

# SCHOOLS WEEK

A digital newspaper determined to get past the bluster and explain the facts.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON AT TEACH FIRST?



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Investigation: The school leaders stripped of their status



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Hinds: Future pay rises must be 'affordable'



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Mental health report FINALLY published



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FRIDAY, NOV 23, 2018 | EDITION 158

## Agnew's bubbly bet

Minister wages heads a bottle of champagne he can find more savings in their schools

Get your wager slip on page 6\*



\*gamble responsibly

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# Kids locked in classrooms

- Secret report reveals extent of failure at doomed Schools Company trust
- Government told children 'not safe', leadership absent and staff demoralised
- Investigation reveals concerns raised nine months before RSC intervened

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## SCHOOLS WEEK

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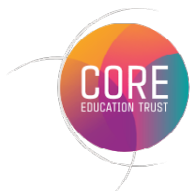
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## The editor's top picks

### Debate



Should home education settings have mandatory monitoring?

P23-24

### Opinion



What role should schools play in teaching pupils to spot fake news?

P26

## Our Pippa wins big at journalism awards



*Schools Week* senior reporter Pippa Allen-Kinross has been crowned 'newcomer of the year' at the CIPR Education Journalism Awards 2018.

Allen-Kinross, who joined the team last September, won for a series of articles exposing deep-rooted problems in the academies sector.

Editor John Dickens said: "This is a richly-deserved award for a superb journalist."

Allen-Kinross is now working full-time on *Schools Week*, after a short spell with our sister title *FE Week*.



# News: Teacher pay

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## Disadvantaged schools hit by pay rise plan

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

A third of schools have been left short by the government's teacher pay rise plan – with disadvantaged schools disproportionately hit, new research has found.

Schools will split £508 million in funding over the next two years to cover the teacher pay deal announced in the summer. Allocations are based on pupil numbers, with uplifts for geographic location and school type.

However, an Education Policy Institute report published yesterday found that the allocations left schools with more disadvantaged intakes and lower pupil numbers more likely to fall short of funding.

Researchers have warned that the policy "flies in the face of the past 20 years" of efforts to direct more funding to deprived schools.

The EPI found one third of schools would get between 5 and 25 per cent less than the cost of the pay rise, while 6 per cent would get more than 25 per cent less. These percentages were the same at the other end of the scale for schools that would get more than the cost of the rises – with 6 per cent getting more than 25 per cent more.

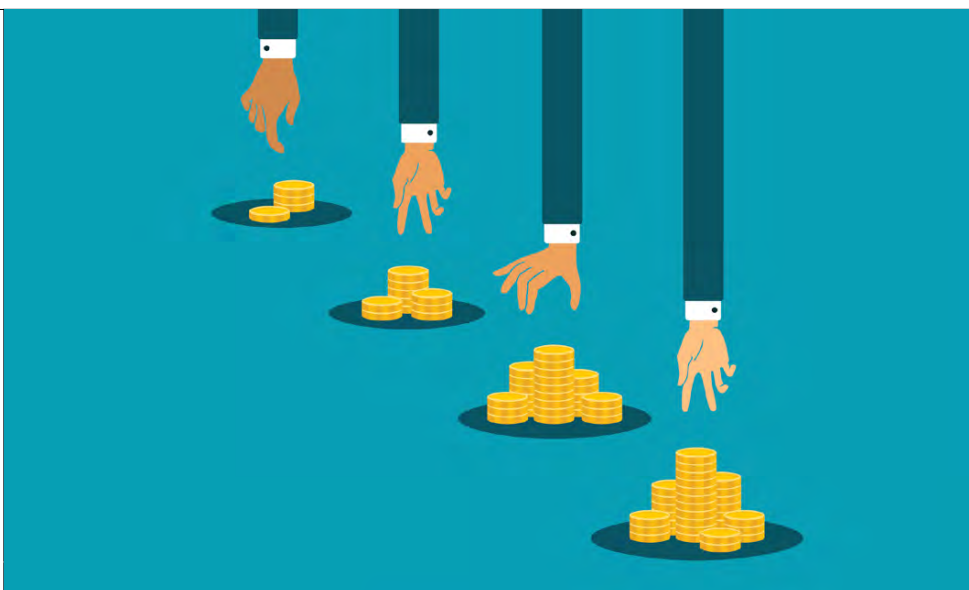
Schools with poorer intakes were also more likely to be negatively affected because they were more likely to have smaller classes and more teachers on the main pay scale, rather than upper and leadership levels.

The deal lifted the main pay range by 3.5 per cent, with a 2 per cent rise for the upper pay range and a 1.5 per cent rise for the leadership pay range.

The analysis also found that some small schools received, proportionally, up to twice as much additional funding as larger schools.

In some cases this was because the government chose to fund each school for a minimum of 100 pupils, so smaller schools would pocket a surplus, researchers found.

A DfE spokesperson said pupil numbers were used to allocate funding as the "quickest and most effective way to get this money out to schools".



## Ominous rumblings on next year's pay rise

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Damian Hinds has urged the independent teacher pay body to give "careful consideration" to whether any pay rises recommended for next year were "affordable across the school system".

The education secretary's language will be interpreted as bad news for teachers hoping to get a pay boost. Schools claim that any extra costs would push them to breaking point.

Hinds' letter, sent to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) on Wednesday, comes as a Department for Education funding boss admitted it was "difficult" to ignore pay rise recommendations for this year.

A DfE commissioned report that found teachers were "profoundly" demotivated when pay did not match workload has put more pressure on the government to lift pay.

Hinds told the review body to consider how next year's pay award could "best encourage high-quality entrants to join the profession and support their progression within the workforce".

However, he urged it to ensure the pay award was "affordable", adding he also wanted evidence of steps they took to ensure this was given "due consideration".

But the DfE's report, also published on Wednesday, found the current pay framework was better at "recruiting rather than retaining teachers".

The study, based on surveys and interviews with nearly 800 heads and teachers, warned that only about a third of teachers thought their current pay range was helping them to

build a career.

It also found widespread confusion over pay frameworks. More than half of teachers thought the structure should be simplified.

Hinds pledged to write again to the board in the new year over its previous calls to make recommendations on how to ensure classroom teacher pay was "clear and compelling".

The department had considered how the pay system could "best support schools" with recruitment and retention.

His letter would ask for recommendations on how to ensure pay was "suitably differentiated to meet current challenges and how remaining rigidities can be reformed to create a more attractive offer for teachers at all career stages".

Last year, the STRB called for a 3.5 per cent rise for all pay scales. However, the government agreed to apply this just to the main and unqualified teacher pay ranges for classroom teachers.

Tom Goldman, the deputy director of the DfE's funding policy unit, told the Schools and Academies Show in Birmingham on Wednesday that ignoring the body's proposals was a "difficult decision".

The department was "aware of the reaction to the teachers' pay award", but said the Treasury "did not offer us any additional funding, perhaps unsurprisingly, and therefore a balance had to be struck".

Under this year's pay deal, schools also had to cover the first 1 per cent of the rises.

Goldman insisted the money already in school budgets nationally was "adequate" to cover this, although he accepted that might not be the case for every school.

## News

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# Agnew's waste wager branded 'unbelievably crass'

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

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, is under fire for promising headteachers "a bottle of champagne" if he cannot find more savings in their schools.

The politician told the Schools and Academies Show in Birmingham that he was "like a pig out hunting for truffles when it comes to finding waste in schools".

The minister has been criticised in the past for his insistence that schools could continue to save on back-office spending amid warnings from headteachers that their budgets are cut to the bone.

But he insisted this week that more could be done.

"I would challenge anyone here, if they want to have a wager with me that I can't find some waste in your school, I will take you on," Agnew said on Wednesday.

"And I will use the teams that I have got at the DfE to win. But if I lose, which is entirely possible, I promise to give you a bottle of champagne and a letter of



Lord Agnew clutched a copy of 'The Future of Capitalism' as he issued his edict

commendation."

*Schools Week* revealed earlier this year that the government planned to spend £2.3 million on up to 160 advisers to help schools to cut their budgets.

Agnew revealed last week that the first wave of advisers had identified potential savings of more than £35 million following

visits to 72 schools and trusts – an average of about £500,000 savings for each visit.

Vic Goddard, the head of Passmores Academy in Harlow, Essex, accused the minister of "sapping our energy every day with this sort of comment", while James Bowen, from the middle leaders' union NAHT Edge, said it was an "unbelievably crass comment to make when school leaders are making heartbreaking cuts".

Paul Whiteman, who leads the NAHT, said Agnew was "wrong to say that efficiencies will solve the school funding crisis."

"Only new money from the Treasury will do that," he said. "Schools have made all the cuts they can."

"When the government talks about 'little extras' and champagne bets, it shows how out of touch they are. School budgets are at breaking point. That's the truth."

\*Want to take-up the academies minister on his wager? Print off and send away our slip below to win your bottle of champagne.

Cut here ✂

**SCHOOLS  
WEEK**

**WAGER SLIP**

Dear Theodore Agnew,

I would like to take up your champagne wager.

Please can your team visit

School: .....

Name: .....

Contact details: .....



**SEND TO:**  
**Theodore Agnew,**  
20 Great Smith St,  
Westminster, London  
SW1P 3BT



**REMEMBER:**  
Don't print this out  
using colour ink!  
(Agnew says you're  
not allowed)



## News

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## ‘Let’s end the mystery of headteacher boards’

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

INVESTIGATES

The government has begun to lift the lid on decisions made by its secretive headteacher boards, but officials want to go further to ensure there are “no mysteries” about how academies are passed around the system.

The first set of beefed-up minutes were published earlier this month for south east England and south London, the area headed by regional schools commissioner (RSC) Dominic Herrington.

The seven other regions are yet to follow suit, but *Schools Week* understands this is on the way.

During a speech to school leaders this week, Herrington, also the interim national schools commissioner, said he wanted to go further, pledging “more transparency around headteacher boards...so that there are no mysteries

about them”.

Set up to advise England’s eight RSCs on academy conversion and rebrokering, the partially elected boards have faced heavy criticism over their lack of transparency.

Minutes were published for the first time in April 2016, more than 18 months after the boards were formed, and even then lacked detail.

The new, more transparent set of minutes, which relate to a meeting in September, include details of advice and comments made by board members, giving the public a better understanding of why and how important decisions were made.

For instance, a decision to defer approving a trust to sponsor Oakfield Primary School, in Dartford, Kent, included eight explanation points, all with full sentences.

Previously, the minutes recorded little beyond the outcome and a single word – such as finance, capacity or

safeguarding, to describe key discussion points.

Setting out his priorities at the Schools and Academies Show in Birmingham this week, Herrington said that he wanted to get “more multi-academy trusts sharing and learning” and to refine the RSCs’ oversight role, “making us more transparent, more consistent, tighter”.

*Schools Week* understands officials are now looking at what they can do beyond the more detailed minutes to open up the process.

Herrington also spoke this week of his plan to champion “good news” in the academies sector, although he admitted schools faced “incredible challenges”.

He said he would “talk more about the next tier of MATs” – trusts with between one and five schools that were “often the unsung heroes that add to the system, who don’t put their heads up above the parapet but just do fantastic things at local level”.



