal practice that "lets down thousands of young people", the shadow education secretary has said.

Ahead of the party's annual conference, Angela Rayner told *Schools Week* the fact that schools are "incentivised" to remove underperforming pupils before they sit their GCSEs is "a disgrace".

Labour announced earlier this week that if it gains power, the attainment and outcomes of pupils permanently excluded or otherwise pushed out will continue to count towards their previous school's league table performance – until they find another permanent school place.

It follows a clampdown by Ofsted on off-rolling, whereby schools illegally remove troublesome or low-attaining pupils before they sit their exams.

The watchdog found that 300 schools had "above expectation" levels of pupil movement between years 10 and 11 for the past two years, and 560 had movement that was "significantly above expectation" in 2017 alone.

Rayner said her party would end the "unfair system that lets down thousands of young people".

"The fact that, at present, schools are incentivised to remove underperforming pupils before they sit their GCSEs is a disgrace," she told *Schools Week*.

"Thousands of pupils disappearing from our education system in the year before their GCSEs is a national scandal.

"For too long, the Tories have sat by idly as some of the most vulnerable young people in our country are falling between the gaps and even out of education altogether."

The policy announced earlier this week is similar to a proposal announced by the Conservatives in 2016 but then abandoned.

Former education secretary Nicky Morgan's 'Education Excellence Everywhere' white paper proposed that mainstream schools would "retain accountability" for the outcomes of pupils transferred to exclusion units, and would "take a lead role in commissioning their provision" even when those pupils are permanently excluded.

The proposal was widely welcomed in the sector but never saw the light of day after the 'Education For All' bill, which set out the white paper's plans in legislation, was shelved by Morgan's successor Justine Greening.

Rayner also wants to close a loophole that currently allows schools to receive funding for pupils months before they sit their exams.

It follows research by

Ofsted, which showed that around 50 per cent of pupils who left school before taking their GCSEs last year did not end up in another state school.

At present, schools are allocated funding based on pupil numbers recorded in the autumn census but numbers recorded later, in the spring census, are used for accountability purposes.

Labour has signalled it will change this system, but has not explained exactly how its alternative would work.

The use of off-rolling by schools and the quality of alternative provision for excluded pupils has in recent years become a big headache for the government.

Ofsted has ordered inspectors to crack down on the use of off-rolling and the government has commissioned a former education minister, Edward Timpson, to conduct a review of the situation.

The parliamentary education committee has also raised significant concerns about the fate of pupils pushed out of their schools earlier this year.

A DfE spokesperson said: "Informal or unofficial exclusions are unlawful and we wrote to schools last year to remind them of the rules on exclusions. Any school 'off rolling' on the basis of academic results is quite simply breaking the law."



Thumbs-down from Corbyn for no-frills private school

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn (pictured) has slammed the "no frills" private school model, as the country's first one opened its doors.

Schools Week revealed last week that Independent Grammar School: Durham, charging £52 a week, would open on Monday.

It was delayed for a year after Ofsted raised technical issues over its refurbished church site.

The school is the brainchild of James Tooley, professor of education at Newcastle university.

Sources close to the school suggested it had

recruited just "a few dozen" pupils this year, fewer than the 65 anticipated by Tooley.

A statement on the school's website now reads: "As a privately-funded organisation... our policy is not to engage with the media."

Schools Week has also revealed there are proposals for a new no-frills secondary school in London.

But Corbyn tweeted this week: "Businesses creating budget private schools is no way to solve the education crisis - in fact it will only make it worse.

"Education is a right, not a commodity yet the Tories refuse to provide schools with

enough resources to provide a proper education."

Sophie Sandor, a former employee

at right-leaning think tanks the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs, said earlier this month that no frills schools could disrupt the state sector.



EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Academies are getting a bad press - but is that because they are open to more scrutiny?

Drew Povey's explosive resignation letter (page 13) won headlines across the media, particularly his claim that the council - investigating him over "off rolling" accusations - has a personal vendetta against him.

But behind those headlines, the story touches upon an often overlooked argument in the local authority-versus-academies debate.

The government has a pretty clear protocol stating that any of its investigations into academies, or academy trusts, will be published on its website, for everyone to see, in "all but the most exceptional circumstances".

These include things like whether the investigation was triggered by malicious allegations, or if publication could prejudice a police investigation.

The policy is pretty clear - that it's in the public interest to publish investigations to be "fair and transparent about issues relating to how public money is spent".

(OK, we know the Department for Education doesn't stick to this rigidly -

and where it does seem to be hushing up investigations, we've been the first to point it out - as we do on page 14 this week).

But are local authorities as transparent?

Povey was working at Harrop Fold School, a local-authority maintained school. Salford Council told us the findings of investigations like this would "generally not be published", and are not obtainable via a freedom of information request.

Why that matters is the case of Craig Tunstall (page 13), who was suspended from his job as the head of the Gipsy Hill Federation amid a Lambeth council investigation in May last year.

The council wouldn't even officially confirm to us what he was accused of, never mind if it will ever publish the investigation.

With Tunstall quietly leaving the trust earlier this year, nobody is any the wiser about what went on.

There may be more misdemeanours surfacing involving academies - but maybe that's because those are the ones we get to hear about?

Council conversion costs aren't fair

Last year we heard rumours that some councils were charging schools to convert into academies.