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# DfE accused of special treatment for minister's trust

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The Department for Education has denied double standards after forcing one academy trust to share documents relating to important decisions made by its bosses, but allowing another – set up by the academies minister – not to.

The Inspiration Trust, in east Anglia, and Bright Tribe, based in the north, were both requested under the freedom of information act to release chief executive reports and departmental reports, which are not usually published online.

When both trusts refused, the campaigner called on the government to intervene – claiming the trusts were breaching their articles of association which state documents heard at meetings should be “made available” to people wishing to inspect.

Emails seen by *Schools Week* show the Education and Skills Funding Agency stepped in to tell Bright Tribe to share the documents, after being asked earlier this year.

The email stated “the department’s position is that we would expect these to be shared as soon as is reasonably practical”.

However when asked to intervene over a similar request to Inspiration Trust, founded by academies minister Lord Agnew, the government refused to.

There is no suggestion Inspiration has acted improperly. But the case raises questions about the government’s differing approach to a trust closely-connected to Agnew.

His trust’s refusal to share the documents – the original information request took place in May before Agnew resigned as a director from the trust – also comes as the minister said earlier this month that the “transparency of academy systems leads to greater accountability”.

Transparency campaigner Andy Jolley, who made the requests, said: “Even troubled trusts like Wakefield, Schools Company Trust and Collective Spirit have produced these documents in redacted form – so why can’t Inspiration?” he said, citing various trusts and schools which are now being wound up.

EXCLUSIVE

INSPIRATION  
—★— TRUST

**BrightTribe**  
learn grow prosper

Section 124 of academy articles of association, which are a framework for trusts to act within the law, state any report or document considered at a trustee meeting must be “made available as soon as is reasonably practical [...] to persons wishing to inspect them.”

But Inspiration invoked section 125, which says material relating to a named employee, pupil, or “which trustees are satisfied should remain confidential” may be excluded from the request.

The ESFA backed up the trust, saying in an email that because the trust had said the documents were confidential, “we cannot take this matter any further.”

But it marks a stark contrast to the DfE’s tone over similar documents withheld by Bright Tribe, which is now closing following a row over standards and facilities. An official said the “department’s position is that we would expect these to be shared as soon as is reasonably practical” in line with section 124.

Bright Tribe shared the documents a couple of days later. Although *Schools Week* understands trustees did not claim the documents were confidential, as in the case of Inspiration.

Nevertheless, legal and governance experts have said section 125 is being used to withhold documents that should actually be shared.

One lawyer at a major education law firm, who did not wish to be named, said the rule was being used as a “get-out-of-jail-free card” by trustees.

“The DfE have no discretion over what should be published, because it’s completely up to the trustees to say what’s confidential,” he warned.

If documents can be redacted, so information did not give away sensitive information, they

should be released, he added.

In relation to use of the freedom of information act, Tanaka Tizirai-Chapwanya, a National Governance Association advice officer, warned in June that governors and academy bosses “need to be clear that simply declaring something confidential doesn’t make it so under FOI.”

Sensitive or uncomfortable discussions are being called confidential “when in fact they are just controversial”, he said.

Boards should also remember that three of the seven Nolan principles of public life are accountability, openness and honesty, he added.

However Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of Schools Trusts, said schools and trusts sometimes struggle with the burden of such requests, with replies often costing extra money because legal advice is sought.

She said: “I worry about the adversarial nature of FOI. We need to create a culture of transparency where FOI is used as a last resort rather than the first stage of engagement.”

An Inspiration spokesperson said the articles “make clear” it’s for the individual trust to apply the articles, depending on the documents in question. He added: “We do not know the detail of the request to Bright Tribe so we cannot comment on that trust’s decision.”

A DfE spokesperson denied accusations of double standards and said “as stated in the articles of association, trusts can exclude from making available any documents that the directors consider to remain confidential”.



## Investigation

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

## 'THIS ACADEMY IS UNSAFE FOR CHILDREN'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

Previously unpublished documents, obtained by Schools Week, shed light on the shocking practices uncovered at a collapsed academy trust...

A school run by a failed alternative provision academy trust was deemed so unsafe it was told to remove its older pupils immediately, documents obtained by *Schools Week* reveal.

Government advisers warned in November last year that "children are not safe" at the Central Devon Academy. They also raised serious concerns about young pupils locked in classrooms, poor recording of attendance, absent leadership and demoralised staff.

The school was one of three AP academies run by the Schools Company Trust, all of which have been rated "inadequate" by Ofsted.

*Schools Week* has previously exposed scandals at the trust, including inflated reporting of GCSE grades and poor safeguarding, and a predicted deficit of £8 million at the end of last year. It is now in the process of being closed.

Heavily redacted correspondence between the trust and the government, obtained by *Schools Week* under the Freedom of Information Act, reveal the extent to which the academy was allowed to deteriorate before formal intervention in November last year.

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the findings showed that the "accountability" arrangements for academy trusts were not working.

"The DfE, its Education and Skills Funding Agency and the regional schools commissioners are like the proverbial three monkeys who apparently see no evil, speak no evil, nor hear no evil of the academy programme, despite evidence that is staring them in the face," she said.

Lisa Mannall, the RSC for the South-West, sent a "letter of concern" to the trust in November last year. It revealed there were "serious concerns, particularly around the



behaviour of the key stage 4 cohort and the risk associated with this for their safety and that of staff and other pupils".

She recommended with "immediate effect" that KS4 pupils were removed from the academy, with "urgent additional" leadership support "imperative" to make sure their absence was not "protracted" and they had access to other education. The pupils remained offsite until January this year and did not all return.

Mannall sent in an academy leader from ACE academy trust later in November, with its interim report exposing serious concerns about the safety of learners and the capacity of leaders at the trust.

"Children are not safe," it read. "It is impossible to know where they are, what they are doing or whom they are with. This is due to lack of systems, poor performance and low expectation of staff."

Primary school pupils were "locked in classrooms and do not have the ability to leave of their own volition", the report said, describing it as a "restriction of liberty and a fire hazard", while staff said pupils were allowed offsite at lunch unsupervised from the age of 11 upwards, despite the school having a large canteen and dining area.

It described claims of 70 per cent attendance as "spurious" and said the designated safeguarding lead "had no control over certain areas, which meant that she could not affect any change to safeguard children".

The report said there were about one and half adults to every child onsite as staff felt they could not manage more than 20 to 25 pupils in the school at once.

The leadership team brought "no added value" and the governing body had not had a chair since the summer term of 2017.

TSC Exeter Base

Initial Findings

On Site: 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

ACE staff arrived on site Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November. We have been on site on the 29<sup>th</sup> November and plan to spend another day and a half in Exeter this week.

The Head had been made aware of our attendance via email from [redacted] the evening before. No other leadership from the Trust were present. Trust staff were also absent on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, though [redacted] was in attendance.

The assumptions based on evidence are as follows;

## SAFEGUARDING

1. Children are not safe. It is impossible to know where they are, what they are doing or whom they are with. This is due to a lack of systems, poor performance and low expectation of staff. The registration system is not fit for purpose and constitutes a health and safety issue. This has been exacerbated by removing the older pupils from site, however neither the onsite nor executive leadership have implemented a plan or system to manage the offsite activity, attendance or safety and welfare of the young people in question. There is evidence that some pupils who are at home or absent are currently being marked as a 'B' code - this translates to educate off site. This means attendance is condoned and therefore not checked upon by any other agency or educational welfare officer. It also means that the claims of attendance running at 70% or more are spurious.
2. There are a large number of pupils on part time packages. It is apparent they have been

## Devon

County Council claimed it raised concerns directly with the government in March 2017.

The documents also show the trust was in expansion talks with the government in July last year, just a month before it was issued with a financial notice to improve.

But the trust did not meet with the RSC's office to discuss concerns until that November.

An interim trustee board took over in January, led by Angela Barry, an academy troubleshooter. In June this year it was announced the trust would dissolve, with its schools joining other trusts.

The trust took a 10 per cent top slice - towards the top end for how much trusts slice from their schools' budgets to cover central costs - and staff suggested Devon County Council was not paying "the true cost of the extra pupils they claim to have on roll".

The council said it had "nothing to add to our previous extensive statements".

A spokesperson for the trust said previous leaders' failure were "unacceptable", adding the interim team has done "outstanding work quickly and effectively".

The DfE said all trusts are subject to "rigorous accountability". An investigation is ongoing and will be published, they said.

# This week in Parliament

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PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

## Pledge to uncover irresponsible trustees

The government wants to “uncover” irresponsible trustees and governors and ban them from governing again.

At the public accounts committee hearing on Wednesday, Meg Hillier (pictured), the committee chair, demanded to know why there was no “naming and shaming” of trustees and governors who behaved badly or irresponsibly in academy trusts.

Schools Week has previously reported disparities in the sanctions for headteachers – who are hauled before misconduct panels that have the power to impose a ban from the profession – and trustees.

Eileen Milner, the chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), said the government was seeking to “uncover in a systematic way the names of people who under their watch irresponsible things happen” and prevent them from joining other boards or disqualify them as directors.

Jonathan Slater, the Department for Education’s permanent secretary, insisted individuals could be banned from teaching

and governance, but later admitted the department had banned just one governor.

This could relate to Tahir Alam, the former chair of governors at Park View school in Birmingham, who was banned from any further involvement in schools following the Trojan horse row in 2015.

When asked by Hillier if the ESFA needed further powers to restrict and sanction trustees, Milner said she would rather “test the powers they already have”. However, Slater suggested the charity commission could also consider disqualifying people as charity trustees.

In September, Michael Pain, the chief executive of Forum Strategy, warned the DfE to “take a harder line” and ensure that anyone “found to be responsible or complicit in the mismanagement of MATs” was not allowed to govern trusts or schools again.



## We're on top of academy finances, says ESFA

Top bosses have insisted the government has strong oversight of the finances of academies, despite concern in the sector about the number of poorly performing trusts.

Mike Pettifer, the director of the academies and maintained schools group at the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), told the public accounts committee on Wednesday that “every single accounts return is looked through” and any “significant” concerns investigated “if necessary”.

Eileen Milner, chief executive of the ESFA, insisted that it did not wait for the accounts to “tell us there is a problem” and said the agency was taking its oversight of academy accounts “very seriously”.

“We are working to prevent rather than react to failure, because that really has got to be our ambition,” she said.

Many in the sector are concerned that Whitehall is struggling to keep a grip on academy finances, although the ESFA has insisted it is taking control of high salaries and related-party transactions.

Milner said from April all trusts would have to declare every related-party transaction and get approval from the ESFA for any above £20,000, although this figure could reduce to “zero”. Academies would then have to get approval for every related-party transaction.

A small specialist team is also being formed to work on identifying related-party transactions and advise academies on what needs to be declared.

She also said more guidance on salaries could be expected in the next six to 12 months. About 40 trusts have been pulled in front of the minister for providing unsatisfactory evidence around the “transparency, proportionality and justifiability” of the high salaries paid to some chief executives.

## Documents of closed trusts are with us, says DfE

A top civil servant has claimed his department is responsible for keeping safe documents of collapsed trusts, despite telling *Schools Week* last week that the duty lies with liquidators.

Jonathan Slater, the Department for Education’s permanent secretary, told a committee of MPs on Wednesday that his department required the return of all documentation from trusts that are shut down.

He was questioned by Meg Hillier, the chair of the public accounts committee, following *Schools Week*’s investigation last week that found a soaring number of trusts were closing.

The investigation revealed important questions about who was responsible for keeping important documents – such as contracts and board minutes – of the closed trusts.

The DfE said last week this responsibility lay with the liquidator of the trust, who would have to keep documents for up to seven years. But one liquidator told *Schools Week* that documents were shredded after a year.

Slater has now insisted that the government required the return of all documentation.

Our investigation prompted concerns

from Julie Rayson, a local councillor and campaigner at the Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria, to point out that many documents relating to its former trust – Bright

Tribe, which is due to close – “can’t be located”.

When asked by Hillier about trusts shredding documents, Slater said he would be “appalled” if anything was shredded.

The DfE has pledged to publish more guidance on trust closure. Our investigation last week found that since 2014, at least 91 multi-academy trusts had closed or were in the process of being wound up.

However, more than half (46) closed or began closing this year.





# This week in Parliament

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

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## Leisure centre still funding former head's £850k pay-off

Most of the money made by leisure facilities on a school site in south London is still being diverted to fund the former head's £850,000 pay-off.

Sir Greg Martin (pictured), who quit as head of Durand Academy in 2015, is entitled to the "special payment" under a contract clause relating to the private leisure centre.

The deal was reached following the termination of a contract between one of Martin's companies and London Horizons Limited, which runs the centre.

Martin was initially entitled to £1.8 million, but, after a Charity Commission inquiry, this was reduced in agreement with the regulator.

Durand was rebrokered to the Dunraven Educational Trust earlier this year after the Department for Education terminated the Durand Academy Trust funding agreement. The school reopened as Van Gogh primary in September.

However, as revealed by Schools Week at



the time, the school land occupied by the leisure centre and accommodation remained in private hands and had not been passed to Dunraven with the rest of the site.

Part of the land on the school's Hackford Road site is still controlled by Durand Education Trust, a separate private company set up in 2010 by Martin and others.

John Wentworth, an education consultant currently serving as a trustee of the Durand

Education Trust, told MPs on the public accounts committee on Wednesday that the facilities made about £400,000 a year, but that much of this was paid to Martin.

These payments were a "considerable liability".

The government handed over the land to the Durand Education Trust in 2010 - although the DfE previously told the National Audit Office that government approval for the deal was not sought.

The committee also heard that it was unclear if the land could be moved to another trust. The charity commission said it was still looking into this.

During his time as head, Martin's annual earnings were said to total more than £420,000. This included management fees paid through his firm GMG, which ran London Horizons, of more than £280,000 from 2012 to 2014, on top of his headteacher's salary of £229,138 in 2012-13.

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# This week in Parliament

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

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## CEC's conference spending criticised

MPs have criticised the Careers and Enterprise Company for spending more than £200,000 on two conferences, asking why it didn't seek out private sponsorship instead.

The organisation, which was grilled by the education select committee in May about its spending, had a second hearing with MPs on Wednesday.

The committee heard the company's annual one-day Joining the Dots conference cost £158,000 – or £200 a person – with another conference, held at the children's activity centre KidZania, costing nearly £50,000.

Robert Halfon, the chair of the committee, said: "Is that money that could go on the frontline? How can that be justified?"

The CEC's chief executive, Claudia Harris, said the annual conference, held at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, helped schools and colleges to work together and understand good careers guidance.

The second conference was a learning

event for 2,000 business volunteers who "give us a day a month for free", adding: "It's how we ensure quality, by providing those events."

But Halfon said: "Do you not understand there are massive public sector constraints [...] people could rightly say, 'why is this money not being spent on the frontline?'"

Other similar organisations got private companies to sponsor such events so taxpayers' money was not used.

The CEC's chair, Christine Hodgson, told the committee there would be no annual conference next year.

The company, which has so far received £40 million in public money to support careers guidance in schools, was also given short shrift about a new survey tool that it claims is measuring its impact.

Harris said the new survey, introduced in September, allowed pupils

to report on their motivation or resilience following a CEC-funded intervention. Results suggested levels increased.

But Trudy Harrison, the Tory MP for Copeland, said she would expect exam results to improve if motivation was supposedly higher, and queried why the CEC did not collect more quantitative data.

Harris said that as more secondary schools and colleges became involved in CEC-funded initiatives, such data could be increasingly collected. About 3,000 were currently involved.

MPs also criticised the organisation's senior staff salaries again.

Harris said she asked for a £50,000 reduction when she was initially offered the role, implying it was originally offered at £185,000.

But Lucy Powell, the former shadow education secretary, said some senior salaries were higher than most headteachers and MPs.



Claudia Harris

## SEND campaigners want EHCP template

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

The government should issue a national Education Health and Care Plan template so that local authorities can properly meet their legal obligations to pupils with special educational needs, MPs have been told.

Local authorities have drawn up EHCPs, which replaced the old statements of special educational needs four years ago, in different ways, which means that many pupils aren't getting the support they need, MPs on the Commons education select committee heard on Tuesday.

Schools rely on the support and attached funding laid out in EHCPs to access top-up funding from councils for higher-need pupils.

Dame Christine Lenehan, director of the Council for Disabled Children, warned that some crucial sections of the plan are being missed out by local authorities.

"Because there is no national template, people have interpreted the law beyond the law," she said.

The new EHCPs replaced statements in 2014 and were supposed to provide more "holistic and efficient" special educational needs and disabilities support for young people up to the age of 25.

But some councils are guilty of "poor practice", said Lenehan, adding that a national EHCP template would be a "fairly simple short-term recommendation" to resolve quality issues with plans.

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## Teach First sharpens recruitment focus as DfE considers its future

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

**INVESTIGATES**

The teacher-training charity Teach First has launched a substantial shake-up of its operations, amid doubts over the future of its government funding.

The organisation this week announced new initiatives to get more career-changers, returner teachers and teaching assistants into the classroom.

It comes after Teach First ditched several of its non-teaching-related programmes, putting a number of jobs at risk.

It has also emerged the government is considering splitting Teach First's funding between a number of different organisations from next year. It follows criticism of the charity, which receives £39 million for each cohort of 1,750 trainees – equivalent to more than £22,000 per graduate.

Teach First was set up in 2002 to encourage those who would not normally consider teaching to join the profession. Since then, it has grown into a charity that champions social-mobility issues far beyond its original teacher-recruitment-and-training remit.

But although the charity's new strategy will see it broaden the routes into teaching that it offers, other projects are due to come to an end as the organisation seeks to save money.

Futures and Oxbridge, two widening participation schemes for the higher-education sector, are now closed to new applicants and will end next summer.

The charity will also cease to be the incubator of the Fair Education Alliance, a campaign group of more than 100 organisations. Its Innovation Unit, which supports social enterprises run by Teach First ambassadors, will also move out to be run by its participants.

A spokesperson would not confirm how many staff are facing redundancy as a result of the changes, though he did say the charity was "going through a process, with staff affected".

The changes form part of Teach First's new strategy, put in place by chief executive Russell Hobby (pictured), who took over from Brett Wigdortz last September.



## TeachFirst

Hobby announced in May that his team was exploring "how we deliver value for money" and what Teach First is "best placed to do". The key focus in the future will be on "developing great teachers and leaders, in education and beyond", he announced.

The charity's contract is up for renewal from next year, and in pre-tender engagement documents seen by *Schools Week*, the Department for Education floated the idea of using "new funding mechanisms" and even delivering the programme through "collaboration between a number of suppliers" in the future.

"At this stage, the commercial model for this opportunity is under consideration," the documents state.

Over the years, Teach First's approach has attracted its fair share of controversy.

Its intake of top graduates made it a target for accusations of elitism, and its generous government funding has been a particular bone of contention in the recruitment-and-training sector – particularly over drop-out rates of graduates.

In 2016, the proportion of Teach First graduates still in classroom after achieving QTS was just 43 per cent.

Long-standing critic Dave Cobb, chief executive of recruitment company Oceanova, says it should not receive public funding, especially now that it is focusing more on recruitment and training.

He said: "If they're finally admitting their primary role is as a training provider and a recruiter, why should they get [government] funding? If they're going to be a provider of services, why can't they do it as part of the

market?"

Cobb said Teach First was a "good invention 15 years ago", but had "wasted millions of pounds of taxpayers' money".

Kevin Courtney, joint leader of the National Education Union, has also called for "clarity on the routes into teaching", and said university routes, which still produce the majority of teachers, "must be supported and not suffer as a consequence of other options".

A Teach First spokesperson insisted the charity would retain its unique appeal, despite the move back to a more traditional limited range of services.

"We're continuing our work of attracting high-potential graduates to teach in schools in the most disadvantaged communities – those that need them the most.

"As a result, our new programmes will continue to respond to the growing demand these schools face in attracting more individuals with strong leadership potential."

He also denied the new routes would create more confusion over teacher-training routes. Its career-changers programme has drawn parallels to Now Teach, an existing scheme which seeks to get professionals from other fields to move into the classroom towards the end of their careers.

Now Teach was one of three organisations handed a share of £10 million government funding this week to boost the number of career changers.

The Teach First spokesperson added: "Across all our programmes there is a unique contribution; we attract individuals with strong leadership potential who want to work in schools in the most disadvantaged communities."

He said the Time to Teach pilot is about "making teaching accessible to individuals who are at a different point in their career".

All training will be carried out during working hours, Monday to Friday, with no weekend, evening or residential courses which "could be especially challenging for those with additional responsibilities outside work.

"There is currently no other route available that is specifically tailored to mid-career professionals," the spokesperson said.

## Investigation

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## Leaders stripped of special status as schools struggle

INVESTIGATES

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Scores more system leaders have had their statuses stripped by the government after their school slumped below performance measures last year, new figures show.

Figures obtained under the freedom of information act show a sharp rise in the number of reviews the government has conducted into the suitability of national leaders of education (NLEs), national leaders of governance (NLGs) and also teaching schools.

Over the three categories, the number of reviews has risen from 211 in 2015-16 to 561 last year.

The number of de-designations (people who were then stripped of their system-leader status) has almost doubled, from 123 in 2015-16 to 220 last year.

Reviews are triggered when system leaders no longer meet certain criteria, set by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, or fail to provide school-to-school support within 12 months or commit professional misconduct.

The Department for Education refused to provide the actual numbers of system leaders over the three-year period our figures covered, meaning we couldn't compare the rising number of reviews.

But our data shows that system leaders being stripped of the status after their schools fell below progress and attainment performance measures has shot up.

In 2015-16, failing performance measures was the cause of only 0.5 per cent of reviews, and one per cent of de-designations. But by 2017-18, 33 per cent of reviews and 27 per cent of de-designations were because of failing performance data.

The rising number of reviews also comes as the government urged more heads to apply for NLE status in October. The DfE

recently commissioned researchers to investigate whether sending supportive letters to would-be applicants would boost numbers.

Robert Campbell (pictured), an NLE who leads the Morris Education Trust based in Cambridgeshire, warned the threat of losing the status could "incentivise heads not to work in the worst schools in the country" where improvement could take time.

Guidance states that heads who move school must have previously led a school judged 'good' for leadership in the last three years and be given that grade when inspected again to keep NLE status.

But even outstanding heads may "need at least three years" to turn a school around, warned Campbell.