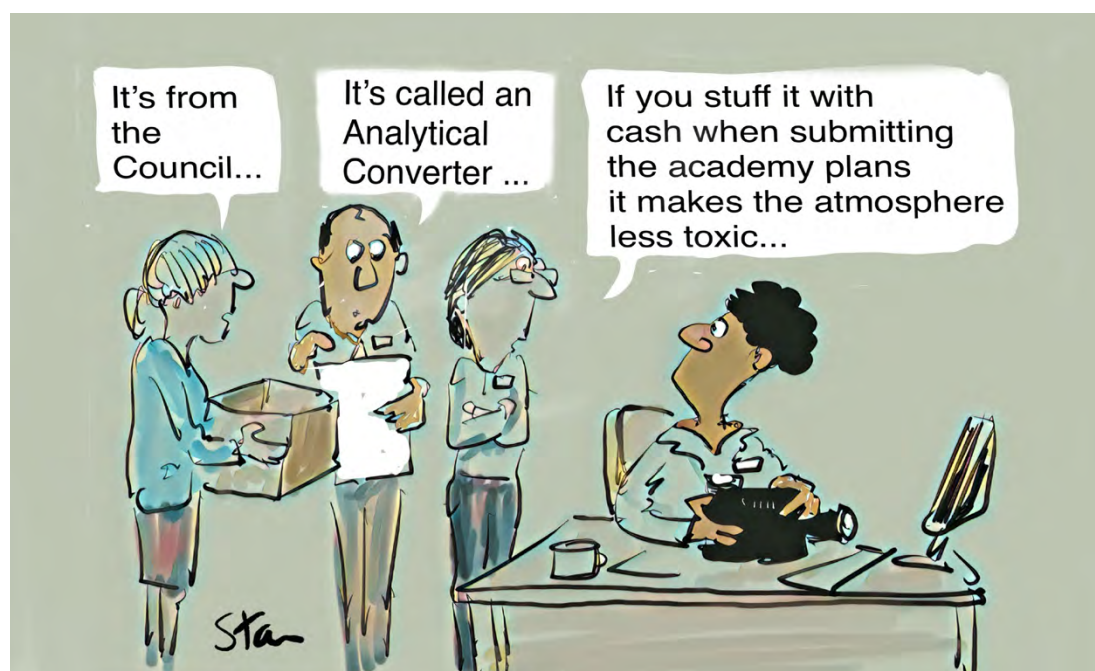
Councils are skint, and schools get a grant to convert - so many local authorities thought it fair to claw back some of the costs they incur for converting schools into academies. Fair enough.

But we didn't realise just how many (page 8). More than half of councils now slap fees onto schools that convert.

Despite the government saying councils should not charge for schools which are forced to academise, it appears that some still do.

It's also a bit of a free-for-all - schools have no idea which councils charge and, if they do, whether the amount is fair.

But the government must recognise that underfunding councils is robbing schools of a portion of their £25,000 conversion start-up grant. For cash-strapped leaders, it's another unwanted pressure.



SCHOOLS WEEK

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The school replacing TAs with technology

Shireland Collegiate Academy

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY_

Shireland Collegiate Academy has been signposted by the DfE as an example of EdTech best practice. *Schools Week* went to observe the teaching in their immersive room and chat to the leadership team about what they're doing, and why

If you ask the Department for Education which schools are doing EdTech well, Shireland Collegiate Academy is their go-to answer. In fact, when Damian Hinds called for an EdTech revolution in schools in August, it was this school they singled out as an example of good practice.

And in 2016, the DfE approved funding for four new "technology primaries" to be built from scratch in the Birmingham region, all to be run by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust.

So what is this Smethwick secondary school doing differently?

What's particularly interesting about Shireland, is that it was one of the first wave of five research schools – selected by the DfE and the Education Endowment Foundation in 2015 because they were already using evidence-based practice.

"I have a problem with people doing things



Year 3 pupils from Holyhead Primary experiencing the 'wow' factor to kick-start a music topic

when there's no science behind it," says trust CEO Sir Mark Grundy, who started his career teaching science and design. "I like some empirical base to things. So I don't like us giving people resource, and not knowing what difference it made."

They've been evaluating their EdTech use for over 10 years, and in 2014 they "persuaded" assessment organisation OCR to fund 18 EdTech action research projects, which include immersive technology, video feedback and flipped learning.

EdTech implementation – like everything else – must be "systemic", not "heroic", says Grundy. "People do the odd thing that's spectacular, but if it's really spectacular every kid should experience it, if it's

relevant".

The immersive room is used for every year 7 and 8 class, once per "theme" – which means once every half-term. With the exception of subjects that need specialist equipment, like DT or practical science, the key stage 3 curriculum is organised into cross-curricular themes, "almost like a primary model," explains Kirsty Tonks, the trust's primary director.

Some of the theme titles indicate clear curricular links, such as *Little-big planet* or *World War II*. With others, such as *Ship Ahoy!* or *Scream if you want to go faster*, the educational element is less obvious.

It's all about creating the "wow" factor to get kids excited about learning, says Tonks.

"If it's really spectacular every kid should experience it"

"Scream if you want to go faster is a design theme, and it's looking at pulleys and levers. The end outcome is to produce their own working model of a fairground ride. But to start it off the year 5s come here from Holyhead primary, and are in a theme park.

"Now ideally what you'd want is to take them to the theme park. But the cost of hiring a coach is astronomical. If you wanted to go and take them to see Da Vinci's



The pupils learn about music history from the secondary school's music teacher

The school replacing TAs with technology



An interactive part of the music history lesson

work you'd probably have to fly a few hundred miles to get to anywhere. Whereas we can create a museum and use it year in, year out.

"It is about the 'excite' element of learning that we try to use that immersive room for."

Entering the immersive room certainly elicits a "wow" feeling. The room is about the size of two standard secondary classrooms and seems to stretch on forever. The lights are low and a projected blue display wraps around three of the four walls. Year 3 pupils bounce contentedly on beanbags. When the music comes on, the space feels warm, enveloping.

Today we're in the introductory lesson for the *Pause and rewind* theme, where students from Holyhead primary – a special measures school the trust has recently taken over – are quizzed on what they already know (very little, it turns out!) about the history of music. Recorded clips are interspersed with real instruments, as the

music teacher takes the class on a journey through classical, jazz, rock'n'roll, electronic and modern – fitting each into the timeline and drawing links between the evolution of instruments and the sounds of each genre.

There's a smell option, with about 500 available scents but not "sweaty armpits" – hence their absence in this experience, jokes Tonks.

"When we did the Viking Ship, we had salt spray so they could get a sense of being out at sea," she enthuses. "This morning the year 8s did Pompeii, so we had an ash sulphur kind of smell. You can't take them to Pompeii and relive what was happening, but what you can do is at least try to recreate."

Their decision to install the immersive room in 2015 was inspired by a visit to Ironbridge Gorge Museum. "It was a "wow"

"Our pupils have never been disadvantaged by having fewer TAs"

experience – you could actually see, hear and smell the Black Country during the industrial revolution," says Tonks.

There's a lot of debate around whether it's a school's duty to get kids excited, or whether teachers should simply deliver content and pupils should lap it up. The reality of most schools is, of course, something in between. But surely there's a danger with the requirement to include an experience in every topic, that it becomes a gimmicky part of the curriculum?