Other reasons for losing designated status – professional misconduct, failure to deliver support to other schools or financial non-compliance – have not changed much over the last three years.

However, leaders losing their status because of a falling Ofsted judgment has dropped.

Three years ago, Ofsted judgments prompted 13 per cent of reviews and 15 per cent of de-designations. But by 2017-18, Ofsted judgments prompted only four per cent of reviews and 10 per cent of de-designations.

In a blog last year, NCTL chair Roger Pope said the college had "recently introduced new designation criteria for NLEs [...] that rely less heavily on Ofsted judgments and more on timely and accurate data" – which explains the rapid increase in reviews because of progress and attainment data.

But an academy head in Essex, who

Having considered all of the evidence presented, the panel still had concerns about your school's performance data and therefore, felt unable to make an exception to the published [criteria](#). If you applied to be a NLE with this data, your application would not be successful. Therefore, I regret to inform you that your National Leader of Education designation and the designation of [REDACTED] as a National Support School will be removed.

## HOW MANY REVIEWS AND REMOVALS OF SYSTEM LEADERS HAVE THERE BEEN?

	Reviewed	Retained	De-designated*
	<b>NLEs</b>		
2015-16	114	10	104
2017-18	286	93	155
	<b>NLGs</b>		
2015-16	13	10	3
2017-18	140	85	34
	<b>Teaching Schools</b>		
2015-16	84	67	16
2017-18	135	53	31

\*some reviews are ongoing

did not wish to be named, had their NLE status stripped after four years when their school-performance data dipped. The school was graded 'good' by Ofsted and the leader said this seemed "contradictory".

The head was informed by a letter, seen by Schools Week, which stated: "I regret to inform you that your National leader of Education designation [...] will be removed."

They said there could be a "more humane way" of removing the status, such as a phone call with a "thanks for their hard work".

However Rob McDonough, an NLE who leads the East Midlands Education Trust with 13 academies in Nottinghamshire, said designations should be reviewed if performance



Robert Campbell

measures are missed, because "it will be hard to have credibility as a school leader advising others if your own school has slipped".

When system leaders are identified as falling below eligibility criteria, they are informed that they can submit supporting statements providing context about their school and their impact to persuade the NCTL review panel not to drop their designation.

A review panel – made up of representatives from the teaching school council, the DfE and a former Ofsted Her Majesty's Inspector – then decides the outcome.

Of 140 reviews of national leaders of governors last year, 60 per cent kept their designation.

Meanwhile out of 135 reviews of teaching schools last year, almost 40 per cent kept their designation. Finally, of 286 reviews of national leaders of education, a third were kept on.

The Department for Education told Schools Week it is now reviewing how it can make "various improvements" to its system-leader designations, but would not provide further details.

# Engaging technical learners can break the exclusion-prison cycle

MICHAEL LEMIN, POLICY AND RESEARCH MANAGER, NCFE

During this year's GCSE results day, a piece of guerrilla marketing in London brought the exclusion-prison cycle into sharp focus. An unnamed group of students replaced tube maps on the northern line with a mock up showing how learners who are excluded from schools could be on a destructive path to prison. Similar reports have indicated that up to 61% of excluded learners could find themselves in this situation.

These statistics represent familiar scenarios for many teaching staff who've felt utter helplessness and frustration when faced with a young person full of potential who cannot seem to engage with mainstream education.

Year on year, school exclusions are increasing. This is hardly surprising; with increasing class sizes, heightened pressure on teachers and little time left over for the direct attention which disengaged learners so desperately need.

There are many reasons why learners may struggle to engage; research has indicated that around 30% of prisoners have a learning difficulty or disability. There may also be poor support at home, the pressure of being a young carer, a lack of positive role models and a myriad of other factors which create a blockade between potential and the ability to achieve.

The make-up of this particular challenge is complicated and multifaceted, making it incredibly difficult to solve. By no means is there one answer to this issue. However, allow me to pose just one part of the solution, with the help of a living example of a learner who has broken this cycle and found their value through education.

Emma was a learner with a difficult start. She lost her brother, a soldier in Afghanistan, and her grandmother in quick succession. She was angry, disengaged and suffered with anxiety. As a result, her school work suffered.

This led Emma to be excluded from two previous mainstream schools due to her behaviour. Emma was at a crossroads which, unfortunately, is a situation too many young people find themselves in; falling behind and never being able catch up.

Emma was lucky to find herself at Everton Free School, which could have been her last chance at attaining any qualifications to help her move forward post-16.



Emma Owen receiving her Learner of the Year Aspiration Award with her grandad at Goodison Park



Alongside the pastoral care that Emma needed, Everton Free School also provided a broad curriculum which introduced Emma to subjects and learning styles with which she otherwise may not have encountered. This was how Emma found her niche and her aspiration to achieve.

Amongst her other subjects, Emma undertook a V Cert in Health and Fitness, a technical alternative to a GCSE, which allowed Emma to demonstrate her knowledge practically. Through her project work, Emma was also able to mend her fractured relationships at home. Emma said, "the qualification enabled me to involve my friends and family and we now all attend aerobics once a week and cycle the Wirral Way. It's helped build up my relationship with my mum and it encouraged us to change as a family."

Emma's reengagement in education has changed her trajectory for the better. Her story shows that learners, when given the right encouragement and diverse subject matter, are far more likely to find their strengths and remove the focus from any weaknesses.

Emma has achieved a place to study at Birkenhead Sixth Form College. She wants to continue learning more about health, the human body and science, and hopes to study Biology, English and PE. It's her ambition to go on to university and become a Radiologist.

We were delighted to award Emma 'Learner of the Year' in our 2018 Aspiration Awards. She embodied the spirit of what achievement looks like to different people. Achievement isn't always being the best or achieving the highest marks, achievement is entirely personal to every learner.

## About the awards

We've now launched our second Aspiration Awards, and will be asking schools and teachers to nominate a 'Learner of the Year' with big aspirations. The awards have been developed to recognise learners who are using NCFE and CACHE qualifications to help them reach their goals and make positive improvements to their life.

Find out more and submit your entries at [ncfe.org.uk/aspirationawards](https://ncfe.org.uk/aspirationawards).



## News

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## South Tyneside council faces £400,000-a-year school closure bill

**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

A failing school handed an academy order more than a year ago is set to close after a sponsor couldn't be found – leaving the council facing an annual £400,000 PFI bill.

South Shields School, in South Tyneside, was ordered to become an academy by the government after being rated "inadequate" by Ofsted last year.

However, talks with two trusts, with low pupil numbers and a £400,000-a-year private finance contract cited as reasons.

South Tyneside council has now said it has no option but to consult on closing the school – despite the authority facing a £7.6 million bill left to pay off on the school's PFI contract, due to run for another 19 years.

The case is another example of how hefty PFI contracts – whereby private firms build, operate and run buildings that are leased back to the taxpayer under contracts of around 25 years – are blocking struggling schools from receiving potentially transformative takeovers.

It wouldn't be the first PFI school to close. Liverpool city council is currently paying £4 million every year – or around £12,000 a day – on a PFI contract for the now empty building that housed Parklands High School until it closed in 2014.

Labour MP Stella Creasy, a regular campaigner against PFI, said: "PFI is the nightmare that continues to decimate budgets across the country – yet these loans are the one repayment they can't cut, meaning it's schools and councils that suffer instead."

South Tyneside council said it was informed by the government in August that the school's academy order would be revoked on the condition a consultation over closure was launched.

However, a Department for Education

spokesperson said any decision for closure was down to the council.

Council documents stated the school's surplus places, close proximity to other schools with "substantial places", a lack of growth of pupil numbers in the area and the PFI agreement mean that "no solutions can be identified".

The closure comes despite Ofsted inspectors, during a follow-up inspection in May, finding leaders are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school is also the only one in the area that runs a DfE-funded cadet unit to improve character education.

The council currently pays £409,802 a year on its PFI contract with Inspiredspaces STaG Ltd, a company set up by Carillion.

Repayments increase by the RPI measure of inflation every year. Terms of the contract mean the building can also only be used for educational purposes.

A statutory representation period for the closure will run until mid-December. The council said it will develop transition plans for pupils.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Liverpool city council said negotiations are ongoing to find a new education tenant for its empty site.

The council's PFI contract with Education Solutions Speke Limited runs until 2028.

The firm lists Michael Dwan – the founder of the collapsed Bright Tribe academy trust – as a director.

A spokesperson for the firm told *Schools Week* it remains "extremely flexible" to accommodating alternative uses for the school buildings, which remain available and "continue to be maintained to a high standard. The council can exercise their right to terminate but, as with any contract, would need to pay the balance of the remaining term."

## AP trust bailed out by government over pensions delay

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

A struggling academy trust relied on a government bailout to ensure it could pay pension contributions, it has been revealed.

TBAP multi-academy trust, which runs 12 alternative provision academies, was issued with a financial notice to improve by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in August, after leaders requested almost £1 million in additional funding from the government.

It has now come to light that the trust also needed government help to pay its pension contributions.

The financial health of the academies sector is the source of concern in the school community amid stagnating funding. As of last August, 185 trusts, or 5.9 percent of those nationally, were in deficit, up from 167 the previous year.

Worryingly, academy accounts published earlier this month also show the academies sector had a pension deficit liability of £7 billion in 2016-17.

A TBAP spokesperson said the delay was related to "cashflow issues" and payments are now "all up to date and being paid on time" following the government's financial support.

But the news has prompted concerns from union officials, who called for clarity on actions taken to stabilise the trust.

Niamh Sweeney, a former president of the National Education Union and local activist in Cambridgeshire, where the trust has several schools, said the pensions issue was "one of many" flagged by members.

"We are concerned that the TBAP was issued with a financial notice to improve, and would like assurance from the trust that they have put sufficient measures in place to deal with the issues of poor financial management and lack of control," she told *Schools Week*.

The disclosure also paints a worrying picture of how close some trusts are to collapsing. A *Schools Week* investigation in 2016 found trusts had pension deficits in the tens of millions.

Experts told *Schools Week* the government would ultimately have to cough up to cover deficits should a trust collapse.

However the £1.3 million pension deficits belonging to the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust, which was wound up last year, were transferred to the new trusts that took over its nine schools.

## Investigation

## INVESTIGATES

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## Music hub inconsistencies reveal funding 'postcode lottery'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has been warned its preference for smaller-scale hub projects instead of larger injections of revenue funding is creating a "postcode lottery" of provision.

The warning comes as new *Schools Week* analysis reveals huge regional variations in the coverage of the government's music hubs programme.

The Department for Education claimed last month that "record numbers" of pupils are now learning musical instruments as a result of the hubs, which were set up in 2016 and are backed with more than £300 million in funding.

Ministers' claims are based on the number of pupils receiving "whole-class ensemble teaching" with the support of the nation's 120 music hubs. So far, the project has reached just 8.8 percent of the national pupil population.

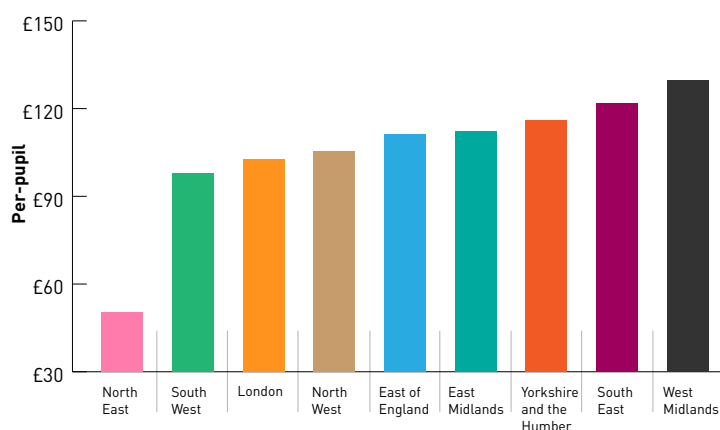
But analysis by *Schools Week* of data published by the DfE and Arts Council England reveals large regional differences in the number and spend on hubs. The equivalent of £50.76 a pupil is spent on the hubs in the north-east, compared with £129.97 a pupil in the West Midlands.

Brian Lightman, an education consultant and former general secretary of the ASCL heads' union, said: "With all these initiatives it feels as if there are constant announcements of pots of money going into specific areas. The trouble with that is you create a postcode lottery.

"All these pots, though relatively small amounts of money, must start to add up at

REGION	SCHOOLS REACHED	HUBS	SCHOOLS PER HUB (AVERAGE)	PUPILS REACHED	
				NUMBER	%
East Midlands	1,768	7	253	57,020	8.27%
East of England	2,391	11	217	61,979	6.90%
London	2,233	29	77	114,315	8.98%
North East	1,077	6	180	72,032	18.61%
North West	2,709	12	226	98,260	9.06%
South East	3,104	14	222	105,231	8.41%
South West	2,005	14	143	70,190	9.53%
West Midlands	2,021	12	168	65,767	7.30%
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,052	15	137	66,447	8.09%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,360</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>711,241</b>	<b>8.84%</b>

## Music hubs spending



a time when schools have got less money in their budgets. It's just papering over the cracks rather than finding the funding schools need.

"It's the same with modern languages and these maths hubs – all of them worthy things to focus on in themselves – but the coverage is very patchy."

While the government shouts about the success of its hubs, the number of pupils choosing to study music appears to have declined. The change has been blamed on the EBacc performance measure, but ministers deny their policy is forcing arts subjects out of the curriculum.

This year, just 35,531 pupils sat GCSE music (0.7 percent of

entries), down from 46,045 in 2010 (0.9 percent). At A-level, the number of entries has fallen from 8,790 in 2010 to 5,440 this year.

Lightman, a former secondary, added that whole-class teaching was "not the same" as learning a musical instrument with a peripatetic teacher, and warned that access to individual teaching for poorer pupils is "minimal and reduced".

The discrepancies in per-pupil spend on the hubs stem from the fact that they reach far more pupils in some areas than others.

For example, in the north-east, just six hubs support 72,032 pupils in 1,077 schools, whereas 15 hubs currently

reach 66,447 pupils in 2,052 schools in Yorkshire and the Humber, and just 61,979 pupils are reached by the 11 hubs in the east of England.

Mike Parker, director of Schools North East, said schools in his area were "well versed in achieving more with less than other regions".

"That's the truth of our whole school funding system," he told *Schools Week*. "It's not just the case with music. Our schools have significantly less funding than in other areas of the country."

However, Parker said the number of pupils reached by such a small number of hubs in the region was "indicative of what's achievable in areas where you get high levels of collaboration between schools".

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said that all children, regardless of their background, "should have the same opportunities. That's why it's so good to see that our music hubs are reaching so many, with more than 700,000 pupils learning to play instruments together in class last year."



## News

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# NHS report finally sheds light on mental health plight

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

One in eight school-age children had an identified mental disorder last year, a long-awaited major report has revealed.

It is the first time since 2004 that such complete data on the mental health of children and young people has been published.

In 2015 *Schools Week* highlighted the lack of data and how it was leaving policymakers floundering about provision.

The data, published yesterday, shows that 12.8 per cent of 5 to 19-year-olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed in 2017, while 5 per cent met the criteria for two or more disorders when interviewed.

It follows pledges by the government for more mental health support. Ministers announced last year that they would spend about £300 million on new mental health leads in schools and support teams to link education and health services.

However, health experts and headteachers have warned the funding settlement is too small.

Claire Murdoch, NHS England's national mental health director, said the figures show the "importance of the action the NHS is taking to ramp up access to services, as well as working with schools

and families".

But this week's study was first promised in 2015 by Norman Lamb, a former health minister, and was supposed to be published last year.

*Schools Week* revealed in June that the government planned to release the statistics in October, but it was delayed again until this week.

The statistics show a rise in mental health issues over the past two decades.

Among 5 to 15-year-olds, the age group covered in all studies since the late-1990s, the proportion with some kind of mental disorder increased from 9.7 per cent in 1999 to 11.2 per cent in 2017.

Emotional disorders were the most common disorder among school-age children, affecting 8.1 per cent. These included anxiety, depression, mania and bipolar affective disorder.

Meanwhile, 4.6 per cent of 5 to 19-year-olds had some kind of behaviour disorder, and 1.6 per cent had a hyperactivity disorder. Autism spectrum disorder was identified in 1.2 per cent, while 0.4 per cent had an eating disorder.

Among primary school pupils, one in ten had some kind of disorder, while one in seven had one at secondary level.

Although boys start out more likely to



*Schools Week* edition 20

have an emotional disorder than girls, this changes when pupils reach secondary school. Girls aged 17 to 19 were almost three times more likely to have a disorder than boys.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and other non-heterosexual pupils were also substantially more likely to have a mental disorder than those who identified as heterosexual. White British pupils and those from lower-income households were also more likely to have a disorder.

The Department for Education said ministers were committed to "ensuring 70,000 more children a year have access to specialist mental health care by 2020-21".

## Schools' fears over P-scales replacement

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

The government has announced that it will use a new "aspects of engagement" to measure the attainment of pupils with complex needs, despite concerns over workload and staffing.

The new approach will replace P-scales, which last year's Rochford review found were no longer fit for purpose. Ministers believe the change will address problems over the old system's focus on "linear progress".

But an evaluation of a pilot carried out earlier this year reveals concerns among schools about the time needed to "develop a clear and consistent understanding of each of the seven aspects involved in the



assessment".

Schools found moderation and discussion were "key" in developing this understanding,

but this could be difficult for mainstream schools with small SEND units and a lack of experienced staff.

Workload was also a "big challenge" for many schools, the evaluation found. Diane Rochford, who led the government's review last year, has now been tasked with "refining" the approach for use from 2020.

The new approach will be based on "seven aspects of engagement" that focus on pupils' abilities in specific areas such as awareness, curiosity and anticipation. The approach was originally developed through a Department for Education-funded project led by Professor Barry Carpenter in 2011.



## News

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Ofqual stays steady on A-level grade boundaries

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

Ofqual has concluded there is no "compelling case" to relax grade boundaries in sciences and modern foreign languages A-levels, following an investigation into claims the subjects are too harshly marked.

The review found no "strong evidence" to justify adjusting the way physics, chemistry, biology, French, German, and Spanish A-levels were graded so they aligned with supposedly easier A-levels, the exams regulator found.

It follows a review by the regulator into inter-subject comparability, after statistical evidence showed sciences were among the most severely graded subjects at A-level, with languages not far behind.

Entries for A-level sciences have plateaued since 2014, while entries for French and German have declined

since 2008.

However, in its report published today Ofqual said that despite not seeking grading adjustments, it did "recognise the potential for perceived grading severity to undermine public confidence in these qualifications".

It would work with exam boards so the subjects did not become "statistically more difficult in future".

It said it would discuss using a "one-sided reporting tolerance". At present, boards can adjust their A-level grades within a 1, 2 or 3 per cent tolerance from Ofqual-predicted boundaries based on the cohort's GCSE attainment.

If Ofqual allowed a one-sided reporting tolerance, boards could adjust their boundaries only to make them more lenient.

"This would mean that boards could award them slightly above prediction," the Ofqual report said. Boards would need to provide additional evidence if they wanted

to award below prediction.

"This should address the perceived risk by some stakeholders . . . in science and modern foreign languages that grading standards might become marginally more severe in statistical terms."

Rasch analysis, a form of mathematical modelling, found further maths was the most severely graded subject, followed by physics and chemistry. Biology was fifth.

French was seventh, German eighth and Spanish thirteenth. Ofqual did not name the other most severely graded subjects.

Last year, Ofqual announced a one-off upwards adjustment to grade boundaries in modern foreign languages to take "native speakers" into account after research found they had a "small, yet important" impact on grade boundaries.

Suzanne O'Farrell, the curriculum and assessment specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said the "lack of action" on severe grading in languages was "disappointing".

A digital newspaper determined to get past the bluster and explain the facts.

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## Data investigation

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## Panels get strict on lifetime bans for teachers

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS  
@PIPPA\_AK

The proportion of teachers banned from the profession for life has increased, challenging concerns that misconduct panels are becoming more lenient.

Earlier this month, a panel decided not to ban Stephen Ivey, who was found to have falsified pupils' computer science controlled assessments, because he was working in a "shortage subject".

It led to comments that the panels were becoming more lenient. However, a *Schools Week* analysis of hearings last year show the proportion of teachers banned from the classroom is rising.

Of the 118 teacher misconduct hearings published between September 1, 2017 and August 31 this year, 45 per cent (53 teachers) received a lifetime ban.

In comparison, of the 135 hearings in 2016-17, 36 per cent (49 teachers) were kicked out of the profession for good.

The number of teachers not receiving any ban remained steady at 27, but proportionally increased from 20 per cent to 23 per cent. Other penalties can range from one to five years before the chance to appeal.

Of those handed a lifetime ban last year, almost half (26 teachers) were for inappropriate or sexual behaviour, ranging from sexual relationships with pupils or possessing indecent photographs, to messaging students on social media or watching pornography on school computers.

Twelve teachers were banned following criminal convictions, which included drink driving and assault.

Sheena Boll, a 36-year-old teacher from Lister Community

School in Newham, east London, was banned for life after she was convicted of making a hoax phone call to ChildLine and impersonating a pupil to make untrue allegations about a fellow teacher.

Three teachers were banned for expressing racist or homophobic views, four for attempting to cheat in exams and three for intentionally misleading schools in their job applications. Two were banned for money-related fraud and three over safeguarding concerns.

Sophie Rahman, the 42-year-old headteacher of Eton Community School (formerly Ad-Deen Primary School) in Ilford, Essex, was banned for life after allowing Khuram Butt to teach afterschool classes unsupervised.

Butt, one of three men who killed eight people and injured 48 others in the attack on London Bridge on June 28, 2017, had appeared on the documentary *The Jihadist Next Door*, had no references and was connected to members of the extremist jihadist organisation Al-Muhajiroun.

Eton school was closed in August 2017.