"The lessons are crafted to go through a quality assurance process," says Tonks. "So at the end of the day, it's as much a tool as using a video or any other piece of content. You will be judged the same." The teachers are also organised into "research groups", to assess the impact of various interventions throughout the year.

Topic teaching is "about making the links smart but not tenuous," she adds. "I always use the example of when I was teaching year 2 many years ago and the topic was animals and

I ended up having to teach the history of horses. Now the history of horses in Smethwick is meaningless. So what we've done is we've mapped it so we've got coverage of the curriculum. It's broad, it's balanced, it's not tenuous in any way."

How do they make sure pupils understand the chronology of history? "That's where a room like that comes into its own completely," insists Tonks, explaining that they project a timeline to show where the history component of each topic sits, in relation to the other units.

The immersive room cost £40,000 to build, and the school employs a technical support team of five – so how do they afford it? "Quite simply, it's how we've chosen to staff the school," explains Tonks. Of the further four EdTech staff who support the embedding of technology across the trust, three cover their own salary by also providing support services to schools outside the trust.

"We have a leaner support staff than most schools have," adds Tonks. "We see technology as a way of supporting students rather than being person-dependent."

One of those tools is Little Bridge, "a surrogate solution for supporting students who are weaker in literacy – when in another school you may have used teaching assistants," explains Grundy. "Our pupils have never been disadvantaged by having fewer TAs, but they have been advantaged by having the right TA support alongside the right technology."

The school has used the software to provide literacy support not only to struggling students, but also local families, through weekend and after-school classes.

Shunning technology is simply not an option. Parents and carers are offered training sessions, and for staff "there's an expectation of use. Because we saw it had such an impact – so why wouldn't you expect it of all staff?"

In short, concludes Tonks, the key is not to consider EdTech as its own entity, but as a delivery tool for "all the areas that schools are looking at" – feedback and marking, questioning, spacing, retrieval practice.

"You could look at it that we're quite lazy," she jokes. "You could say that's our motivation, that we want to make things as easy as possible and we want technology, as we use the phrase, to do the heavy lifting."

[L-R] Sir Mark Grundy, Kirsty Tonks and research school lead Jen Devaney



Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Don't knock "low-cost" schools – they have the potential to improve efficiency across the sector, says James Croft

Affordable fee-based private schools have a long tradition in England and, as late as 2012, the best value schools in the independent sector (from the point of view of both education quality and their low fees) were privately owned and operated. But despite much talk of market conditions favouring the advent of a more radical low-fee model, until now we've seen little progress.

Among the inhibitors, standardised teacher pay and conditions and increasing regulatory demands on the independent sector have proved particularly prohibitive. The proprietors of the new schools in Durham and (proposed for) north London are to be credited for having found ways – through cutting facilities spend, focusing on traditional curriculum teaching, increasing class sizes, and (in the case of Durham) off-setting lower pay and incentivising younger teachers through a profit-share model. But whether, on reduced back-office staffing, it can stay abreast of regulation, we will have to wait and see.

Related to this is the question of the ventures' sustainability and prospects for scale, which are also difficult to gauge. Thus far details of the investment model are thin on the ground, but it's not uncommon for ventures with a purpose to find themselves struggling when they've used up what philanthropic leverage they had to command at the opening.

So revenue from fees, as for all schools, will be key. It's worth noting



JAMES CROFT

Chair and acting director, Centre for Education Economics

'Low-cost' schools are an experiment worth backing

that since 2012, when there were in the region of 200 private institutions operating on resources equivalent to or less than state-sector schools, most

experiments worth lending support to. Not because of any competition effect likely to arise as a result of new low-fee schools challenging

“Choice actually improves equity

have significantly increased their fees. Whether they charge £52 or £100 a week, they'll be pushed to maintain this price for long.

In terms of availability of sites, finding appropriate vacated premises in urban areas is always a challenge, and sites for conversion no less so. Those with scope for expansion are even more scarce. So development is likely to be slow going.

But for the DfE, these are

state schools. It's unlikely in fact that we'll be able to draw any more illuminating conclusion than the answer to the question whether the 'wealthy enough' middle-class target demographic want them. But because schooling needs to become more efficient.

While progress has undoubtedly been made, free-schools, of which much was hoped in this regard, have yet to realise their potential.

Elsewhere around the world where countries have run reform experiments, at state and national level, there have been significant efficiency gains. Here the legalities of ownership, contracting new providers, and construction outsourcing and procurement frameworks have failed us, as too have inherited soft budgetary practices and inadequate incentives on schools to scale.

If a more capital- and revenue-efficient model can be made to work, at scale, in the independent sector, then the case strengthens for liberalisation of free schools on the question of private ownership of government-funded schools.

As successive CfEE studies of the economic evidence have shown, deterioration in quality does not automatically follow (and in the cases in question it's unlikely as the evidence supports that the instructional models and methods proposed are sound). Neither, as CfEE research has also demonstrated, does decreased equity follow such reforms. Choice, especially when given impetus through the introduction of a profit-motive to schools, actually improves equity (provided the appropriate supporting measures and safeguards are in place).

The evidence suggests in fact that they are socio-economically much less discriminatory than other types. They won't always work, but they've equal potential as not-for-profits for raising standards, and of key importance in this context, they have built-in incentives to efficiency and scale.



Opinion



ANNE
HEAVEY

National director, Whole School SEND

How to incentivise schools to be more SEND-inclusive

What incentives are there for schools to be inclusive? Not many, says Anne Heavey, who has some suggestions on how to improve matters

Here's a question for you: What recognition do headteachers get for running schools that are inclusive for SEND learners? What are the systemic incentives to prioritise SEND provision in our schools?

Beyond fulfilling a sense of moral purpose, it's challenging to identify any tangible incentives. In fact, it's a lot easier to identify disincentives.

Here are a few:

- Pupils with SEND have lower progress scores on average than non-SEND pupils.
- SEND pupils are less likely to achieve national expectations for attainment, such as the expected standard in the SATs, phonics screening check or GCSE grade 4 or 5.
- SEND pupils may require the support of external agencies who also have limited capacity and resources. The local authority may not have the necessary specialist resources in-house to provide support,

and waiting lists can be long for both assessment of need and interventions and support – meaning schools can often be left lacking support when trying to meet a pupil's need.

- Neither Ofsted inspections nor school performance measures recognise or reward inclusivity for SEND pupils.
- Few school leaders have been seen to lose their jobs for failing to be inclusive.