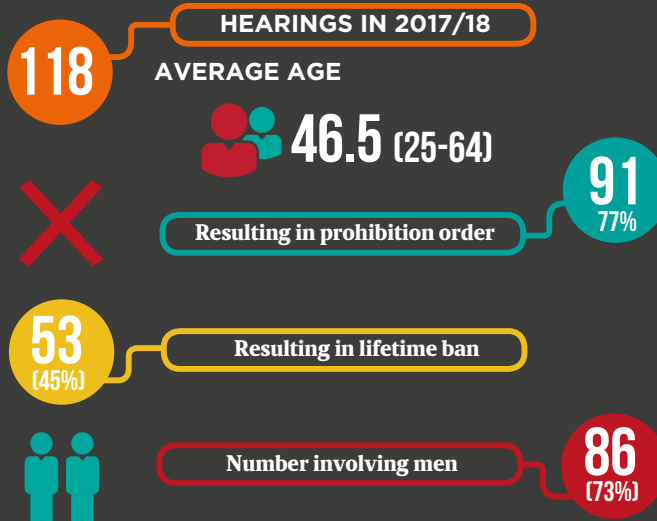
Of the 118 teachers who faced hearings, 73 per cent were men (86). The average age was 46.5; the oldest was 64 and the youngest were four teachers aged 25.

More than half facing hearings taught at state secondary schools (62), with 19 at primary schools. Eleven were teachers at special needs schools.

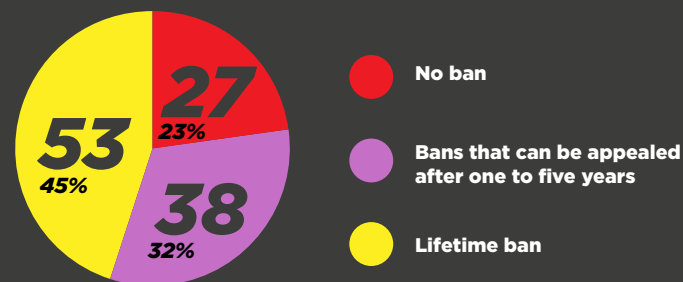
The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) took over misconduct trials in April, following the closure of the National College of Teaching and Leadership.

Although the total number of hearings fell in 2017-18, 68 were held after the TRA took over – an average of 17 a month.

## HEARINGS IN NUMBERS



## HEARING RESULTS



## REASONS FOR LIFETIME BAN



## News

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Rethink 'bums on seats' unconditional offers policy, say heads

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

School leaders want universities to overhaul unconditional offers to ensure pupils keep pushing themselves in year 13.

In a letter published this week, signatories from academy trusts, private schools and universities said youngsters should not be forced to accept unconditional offers until they had a full slate of offers. They should also be able to accept an offer as an "insurance" place.

The letter follows figures published in July that show nearly a quarter of all 18-year-old university applicants in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have received at least one unconditional offer, a rise of 29 per cent on 2017.

Universities have been criticised for trying to get "bums on seats" and the funding attached to each pupil.

One of the signatories, Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said unconditional offers were "running out of control" and causing "real problems" for schools and colleges.

"They may lead to students taking their foot off the gas in their A-levels or other post-16 qualifications, and getting grades that aren't what they are capable of achieving.

"They are then at a disadvantage if a potential future employer takes into account those qualifications in deciding on job applications."

Barton said not compelling students to accept an unconditional offer, or be able to accept it as an "insurance" place, would ensure youngsters continued to aim high in exams to see if they could get a better offer.

The letter was also signed by bosses from Brunel University London, King's College London, and the University of Chichester.

From the schools world, signatories included Dame Rachel de Souza, chief executive at Inspiration Trust, and Lucy Heller, the chief executive of Ark.

St Mary's University in London announced last month it had ditched offering unconditional places after some pupils didn't go on to get their expected grades.



## Late GCSE entries cost schools £20m

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Schools paid an estimated £20 million in fines after the number of late GCSE entries increased by 22 per cent last year.

Ofqual figures published on Thursday show that late entries to GCSEs rose from 471,685 (3.3 per cent of total entries) in 2016-17, to 573,475 (4.2 per cent) last year.

Late entries had been going down year-on-year since 2013-14.

It means more schools will have had to pay hefty fines: for every pupil entered late, schools must pay a premium to exam boards.

The cost of an exam doubles if a pupil is entered late, and can triple if entered very late, at OCR, Pearson, WJEC and AQA.

The average entry fee for English language GCSE and maths GCSE across all exam boards last year was £35.

Given the 573,475 late GCSE entries across all subjects, *Schools Week* estimates schools paid £20 million in late fees on top of the regular cost of entry.

The rise also comes as modular exams moved to linear GCSEs – a move that many hoped would help to reduce the figures as pupils were less likely to be removed at the last minute and schools had fewer decisions to make about papers.

AQA had the biggest increase in the number of late entries. They rose to 5.3 per cent of all entries to the board last year, from 3.2 per cent

in 2016-17.

The board said the rise could be down to the reformed GCSE science and modern foreign language specifications, which have made it "slightly more challenging" for centres to identify the correct tier of entry for their students (resulting in a larger number of tier changes).

OCR had the next highest increase in late entries, rising to 4.7 per cent of all entries from 3.5 per cent in 2016-17.

Late entries at Pearson reduced to 1.6 per cent last year from 2.8 per cent the year before. They also went down at WJEC to 3.6 per cent from 6.1 per cent in 2016-17.

Paula Goddard, a senior examiner and a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, suggested budget cuts left schools with inexperienced exam officers.

"Lower pay and fewer hours of work mean that this vital school support staff is less aware of exam board deadlines for entries. So, they miss them.

"This is a double whammy as late entries cost the school more ... as late entries have a higher candidate entry fee."

There was also a proportional rise in late entries to AS and A-levels this summer, up to 2.7 per cent of total entries in 2017-18, from 2.3 per cent in 2016-17.

Overall there has been a 29 per cent decrease in AS and A-level certificates from 2016-17 to last year "mainly due to the decoupling of AS and A-levels", said the Ofqual release.



# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## The government's school funding rhetoric has gone flat

Theodore Agnew's unapologetic pursuit of yet more cost-saving measures in schools was already wearing thin before he popped the cork on a new strategy this week.

The academies minister's wager of a bottle of champagne if he and his team of cost-cutting consultants can't find MORE cuts in schools' budgets isn't just absurd, it's insulting.

As we discovered at last year's general election, baiting headteachers is not a wise decision. But the good Lord Agnew simply doesn't seem to care.

He should, though, because school leaders aren't stupid. They can see through the jokes cracked at education conferences, these challenges levelled at them as if they have anything left to give.

These unhelpful interventions from ministers are a thin veneer which does not mask the actions of a government unwilling to confront the real issue with our schools: there simply isn't enough money in the system for schools to do everything demanded of them.

When heads gave the same warning last year, they were accused of scaremongering and being "too political", yet the government was forced to admit defeat after hundreds of thousands of

people changed their vote in the wake of the school cuts campaign.

The additional £1.3 billion of funding announced last summer was a tacit admission that the settlement for schools is not good enough.

Damian Hinds and his ministers would do well to take inspiration from Justine Greening and realise they can't simply wait for a gift from the chancellor at next year's spending review. Now is the time for members of this government to rock the boat. If austerity is indeed over, then they must prove it. And no, more "little extras" won't do.

Last week, the UN's poverty tsar warned that teachers are collecting food to give to hungry pupils.

This week, the EPI revealed the schools with the most deprived intakes are among those worst-affected by holes in the government's pay settlement for teachers which, surprise surprise, won't cover what's needed.

How many more times will headteachers have to march on Downing Street before our ministers realise they are failing to provide the resources needed for a good education for every child, and that no amount of conference whimsy from a reformed venture capitalist is going to help?



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# The Debate

Mike Wood, founder of  
Home Education UK



## Should home education settings have mandatory monitoring?

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY\_

With the second reading of the Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill due in parliament, we brought together a home education expert and a former teacher who now consults for local authorities, supporting children at risk of exclusion

**Would you support monitoring visits for home-educated children?**

**Sarah Dove:** Yes, but I do have concerns. Not about home-education itself, but that some families are being pushed into off-rolling their children to make statistics look better. Further monitoring and support from the local authority would shift the responsibility back on to schools. I also have concerns about children with special needs not having their needs met. Monitoring in those cases would push the responsibility back on to the local authority.

**Mike Wood:** It's not necessary. If local authorities or others were prepared to work with the home-education groups, we would be pushing those kids back towards you anyway! The truth is that there's no contact point between them and us.

My website gets 4 million hits every year - that's 275,000 families. I'd love to be able to pick up a phone, talk to a local authority and say, "This child has been off-rolled from a school, probably illegally, certainly unethically, for reasons that benefit the school, not the child, and we need to open a dialogue with the family and yourselves as to how to put this right." But there's no contact I can talk to.

There are about 150,000 children being home-educated in the UK. You're looking for a needle, and if you brought in monitoring, you'd be making the haystack bigger.

**SD:** Home-educated children are often well-rounded, academically and creatively. But if you don't have mechanisms by which you can monitor - those needles will never be found.



**"The ones with nice homes will have the scones and cream waiting"**

**MW:** That's not the way it works. Problem families are already known by the school and when they de-register they are required by law to inform the local authority. If there's a genuine problem in the family it should be referred to the elective home-education team and if the family won't open dialogue, and the local authority still think there's a serious problem, it should be referred to children's services.

The advice of the home-educators has always been, if an attendance and welfare adviser knocks on the door, you are legally entitled to tell them to go away. But if it's a social worker, we advise to let them in, because the powers of the social services, and the work they're doing, are rather different.

**Should monitoring be about safeguarding or academics?**

**MW:** Well, you couldn't do academic without safeguarding - that falls under section 175 of the 2002 Education Act. Everything an education department should do has to be in the best interests of the child.

**SD:** And it depends on what we mean by academic progress. I know home-educating parents who are travelling the world with their children. How do you monitor that academic progress? You can't. But what an amazing education!

**Would monitoring be perceived as punitive?**

**MW:** It's extremely punitive and that's mostly because local authorities don't understand home-education. The EHE teams are made up in some local areas, of people with only level 2 or 3 qualifications. A handful are teachers. But the problem with teachers is they expect to see what they saw at school.

**SD:** The legislation is very clear that different doesn't mean less. Clearly it doesn't have to be the same. What you want is someone who can have a really good understanding of the family and their needs.

**Should an annual monitoring visit be statutory?**

**SD:** Processes and policies should always



# Should home education settings have mandatory monitoring?



## The Debate

**Sarah Dove, local authorities consultant and former teacher**



“Monitoring visits should become part of a package of support”

meet the needs of the children. We could say an annual visit is appropriate, but let's say you've got a family that have been electively home-educating for three or four years, they're in touch with home-educating groups, and they haven't come up as a safeguarding issue. It's fine to do written correspondence with that family.

But when young people start being electively home-educated, a monitoring visit is really important. It will uncover some of those questions that you mentioned: has the child been off-rolled illegally? Are there issues around SEN and their needs not being met in school?

For me, monitoring visits become part of a package of support to make sure the local authority is meeting their statutory obligations to safeguard children.

**MW:** If you set up something statutory to enforce a visit, you will find that those families you really want to visit will disappear. Many of the others - particularly the ones who are well-educated, with nice homes, and are confident in their ability, will be over the moon to have a visit! They'll have the scones and cream waiting. But you don't need to see those people! You're wasting your time.

The ones you want to see are the families who've got problems. But they hear reports of how badly those visits have gone, and they're terrified. They're also angry because it's the local authority and the school who put them in this position. They will do anything to avoid a visit, because they see it as yet more intrusion.

You need to make the whole thing much more gentle and user-friendly. Then build relationships with people like me, who are trusted by the families.

**Why isn't the current system of optional visits working?**

**MW:** There's no duty on the part of the parent to allow one. Legally, the purpose of the visit is to ensure that education is taking place. This could lead to a school attendance order, and failure to comply could lead to a criminal conviction, so the law of evidence applies. So we advise parents to refuse a home visit, because you lose control of the evidence.

I've heard cases where the house is tidy and the court hears that there's no opportunity for creativity. Or where the house is untidy, that it's chaotic and unsuitable for home learning!

**SD:** Before this gets enacted into law, it seems there's a step that's been missed, which is to develop good relationships.

**MW:** We're beginning to suspect that the determination within some local authorities for home visits is that there might be money on the back of it.

**SD:** I can't imagine there'll be much.

**MW:** It might be enough to fund several jobs or keep a department open. There are some statutory duties around home-education, mainly the duty to act where there is a welfare risk or the child is not receiving an education.

**SD:** But then you've got pupils with special needs and EHCPs. If they're not in formal education, the local authority doesn't have to pay that money.

**MW:** I've had the parents of a non-verbal ASD child in tears because when they home-educated, someone from the local authority took away their augmented speech tools and wheelchair. They said if the child wasn't in school, they didn't need to be mobile.

**SD:** That's a really weird anomaly. There's meant to be joint funding. The EHCP is around obligations for the local authority.

**MW:** That was with the old statement. With the EHCP, the money is supposed to follow the child, but it's still seems to follow them only if they're in the system.

**SD:** When we lose sight of the child, we make mistakes. So monitoring for me firstly supports the local authority meeting their statutory obligations, but it also means hopefully some of those conversations around off-rolling, and kids with SEN getting the things they need.

And relationship-building, yes. Rather than you feeling you have to say to parents don't let them in, I would prefer that parents and local authorities had positive relationships, where they could explore the issues and then leave them be.



## Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**The land might have been cleared for self-improvement but the tools are in short supply says Stuart Kime**

**T**he coalition government of 2010 brought with it a secretary of state for education who believed passionately that “a thousand flowers” should bloom in our school system, borrowing from a phrase used in mid-1950s China to encourage public debate about the arts and sciences (“Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend”).

#### Weeding the garden

September 2014 saw the (eminently sensible) removal of levels as a means for reporting pupil attainment and progress, with no replacement for them provided by the DfE (again, another sensible, albeit challenging, move). Documentation published by the Department stated the decision would “allow teachers greater flexibility in the way that they plan and assess pupils’ learning”.

The removal of levels is a classic example of Michael Gove’s vision of how our education system should operate, and it’s one that has caused consternation, pain and frustration ever since. But among all the turmoil, has it allowed a thousand flowers to bloom, or have the weeds returned?

The self-improving system that has long been the vision for English schools is a bold and brave one, but it’s also one that requires more than the mere removal of ineffective and inefficient practices. What comes after? What happens next? Filling the void with anything other than more versions of the thing removed (levels by another name) requires a



STUART  
KIME

Director of education,  
Evidence Based Education

## Assessment without levels: did a thousand flowers really bloom?

deep understanding of assessment theory, design, analysis and, crucially, implementation. These are the tools of the self-improving system when it comes to assessment; tools that are in short supply.

#### Sowing the seeds of success

Long before Gove’s floral vision, a 2004 EPPI-Centre review concluded that teachers’ professional development on

The Commission on Assessment without Levels in 2015 agreed with Carter, adding that “the quality of assessment training is currently too weak and reiterates the importance of schools taking up opportunities to train staff in assessment”.

So the weeds were removed from the garden, and the land cleared for schools to take up any of the myriad “opportunities” to improve

“ It requires more than the mere removal of ineffective and inefficient practices. What comes after?”

assessment was “essential”. In 2014, the NAHT said that “schools should identify a trained assessment lead” to be a beacon of expertise and positive change, and in 2015 the Carter Review of ITT identified assessment as the area of “greatest weakness” in teacher training programmes of the time. The review suggested that teachers should be trained in theoretical aspects of assessment such as validity, reliability and value, as well as the practical application of theory in designing questions effectively and efficiently.

assessment. But to know which of these is of sufficient quality requires the highly professional training that a range of commissions found insufficient – catch-22.

Yes, there are countless training courses for teachers on assessment, but very few that affordably help develop the theory and practice outlined by the reports listed above in ways that, themselves, are effective and efficient. If we know that one-day courses are generally ineffective in changing teachers’ practice (as well as



unnecessarily expensive), why are there so many one-day courses on assessment?

While the flowers of assessment may not have bloomed fully just yet, we need to nurture the strong shoots growing in schools such as Whitehill Junior School in Hertfordshire and Falinge Park High School in Rochdale.

We also need to work with and not against Ofsted as they introduce the education inspection framework for 2019; we need to engage constructively with the DfE’s early career framework. Only through such constructive, evidence-informed debate can we depersonalise our critiques of education policy and practice, and focus on bringing back professionalism to teaching by knowing more and doing better.

As part of this endeavour, Schools Week and Evidence Based Education are hosting a free event at which a panel of expert practitioners will answer the questions ‘What does every teacher need to know about assessment?’ and ‘What assessment practices should schools do more of and less of?’ It takes place from 4.30pm to 6pm on Tuesday 27 November 2018 at St Matthias School, Tower Hamlets, London, E2 6DY.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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There's been lots of talk about the need for children to identify fake news, but what resources are available? Asha Carpenter brings us up-to-date

Research conducted by the Reuters Institute last year showed that there are clear distinctions in how people of different ages access news. Older generations are more likely to access it via TV, radio and printed newspapers whereas younger people use digital and social media. Ofcom found that more than half (56%) of children in the UK aged between 12-15 used social media such as Facebook or Twitter to access news in 2017.

Since social media is not regulated in the same way as traditional news media, anyone can convey information with little fact-checking, meaning young people are at greater risk from inaccurate reporting. So how do we help children to sort the fact from the fiction?

The National Literacy Trust conducted surveys of primary and secondary school children in the UK last year. Only 22% of secondary school children had not heard of fake news. For primary school children the percentage was higher, at 40.3%.

The NLT also wanted to test children's abilities to spot fake news by asking them to participate in a quiz consisting of six news stories, four real and two fake. Only 3.1% of primary school pupils and 0.6% of secondary school pupils were able to correctly identify all six of the news stories as either real or fake. These findings suggest that children's apparent awareness of fake news does not necessarily match their



ASHA  
CARPENTER

Former research assistant, RAND Europe

## What role should schools play in teaching pupils to spot fake news?

ability to identify it.

Teaching comprehension at primary school can provide a foundation for developing critical literacy at later stages in the education system. Skills in critical literacy feature in the curriculum to a greater degree at secondary school. There are requirements at key stage 3 for pupils to be able to read critically and as part of the English curriculum at key stage

with the literacy skills they require to spot fake news. This, along with the difficulties children themselves appear to have in identifying fake news, suggests that the critical literacy skills they are currently being taught at school are not sufficient for the digital age. Just over a third of teachers felt that children are not being taught transferable critical literacy skills that they could use in the real world.

## “ How do we help children sort fact from fiction?”

4 children are taught to distinguish “between statements that are supported by evidence and those that are not” and identify “bias and misuse of evidence”.

Despite this, half of teachers surveyed by the NLT in 2017 believed that it does not provide children

The Growing up with the Internet report produced by the House of Lords select committee on communications in 2017 recommends that “digital literacy should be the fourth pillar of a child's education alongside reading, writing and mathematics”. The report suggests that personal, social, health

and economic education become a statutory subject that would be inspected by Ofsted, to help children develop critical thinking and understand “the veracity of online information”.

Showing children how fake news is produced and the reasons behind the inaccurate reporting could also help them become more news literate. The Guardian Foundation has partnered with the NLT and the PHSE Association on a news literacy programme for primary school children. News Wise began in September this year, with Google funding the first year of the programme. This could perhaps help to identify how news literacy could be built into the national curriculum more formally. The BBC has also developed a game for young people aged 11 to 18, which allows them to experience being a journalist and challenges them to identify fake news.

Children process information from a vast array of sources, more than ever before. With this, perhaps, comes a greater need for children and young people to develop critical literacy skills to enable them to interpret the media correctly. The responsibility to enable children to develop these skills must be shared between policy makers, media organisations, teachers and parents, as well as children and young people themselves. These stakeholders could be supported by resources such as those offered by News Wise, the BBC and the NLT.



# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### Ten Traits of Resilience

**Author:** James Hilton

**Reviewed by:** Jack Murphy, deputy head (pastoral)

**Publisher:** Bloomsbury Education

As concerns grow over the shortage of headteachers and senior teachers, this book is not only timely, but necessary.

Grit, resilience, bouncebackability – call it what you will – has been a feature of edu-speak for some years now. James Hilton turns our attention to school leaders and in this well-crafted workbook seeks to help us develop the habits that will keep us going through the tough times.

Hilton has certainly walked the walk as a school leader, having served as a headteacher for 15 years, and suffered a nervous breakdown during that time, he is well qualified to talk about the effects of stress. However, this is not a memoir, it is a workbook, with carefully formulated exercises and questions (as such I think it would have been better without the attempts at parenthetical humour). It is also well researched and rooted in an understanding of psychology, leadership and the practical demands of running a school.

Hilton identifies 10 traits of resilience, giving each one a chapter in which he explores its meaning and psychological significance, shares stories from his own and others experiences, and asks questions to help the reader reflect on their own behaviour.

The central metaphor of the book is that leading a school is like piloting a hot air balloon and that the traits of resilience are separate balloons that we must keep inflated if we are to remain at

a safe height. I must admit that on first reading I found this rather stretched and fanciful, and thought I would find it irritating as the book wore on. However, it is actually a rich and helpful image.

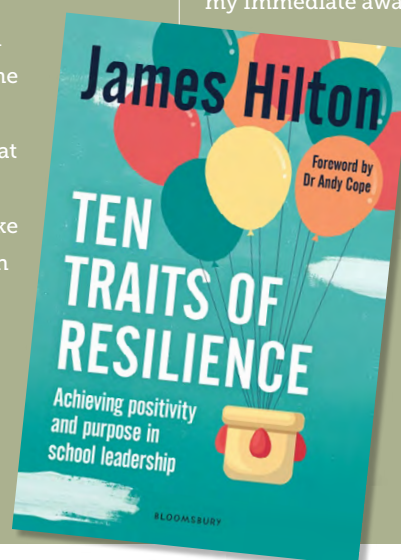
Throughout, Hilton stresses the importance of balance and moderation in focusing the separate traits – each balloon needs to be inflated, but equally so in order to prevent the balloonist from becoming unbalanced or floating off course. This allows him to deal with the complexity of the task of leadership without succumbing to simplicity ("You must always be decisive") or meaningless "balance" ("On the one hand this, on the other that").

This is illustrated in the chapter dealing with optimism. Hilton discusses the difficulties of remaining optimistic about the ability of staff to change, while not becoming unrealistic or allowing yourself to avoid the difficult conversations that sometimes need to happen – the difference between the belief that obstacles can be overcome and the belief that nothing can go wrong. It would be easy for a book like this to turn into a collection of simple homilies, but the practicality of the advice – for example, don't sit next to colleagues who always moan – stops it from descending into

statements of the obvious.