“ It's a lot easier to identify disincentives

We've all heard the stories on social media about schools where heads have allegedly said things to parents of children with SEND on open evenings, like “school X down the road will be much better at supporting your child's needs than we will here”. Without condoning such activity, it is easy to understand how some leaders may feel incentivised to act in a way that discourages the parents of



children with SEND from applying to their schools. The impact of negative progress scores and low attainment in statutory assessments on school performance measures really matters here – many heads still feel vulnerable if scores are too low. The DfE, Ofsted and RSCs are working hard to ensure that performance data is only the start of a conversation, but until every head believes this is the case, then a rebalancing of accountability measures is necessary.

Here are two ideas that could lead to a rebalancing of school accountability to recognise inclusive

practice.

Ofsted are in the process of developing a new school inspection framework and Nick Whittaker, SEND lead at Ofsted, recently confirmed that the consultation will include a SEND strand. This presents a timely opportunity to introduce recognition of inclusive practice into the accountability framework. Under this new framework, schools could be recognised and

celebrated for providing an excellent education to every pupil, including those with SEND. School SEN information reports could be checked for quality and impact. Going further, the quality of SEND provision within a school could also be a limiting factor on the overall judgement – can a school really be considered “good” if the SEND provision is poor?

Another approach would be to treat school SEND notional budgets in a similar way to pupil premium, so that all spending is accounted for and the impact of spending is demonstrated at all levels, including governance. This idea might not be popular with everyone, especially as school funding is tight, but it would provide a mechanism for identifying and recognising schools that have strong strategic leadership and effective SEND provision. Pupils with SEND make up a disproportionately high percentage of pupil premium students, and since those who are dual-categorised face increased challenges in their lives, there should be greater scrutiny in this area.

I have never met a school leader who admitted to deliberately pushing out pupils with SEND. However, I have met plenty of school leaders who feel that the current system relies on their goodwill alone to ensure that children with SEND develop, achieve and are happy at school. As things stand, the efforts of those who go above and beyond to include learners with SEND are not recognised, let alone rewarded.

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Better Behaviour

By Jarlath O'Brien

Reviewer: Hannah Pinkham, Head of MFL & Coordinator of ITT

Jarlath O'Brien brings his wide-ranging experience to bear in this plea to teachers and school leaders to truly understand children's behaviour, and there is much to commend this book.

Over the first chapters O'Brien advocates a highly empathetic approach to improving behaviour, drawing on lessons learned from psychological research and his own career. Throughout the book he seeks to develop teachers' understanding of how different pupils experience school, and is particularly averse to the use of fixed-term exclusions.

One of the book's strengths is the chapter on restorative approaches to behaviour management. His arguments are explained clearly, with a persistent focus on the value of such approaches in affecting genuine change. He proactively addresses common complaints about restorative processes and suggests practical ways to implement them successfully. I would strongly recommend chapter seven for anyone interested in restorative justice in schools.

In chapters eight and nine, O'Brien discusses the importance of working with parents and support staff to improve behaviour. The inclusion of a parent's point of view is eye-opening. While experienced educators may consider much of this common sense, it's solid advice.

Chapter ten, on pupils with special educational needs, is another gem, and it is clear that this is where O'Brien's expertise really lies. He outlines a range

of common needs affecting pupils, offers practical ways of supporting them and clarifies his points with amusing and relatable anecdotes. I will definitely be sharing this chapter with my trainees. However, I am concerned that O'Brien's message may be (mis)interpreted as "all misbehaviour is the fault of the teacher" – so caveats apply when sharing his book with less confident colleagues.

Now for the bits I found less convincing...

The book opens by exhorting schools to adapt to their pupils' needs – but O'Brien seems to contradict himself later when he (quite rightly) reminds us that the role of schools is to prepare children for the adult world. Very few would argue against reasonable modifications to meet children's needs, but some of the approaches suggested by O'Brien may give children unrealistic expectations that the adult world will simply bend to accommodate them.

In chapters four to six, O'Brien examines the use of rules, rewards and sanctions. This section of the book has a more practical focus and fans of Lemov's "Teach Like a Champion" will recognise many of the suggestions here. However, there are several arguments in these chapters that seem to over-exaggerate to emphasise a point. Reading his characterisation of schools rigidly enforcing boy/girl seating plans regardless of behaviour and additional needs, I wrote in the margin "does anyone actually do this?".

Whilst I wholeheartedly

agree with his emphasis on the role of the teacher in children's behaviour, I bristle at his warning to teachers that their feedback may be taken as "scathing criticism". Reading out test scores can be done in a way that does not unduly upset pupils, and I take umbrage at his assertion that such a practice shows "no regard to the dignity of the children".

The final chapter proved the most controversial for me as, at times, O'Brien appears to be encouraging teachers to subvert their school's behaviour system with suggestions such as, "Are there any behaviourist customs in your school that you can simply cease doing?". While I agree that teachers need to make systems work for their pupils, I worry that this risks setting up conflict between teachers and leaders. Surely the ideal is for teachers with doubts about the behaviour policy to discuss them with their managers, rather than stop enforcing the policy?

Overall, "Better Behaviour" has plenty to offer both novice teachers and more experienced educators. Every chapter starts with "Headlines", in which O'Brien's key arguments are laid out and there are regular "Reflection Points" that encourage readers to interrogate their own beliefs about behaviour management. By far the most useful elements for leaders are the "Taking it further" boxes at the end of each chapter. These contain activities and questions to promote discussion and deeper

consideration of a wide range of behaviour management strategies and would be useful at all levels of school leadership.



Research

Every month Laura McInerney shares some insights from polls of people working in schools, conducted via the Teacher Tapp app.

What if it's behaviour, not workload, that makes teachers leave?

Laura McInerney, Co-founder, Teacher Tapp

Everyone knows the statistic: one in three teachers leaves in their first five years on the job. But what if it isn't stress, or workload, or pay, that's the issue? What if it's pupil behaviour?

Over the past year, as I've watched the daily replies of 2,500 teachers to the Teacher Tapp surveys, it has become clear that new teachers bear a serious brunt of bad behaviour. It shouldn't shock me. Like every teacher, I remember the stomach-churning feeling before a dreadful class and the hours spent tearing my hair out just to get some classes to sit down. Several times I sat and cried the whole way home on the train after enduring back-to-back failed lessons.

Yet, as time wears on, it's easy to forget. Teachers in their fifth or later years of teaching seem to have it much easier. When we asked the panel about the last lesson they taught on a Friday, 55 per cent of new teachers said it was disrupted by behaviour at least once. For those over five years it's only 30 per cent. Veterans with over 20 years of experience have it down to just 20 per cent.

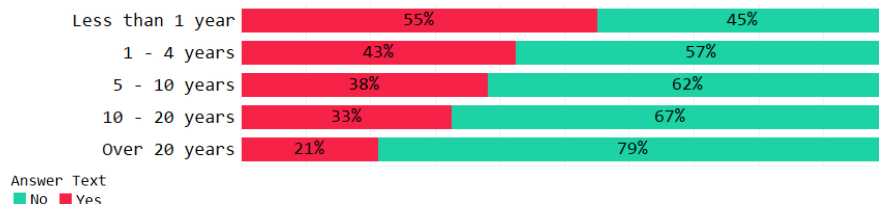
One in five classes experiencing a disruption is still a lot - but it's not as bad as feeling like most of your lessons will be disrupted. This is probably why new teachers are much more likely to be dreading school on a Sunday evening.

Isn't this all natural, though? Handling children is a skill that must be learned. Experienced teachers often think it's something that new teachers will simply get a grip on, in time. As understandable as that seems, it comes with a cost.

At the end of the year we surveyed the amount of time-off teachers had taken during the year. The group most likely to have stayed at home with a mental health or stress issue? Teachers in their twenties. Almost twice as many teachers in their twenties stayed home at least once for mental health reasons (13 per cent) compared to those in their



In the last lesson you taught, was there any time when you felt teaching and learning largely stopped because of poor behaviour?



forties and above (7 per cent).

In line with the Whitehall studies is the 1960s, which proved that lower grade civil servants were more likely to become sick than their senior managers, we also found that classroom teachers with no additional duties - and so teaching the most classes - were those most likely to take time off with stress or mental health issues. In fact, classroom teachers were FOUR times more vulnerable to being absent for this reason compared to headteachers.

If behaviour is a problem for teacher retention, what is the solution? Improving the new teachers' skills seems an obvious one. But the results of a particular question changed my mind on this.

When Teacher Tappers were asked if behaviour rules were consistently enforced in their school, senior leaders heavily agreed, while classroom teachers were much less convinced (to put it mildly). Secondary schools are particularly affected. Only 19

per cent of heads said rules were not consistently enforced; among teachers the rate was 54 per cent!

For heads, this figure is disheartening. No one wants to be out of touch with the reality of the classroom. But it's a truism of leadership that you are likely seeing only the very best, and the very worst, of behaviour. Both from pupils and from staff. Seeing an 'average lesson' is difficult. Which is why we think the question of whether or not someone's last class on a Friday might be an important metric for knowing if they are struggling, or likely to dread the week ahead, or be sick in the coming year. It won't work in every case. Sometimes it's just a dud week. Sometimes it's just a zany-but-lovely class that gets wound up when Friday gets near.

Keeping an eye and asking staff how they got on with behaviour is important, though. As is working really hard on consistency of approach - because even if leaders think behaviour is nailed, the likelihood is that the teachers don't agree.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is
Jon Hutchinson

@JON_HUTCHINSON_

Subject Knowledge

@dodiscimus

"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing", says Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. For teacher trainer Matt Perks, there are actually three main things underpinning all of the beautiful complexity of teaching: planning, behaviour and subject knowledge. This blog, which deals with the latter, is brief but brilliant, arguing for the primacy of subject knowledge in effective teaching and offering some classroom applications and tips.

An open letter to Peter Thomas, chair of the National Association of Teachers of English

@MrsSpalding

"Surely, the role of a subject association is to share subject-specific expertise and pedagogy, not to look down its nose at teachers who are actively seeking it out?" Caroline Spalding's open letter to the chair of the National Association of Teaching English is professional, erudite, and unflinchingly robust. Underneath the surface of the letter, larger themes bubble away. Most pertinently: the legitimacy of

TOP BLOGS of the week

subject associations representing teachers in the context of grassroots, self-organising movements such as #TeamEnglish and other social-media based initiatives.

10 picture books for year 1. Actually there's 12 but who's counting?

@smithsmm

Philip Pullman once said that "there are some themes, some subjects, too large for adult fiction. They can only be dealt with adequately in a children's book." We are living in a golden age of children's fiction, and that is most true in the avalanche of achingly brilliant picture books published over the last few years. In this blog, Simon Smith has painstakingly curated 10 (or 12, if you're counting) of the best for year one children, but there are links to lists for every other year group in primary. Fair warning, I'd lock your Amazon account before reading this one.

Vocab teaching: summary for busy teachers

@liaesthermartin

Teaching vocabulary effectively is fundamental to pupils' success. In this blog, English teacher Lia Martin argues "we need our energy focused on the middle section: the tier 2 words that pop up across a range of texts and that are more frequent in writing than in speech". What follows is an

invaluable summary of teaching vocabulary both implicitly and explicitly drawing on the work of Doug Lemov, Isobel Beck and Daisy Christodoulou among others. Although it's pitched at English teachers, this is an area that teachers of all subjects should take seriously.

KS3: The Wonder Years

@sputniksteve

In this timely blog, Steve outlines the writing of leading lights in the so-hot-right-now curriculum debate – Mark Lehain, Clive Wright and Clare Sealy – before challenging the reader to consider "what is your Ovid?" In other words, what are the foundational bits of your subject that your children would benefit from knowing. Those on the poles of the "knowledge-rich" curriculum debate will find this blog respectively compelling or contemptuous, but for the majority of us who are somewhere in between, it presents a delicious challenge.

Taking (geography) curriculum seriously – subject specialists, subject communities and sustaining subject expertise

@GraceEHealy

Serendipitously, the gauntlet thrown down in the previous blog is claimed and skilfully wielded by geography teacher Grace Healy. In this blog, the subject of the matter is the matter of the subject, and Grace addresses this issue with academic brilliance (the blog is meticulously referenced) and infectious humility. Inspired by Taking curriculum seriously, Christine Counsell's masterful article in the Chartered College of Teaching's Impact journal, Grace unpicks the concept of disciplinary knowledge within her subject, arguing that "geography teachers need the time and space to sustain their subject expertise, so they can go some way to rendering the discipline visible to students". If everyone thought about their subject the way that Grace does, teaching would be in a very good position indeed.