One of the strengths of the book is its wide-ranging nature. While it is ostensibly about resilience, it also covers the range of tasks and challenges a school leader faces: there's practical advice on preparing for Ofsted, thoughts on managing the wellbeing of staff and a discussion of school mission statements. As each chapter moves along briskly, with a range of lists, questions and stories, there are times when it can feel a little like pond-skating. I would have been interested to hear more from the author about how to embed cultural change in a school, for example. However, this is a product of the book maintaining its focus on building resilience and there is an excellent bibliography for those who want to read further. Moreover, I found myself enjoying being swiftly reminded of key ideas - like a good study guide it brought to mind things I already know but that had drifted out of my immediate awareness.

And, of course, the succinctness of the book means that busy, stressed and time-poor school leaders will be able to read it without letting other balloons deflate.





# Research

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

## Teaching out of specialism: does it matter to pupils?

**Laura McInerney, Co-founder, Teacher Tapp**

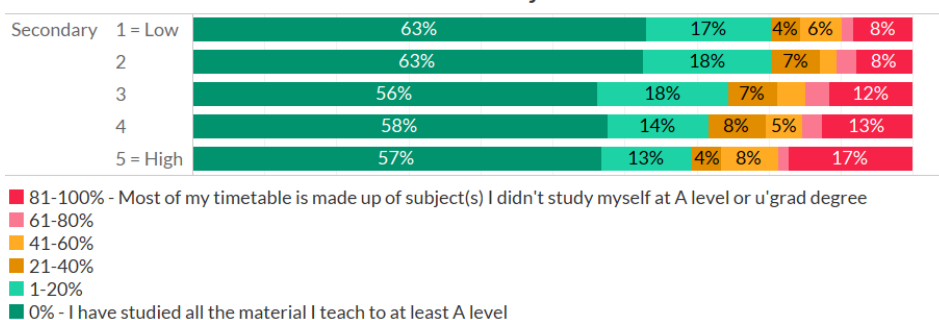
Imagine it's Monday morning and you are suddenly told you must take a supply lesson. Your teaching subject is geography. Today, however, you will be teaching Urdu. For the few readers among you who speak the language, this may be an exciting moment. For everyone else, it is terrifying. I say this as someone who, on more than one occasion, was dispatched to try to teach a language that I didn't even realise reads in the opposite direction to English on the page.

Although this is an extreme case of discomfort, a recent Teacher Tapp survey found that one in seven teachers currently has a timetable where more than 80% of their lessons are in subjects not studied during their degree or A-levels (or other post-16 education). If that figure extrapolates across the country, there are more than 70,000 teachers currently leading classes in subjects they haven't studied past the age of 16.

How does this happen? Our data suggests that three secondary subjects – English, maths and humanities – are particularly prone to having teachers who didn't study the subject post-16. For English and maths this may be due to teachers having an “aligned” degree – for example, history or engineering – in which they have used the skills of their teaching subject but didn't study it directly. In the case of humanities, teachers of one subject are often expected to simply “pick up” any other topics in the same area. A history teacher who also does religious studies, citizenship and a bit of English may sound an exotic creature, but it's the reality for the 13% of humanities teachers who teach subjects almost entirely outside of their specialism.

Scientists might be wondering how they have been left out given that science teachers typically work across physics, chemistry and biology, yet will often only have studied one of those subjects (if any) at university. It's a fair cop. Scientists are more likely to teach at least some of their lessons in a topic they didn't do after 16. But, they don't

Approximately what percentage of the lessons you are teaching this year do you not have either an undergraduate degree or A level in the relevant subject?



tend to do whole timetables of off-piste topics. The majority (68%) said that at least 80% of the lessons they taught were in the subject they did at university or for A-levels.

So far, so interesting. But our latest data has uncovered something perplexing. Teachers in schools with the poorest intakes are twice as likely to teach completely outside of their specialism. That is to say, if you're a poor kid in a school with lots of other poor kids, your chance of having a teacher who didn't study the subject they are teaching you is twice as high compared with your wealthy friend who goes to a school on the fancy side of town. Schools with wealthy intakes have 7% of staff teaching entirely outside their specialism. In poorer schools, that rockets to 17%. The difference between the two might not seem a lot, but, over a week, it's the difference between two out-of-specialism lessons, and five.

But before we go getting all hysterical about inequity, we have to consider whether specialist teaching actually even matters to pupils. It's fair to assume that a person with a maths degree has top subject knowledge. It's not fair to assume this will make them a better teacher.

Back in 2016, FFT Education Datalab investigated whether science departments that have loads of specialist physics teachers gained higher average point scores for their pupils. The researchers used two different methods, and took into account a range



of demographic and environmental factors. However, they found no relationship: having more physics teachers did not seem to increase physics results.

On the one hand, this is great news. It means we don't have to worry that the unequal spread of teachers is affecting results. But there are other likely benefits of specialist teachers. They might have more experience of jobs in the sector, or extracurricular opportunities, or have a better understanding of the higher education space. Children in poorer schools might not be denied the opportunity to learn subjects well, but if they aren't also given the chance to be inspired, then further knowledge in the area may never be sought. When that happens, the world is down a set of dreams, and all the poorer for it.



## Reviews



**JL Dutaut is a teacher of Citizenship and Politics and the co-editor of *Flip the System UK: A Teachers' Manifesto***

**@DUTAUT**

### Teacher in Amber

**@whatonomy**

By far my favourite voice in education blogging year on year, @whatonomy reaches new levels of poetry with every post. This latest instalment lays bare the inner darkness that relentless workload creates. To those with rosy ideas that international teaching is easier, this blog should serve as a salutary tale. To those who prey on that stereotype to discount the voices of the many English teachers who have fled to international schools and still speak up about our school system, it should act as a cease-and-desist notice. Education politicking aside, it is an English teacher's paean to the redemptive power of writing; a beautiful and unmediated appeal to solidarity.

### Can we have shared professional meaning in teaching?

**@mfordhamhistory**

Anyone who has taught in a secondary school knows: history teachers are fierce. Their commitment to their discipline and to enriching their knowledge base is second to none. Those few that lack that commitment are rapidly promoted to positions of

## TOP BLOGS of the week



leadership to get them out of the way. Michael Fordham is one of the fiercest I've encountered (albeit only digitally). Here, he argues convincingly that generic educational concepts can only ever lead to discussions of very limited use. Worse, they put focus on aspects of teaching that ought to stem from curriculum in the first place, and lead to bad policy. His remedy is two-fold: First, teachers should engage more with conceptual, philosophical analysis of educational concepts to protect against genericism. Second, policy makers should accept greater complexity and do away with one-size-fits-all school solutions.

### The three best arguments against a knowledge rich curriculum (and why I think they're wrong)

**@jon\_hutchinson\_**

Last week's *Schools Week* blog reviewer makes it into my blog review this week. No, this isn't a cabal or evidence of bias. In fact, I often find myself in disagreement with Jon. Here, he sets out to truly engage with the arguments frequently used against the knowledge-rich curriculum approach he favours. The concision of this post provides a handy primer for anyone interested in the debate. While the structure clearly sets up the knowledge-rich camp's right-of-

reply, giving them the final word each time, the politeness and fairness with which Jon portrays his detractors' views, the evident principle of charity at play, and the attempt to bridge the more artificial aspects of the divide make this a model for teacher-led discourse about our profession's big ideas. Over to you, detractors.

### Young people are the experts we've been waiting for...

**@franlandreth**

In this blog for the RSA, Fran Strong sets out some insights from events held around the publication of their report into teenage agency. It's a powerful call to stop this cycle, ditch the assumption that adults have all the answers, and unlock the resources young people need to solve their own problems through social action. Now imagine schools and curricula that shared in that vision!

### Why I love teaching in early years

**@ColeridgeNI**

In all our human endeavours, we ought to seek balance. As per Michael Fordham above, genericism is the enemy of good policy. While much of children's formal schooling can be accounted for by Jon Hutchinson's system-led, knowledge-rich curriculum – perhaps even by traditional teaching methods – I can't bring myself to accept that's all there is or can be. That young adults should be supported to transition out of it and into a meaningful, agentic life as suggested by Fran Strong seems a no-brainer to me. Equally, young children need time and space to transition into it, as set out by Marai Daniels here. I loved reading this blog and spending a little time with highly skilled and deeply caring Early Years staff, imagining dressing up as a policeman and rearranging chairs to make an airplane. We all need a regular dose of that in our lives. If we had it, perhaps fewer wonderful teachers like Whatonomy would end up writing poetic prose exposing the awful effects of workload.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



## Hinds tells review body 2019-20 teacher pay rises must be 'affordable'

@kitandrew1

@DamianHinds needs to come into schools and see the impact of cuts and morale, not to mention the brain drain and recruitment & retention issues. He is in full ostrich mode.

@davidjclayton

Is he affordable?

@terryfish

Surely the review body is 'independent' - affordability is a government issue - not one for the review body!

@SimonMurray2012

That's means none then. So, pay freeze, partial pay rise for minority and more leaving quicker. Genius. Importing them from where then?

## Minister bets heads a bottle of champagne he can find savings in their schools

Bubs

I bet him a case of champagne I can find savings in Westminster. Twelve million pounds on food and booze at Banqueting House per annum for starters. Soldiers to teachers is another. Cash to secure DUP votes before things got tricky also springs to mind. The £18m security bill for Trump's visit was less than thrifty.

@jonw999

Glib bullshit that is part of the discredited DfE funding discourse. Anyone who thinks that finding small savings in resourcing will resolve structural deficits in funding is deluded. File this nonsense under #littleextras.

@springleanet

I wonder how the champagne will be paid for? The academies financial handbook bans schools from purchasing alcohol and expects their auditors to report on any transgressions. I presume the rules don't apply to ministers.

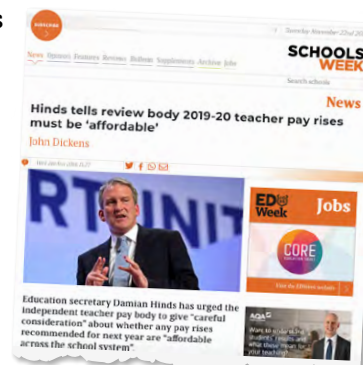
@SeagullSmith

The implication being that despite all the years of budget cuts

## REPLY OF THE WEEK @neiljpayne

### Hinds tells review body 2019-20 teacher pay rises must be 'affordable'

Perhaps Hinds needs Lord Agnew to give his department a hand with simply 'finding' some money. Bottle of champagne anyone?



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

heads haven't quite tried hard enough to make all possible savings. However the promise of a bottle of plonk and a certificate from this man will do the trick. Disgraceful!!

@SBMKat

Great! Why not grab a bottle from your subsidised bar? Come over and have a brew in our staff room. Oh wait, we can't afford to provide a jar of coffee for our teachers.

@adekofthederby

Anyone can make cuts but making cuts that don't end up impacting on standards, mental health/wellbeing and morale of staff is almost impossible. This is obviously not the answer to a retention and recruitment crisis!

@andykaren7893

Sorry, but what a prat.

## Durand Academy leisure centre profits still going to ex-head under £850k 'special payment' deal

@WellBeingKaty

If this is true it must be verging on the criminal - or at the very least be morally indefensible. Maintained schools are having to cut staff which