"No evidence" EU migration harms educational outcomes or school choice

Eric Fairchild, comment

There is no surprise to me in reading that the research shows that the number of EAL pupils in a school does not have a negative impact of overall outcomes. As a governor in an inner city primary with a majority of EAL pupils our results are broadly similar and often better than schools in the white middle class areas of our authority and far above national averages. The important factor is always the quality of the school's leadership.

SATs results wiped at second Harris academy

Roger Truelove @RogerTruelove

Enough is enough of this ridiculous nonsense. Executive salaries, budget irregularities, testing irregularities, covert selection. Time for our schools to be properly monitored.

bewilderedteacher @chum440

This is a very widespread problem. We'd have illiterate kids coming up with a 5c. Makes it impossible for secondary teachers to make progress.

Untamed Shrew @ScotsLindaT

As much as I deplore cheating, rampant or otherwise, I can't help feeling sad that fear and pressure leads to this.

The new computer science GCSE is already being reviewed

Andrew Howard, comment

Two subjects are needed, a GCSE in ICT and a GCSE in Computer Science. Uptake is improving in my school, with 40 percent of my year 12s being female this year. However, ICT is a vital skill for the workplace and a new GCSE should be introduced, as it is a separate and needed subject.

Jacob Habgood @jacobmph

Sorting algorithms, Von Neumann architecture, TCP/IP models. I love my subject, but at 13 I'd definitely have chosen art or history over this. Programming is such a powerfully creative skill, but that's not coming across in any of the board specification docs.

REPLY OF THE WEEK

John Connor

Academy trusts: More than just one bad apple?

"There will always be some bad apples in any system." Breathtaking. People will exploit this system because they can – it's the way it was set up – scribbled on the back of an envelope by Gove and his attack dog Cummings. The glaring flaws in the system are a) neither the DfE nor the ESFA have the capacity or the skill sets to oversee the finances of 7,000 schools directly, and b) it's not within their remit to detect fraud – they're not the SFO. Warning bells were ringing 8 years ago, but the warnings went unheeded with inevitable consequences. It's worth remembering that Agnew, having run an academy trust, was ennobled and parachuted into the DfE as minister for academies, as was his predecessor. As the saying goes, absolute corruption corrupts absolutely.



THE REPLY OF THE WEEK WINS A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG. CONTACT US AT NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK TO CLAIM

Sir Anthony Seldon: Fast track headship college will open in 2020

Jim Garbutt @gublet

Fast track leadership is a very dangerous route I think. Why - because there are so many things to learn in the cultural capital aspect of leadership. Fastrack usually means following a rote system, applying strategies etc but often with little or no understanding of leadership.

V&V @VandVLearning

What a bold concept. Great head teachers play crucial role in creating, developing and sustaining truly successful schools that go way beyond exam results. To focus on developing HTs on a dedicated, extended programme could be very exciting.

Labour: We'll make schools 'accountable' for off-rolled pupils

Terry Fish @terryfish

That's not the answer! How can anyone be accountable for something over which they have no control. Madness!!

JSM @inclusive_head

Will Labour also commit to tackling issue of significant numbers who choose to electively home educate rather than work with schools to address attendance concerns? Growing issue!

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

FRIDAY

The Chartered College of Teaching has endured its fair share of criticism since it was set up (especially over its membership policies), but now it appears that the roof has literally caved in.

Part of the ceiling at CCT HQ fell down on Friday, sending plasterboard everywhere and a large strip light crashing to the floor.

Speaking at an event in the neighbouring Wellcome Trust offices, CCT boss Dame Alison Peacock made light of the damage.

"I hope it's not symbolic," she joked, before adding: "It's not."

MONDAY

As the saying goes, no publicity is bad publicity, and the creators of a new no-frills low-cost private school in Durham appear to have had so much good publicity that they no longer see the need to engage with the press.

Professor James Tooley, who has spoken to *Schools Week* about his plans many times in recent years and wrote a gushing op-ed in the *Telegraph* a while back, is now avoiding the calls of journalists keen to know more about how things are going at the £52-a-week Independent Grammar School: Durham (which finally opened this week).

"We are extremely gratified by all the national and local media attention surrounding the opening of our school," a statement on the school's website reads.

"As a privately-funded organisation, however, our policy is not to engage with the media."

Maybe it's just a coincidence, but the change of heart follows a critical article in the *Guardian* – questioning just how much he is paying teachers. WiW also understands that the school has under-recruited the number of pupils originally touted by Tooley.

TUESDAY

Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner has been busy ahead of Labour's party conference this weekend (which has absolutely nothing to do with rumours she is positioning herself for a leadership bid).

After successfully pinching a well-regarded Tory policy on off-rolling that like so many things never saw the light of day, Rayner sat down with the *Guardian* to talk about plans for a National Education Service. Despite having first been announced by Jeremy Corbyn in 2015, it is still little more than a mission statement for the party and an umbrella term for funding increases and universal access to education.

WiW understands that although Rayner will have plenty to say in her conference speech on Monday about what the NES might mean for schools, the party is still not ready to address the elephant in the room: academies and the middle tier.

Rayner told *Schools Week* around a year ago that she wanted to move on from the academies vs maintained schools debate and behind the scenes, Labour needs a solution more achievable than "give all schools back to local authorities". But this position puts Rayner – and by extension Jeremy

Corbyn – on a collision course with Labour members and trade unionists, who favour ending the academies experiment for good.

THURSDAY

Amanda Spielman found herself on the spot when she arrived at the LBC studio for a 9am phone-in about her role as chief inspector of schools.

The first question from presenter Nick Ferrari about the new 9 to 1 GCSE grading system was a blast from the past for Spielman, who used to chair exams regulator Ofqual.

It's easy to feel sorry for Spielman, who stumbled several times as she tried to explain on live radio the comparison between the 9 to 1 grades and the old A* to G grades.

But she's not alone.



A survey of almost 3,000 heads, teachers, parents, universities and the public at large conducted shortly after the first use of numerical grades last year found 62 per cent of respondents felt GCSEs are well understood by people, compared with 70 per cent the previous year.



Director roles commencing in January 2019 at Sydney's benchmark Montessori school.

Inner Sydney Montessori School, established in 1981 and well located in Inner Sydney, is recognised as one of the leading Montessori schools in Australia, yet maintains an enviable small school reputation as a friendly and dynamic Pre-Primary and Primary School with students at the centre of everything we do.

ISMS Principal, Zoe Ezzard welcomes contact from potential applicants to discuss why you should join this growing team. We would love to hear from you!

We are looking for passionate educators with an embedded understanding and appreciation of the Montessori philosophy. You will have a reputable 6-12 Montessori Diploma and hold a relevant teaching qualification. You will also be required to attain NSW Education Standards Authority accreditation.

You will have a Working with Children Check number and a First-Aid qualification.

You will demonstrate:

- A passion for Montessori education and a strong desire to work within a collaborative, authentic Montessori environment;
- The ability to promote a positive and supportive ethos for pupils where all are valued, encouraged and challenged to achieve the best they can;
- Excellent interpersonal skills.

Respect, collaboration and supportive relationships are at the heart of our School culture resulting in an environment where staff feel valued, supported and inspired. We work collaboratively to create nurturing classrooms where each child develops a healthy self-concept, positive values, strong skills, a deep academic understanding and a curiosity and appreciation of nature and the world around them. Our child focused Pre-Primary and Primary School is at enrollment capacity with around 300 students between the ages of 3-12.

In addition, around 100 students are enrolled per term in our esteemed Infant Community Program for 0-3 year olds.

We are very proud of our School & encourage you to learn more about us at www.isms.nsw.edu.au and follow us at [facebook.com/InnerSydneyMontessori](https://www.facebook.com/InnerSydneyMontessori)

Meet with Principal, Zoe Ezzard in London this September!

How to Apply

Please forward applications by including a cover letter and CV to principal@isms.nsw.edu.au

ISMS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. The position is subject to satisfactory references, police clearances, a Working with Children Check and comply with the requirements of NES.



TEACHER OF DRAMA

FT or PT 0.8/4 days

Fixed term Maternity Cover until August 2019

Required December 2018 or January 2019

We are seeking to recruit a suitably qualified enthusiastic and hardworking Drama teacher to join our committed and successful team. Experience and ability to teach Drama at KS3 and KS4 is essential also with the ability to teach some English (not essential).

CD: 12.00noon 2 October 2018

TEACHER OF ENGLISH

FT or PT

Required ASAP or January 2019

Fixed term until August 2019

We are looking for a suitably qualified enthusiastic and hardworking teacher to join our outstanding English Department. Experience and ability to teach KS3 and KS4 English is essential. Our P8 figure for English Language ranked us in the top 10 state schools in Hampshire.

CD: 12.00noon 16 October 2018

For further information and to apply please visit the Recruitment Page on our website www.hounsdown.hants.sch.uk

Headteacher

(Head of School), Brindishe Manor Primary School. from January or April 2019

Salary: Group 3 within the Leadership point
18-24 plus a discretionary allowance



Brindishe Manor is a two form entry primary school within our Brindishe Federation of three ofsted-rated outstanding schools located in Lewisham SE London.

A maintained Local Authority school which is strong, diverse, forward looking and vibrant with 480 children who learn in a responsible & considerate way. This is one of the most popular local schools for children aged 3-11 years.

Working with our newly appointed Executive Head, our tri-school Governing Body and a supportive SLT you will lead 70+ talented & highly-skilled staff. You will work alongside the Headteachers of Brindishe Lee and Brindishe Green bringing the best possible opportunities to all of the children in our federation. We take pride in offering opportunities to develop leadership skills always look forwards in our thinking.

To find out more go to our schools' website
www.brindishemanor.lewisham.sch.uk

Deadline for applying is: midday on Monday 15th October 2018
Interviews are likely to be : week beginning Monday 29th October 2018



We are delighted that you're interested in this role - it couldn't be a more exciting time to join us. We are a new organisation formed out of the merger of Ambition School Leadership and the Institute for Teaching.

We know that great teaching and school leadership are the most powerful levers for transforming children's outcomes. Effective leaders set the culture and create the conditions for improvements in teacher expertise, and expert teachers can close the attainment gap. Yet too much professional development for teachers and school leaders is low-quality, generic and fragmented.

Our new organisation, launching in Spring 2019, will have a single focus: to help teachers and school leaders to keep getting better. We think that this is the best way to make sure that every pupil, regardless of their background, gets a great education.

We will be the largest teaching and school leadership development provider in England, with more than ten years of collective experience working with everyone from new teachers to multi-academy trust CEOs and all of the roles in between.

Executive Director - School Leadership

Closing date – 30th September 2018

Salary: Competitive

London, Birmingham, Manchester (with occasional travel to our other offices) Full and part time considered.

This is an exciting, demanding role that will give the post-holder an opportunity to have system-wide impact. It is the most senior school leadership role within our Programmes Division.

You will be accountable for the successful execution of all school leadership programmes - from middle leadership through to headship. In addition you will also manage our schools advisory group and contribute to school leadership related business development. As an Executive Director within the Programmes Division you will manage a team of Deans, act as an external voice for the organisation when required, deputise for the Chief Education Officer when required, and take on wider leadership responsibilities across the organisation.

In order to excel in this role, the post-holder will need a clear vision for our school leadership programmes and the ability to apply this vision strategically to ensure our programmes are successful. The post holder will also have been a very effective leader within a school serving a low-income community. They will be a credible professional, both internally and externally and have experience of managing a large and complex team and its budget. The successful candidate will champion our values and embody them in interactions with colleagues and partners.

Dean – Learning Design

Closing date – 30th September 2018

Circa £60,000 - £64,000 plus £3,000 LW (If applicable)

London, Birmingham, Manchester (with occasional travel to our other offices)

We are looking for an exceptional individual to join our team as the Dean - Learning Design. This is an exciting, demanding role that will give the post-holder an opportunity to have system-wide impact. It is a leadership team post within our Programmes Division.

You will be accountable for the design of all programmes ensuring that they are high quality and aligned with our education model. You will also undertake some direct facilitation on those programmes as required. As a Dean within the Learning Design Team you will manage a team of Associate Deans - Learning Design, act as an external voice for the organisation when required, deputise for your Executive Director when required and take on wider leadership responsibilities across the organisation.

Our offer

- Agile working - a dynamic and flexible internal culture that gives employees control over the way they work and supports wellbeing
- A competitive annual leave entitlement - 25 days plus bank holidays
- A generous employer pension contribution - 11% (10% pension plus 1% NI rebate)
- Competitive salaries rates and life assurance
- Access to interest free season ticket and bike loans, as well as childcare vouchers
- An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which gives staff confidential support and personalised information and resources when they are experiencing everyday challenges or more serious problems.
- A proactive, positive and progressive approach to team development.

How to Apply

To apply for any of our vacancies, or if you have any questions, please visit our website.

www.ambitionschoolleadership.org.uk/work-for-us/



HEADTEACHER FROM APRIL 2019, OR EARLIER IF AVAILABLE

Salary negotiable, indicative range £50k - £60k

St. Mary's is a welcoming, 1 form entry Church school with a caring ethos situated in the centre of Saffron Walden, a thriving Essex market town close to the Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk borders. We would like to appoint an excellent practitioner and inspiring Headteacher with the vision, drive and energy to lead our school forward, building on our current Ofsted judgement of Good and aspiring for excellence for the whole school community.

WE ARE PROUD TO OFFER YOU :

- Polite and well behaved children who greatly enjoy coming to school
- A committed, enthusiastic and talented team
- Parents who appreciate and support the school
- A collaborative Board of Governors committed to supporting you in your role and to investing in the ongoing development of the school
- Strong, supportive links with the Church

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

An ambitious and dynamic leader who:

- will enhance the standards of teaching and learning to maximise the progress of every pupil whilst valuing each child as an individual and providing a wide range of opportunities for all
- has the passion and experience to engage and empower our staff
- has excellent interpersonal and communication skills, able to create effective and positive relationships with parents and all members of the school community
- will further strengthen our links with other local schools
- will continue to nurture and develop the Christian faith, values and ethos of our Church school

School visits are warmly welcome and will be hosted by one of our governors. Please contact **Richard Peet**, our Vice-Chair, to make arrangements by email:
richardpeet@st-maryscofe.essex.sch.uk

If you would like an informal chat about this opportunity, in confidence, please contact our governance adviser, Andrea Morley at Balance Education Consultancy via andrea.morley@balanceec.com

How to apply

Please visit our advert on the Essex Schools Jobs website for an Application Pack and to apply online:

<http://www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk/Vacancies/Details.aspx?VacancyId=48104>

Closing date: Midday, Monday 1st October 2018

Selection event: **Friday 12th October 2018** with a late afternoon tea on **Thursday 11th October** to meet staff

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to enhanced DBS and other checks in line with safer recruitment practice.



The Russett School

Deputy Head of Academy

The Russett School Middlehurst Avenue Weaverham Northwich Cheshire CW8 3BW.
Required for January 2019 or sooner

Leadership Point 4 to Leadership Point 8 (£42,398.00 to £46,799.00),
subject to pay award

Following a recent expansion of The Russett Learning Trust an opportunity has arisen at the Russett School. The Governors are looking to appoint a further innovative and inspirational Deputy Head for the Academy.

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

This person must be committed to working in partnership with the Head of Academy, Executive Head Teacher and the Trust. We are looking for someone who has the highest expectations in terms of our pupils/students and staff. Who is passionate and committed to working with children with special educational needs and who will embrace the ethos and values of the academy and Trust.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk to you and show you around the academy. To arrange, please contact **Jane Palfreyman**, Office Manager The Russett School, on 01606 853005 or by email to jpalfreyman@russett.trlt.org.uk

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

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

Completed application forms should be returned to jpalfreyman@russett.trlt.org.uk by noon on the 4th October 2018. Shortlisting 9th October 2018 and interviews will take place on the 16th and 17th October 2018.

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



Education Associate,

YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

Are you an outstanding teacher, who wants to transform how schools build the essential skills of their students?

Enabling Enterprise is an award-winning social enterprise. Our mission is to ensure that one day, all students leave school equipped with the skills, experiences and aspirations to succeed – beyond just a set of qualifications. We do this through creating innovative educational programmes for schools that introduce new, more enterprising teaching approaches. Our work is reinforced and supported by more than 130 top employers including PwC, London City Airport and Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital.

We are looking for an experienced and passionate teacher, comfortable working with students, training and modelling to teachers, and presenting to school leaders. We want someone who will be dedicated to building and maintaining relationships with our schools, and supporting them to make our programmes transformational for their children.

Salary: £28,000-£32,000 subject to review in 12 months

Closing Date: 9am on the 10th October 2018

To apply please visit: <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/jobs>

TEACHER ADVISOR BIG PICTURE DONCASTER

Job Role: Teacher Advisor, Big Picture Doncaster

Organisation Type: Secondary, Alternative Provision

Start date: January 2019

Salary: £25,000 - £35,000+

Applications by: Midnight Sunday 14th October 2018
(interviews in Doncaster 18th October)

The Teacher Advisor Role

We are seeking to appoint up to three Teacher Advisors who are inspired by the opportunity offered by the UK's first Big Picture Learning school. We are seeking someone who is passionate about the potential of all young people to succeed regardless of prior learning histories/personal circumstances.

Teacher Advisors are more than teachers, although they need to be highly capable designers of learning (and thoroughly grounded in curriculum, assessment and safeguarding requirements of the English school system).

Teacher Advisors will form deep relationships with young people and their families, supporting personal learning plans, acting as coach and advocate.

Each Teacher Advisor will be a true learner who enjoys the challenges of new approaches to pedagogy and education, seeking professional and personal

growth as a part of a community committed to the success of all students, whilst taking joy in immersive new experiences and contexts.

The School

Opening in January 2019 with a small intake of learners (increasing to 60 in year 2), Big Picture Doncaster will be the first school in the UK founded on the Big Picture Learning school design. The school, which is independently funded, is actively supported by local partners, including Doncaster Council.

Big Picture

Big Picture Learning has supported thousands of students in the US and Australia to succeed against the odds. Providing a different approach to schooling and learning, family partnerships, community-based internships and personalized learning are features of the design. More information: <https://www.innovationunit.org/projects/big-picture-learning-in-doncaster/>.

Details and full job description:

<https://www.innovationunit.org/thoughts/big-picture-learning-is-hiring/>.

Please submit applications to **Claire Adsley** (Claire.adsley@smartpasupport.com) by midnight on 18th October 2018.

**BIG
PICTURE
LEARNING** UK

MAKING THE RESEARCH EASY

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Search through hundreds of premium jobs from
across the education sector.**



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advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk or call: 020 8123 4778.

Roles from organisations including: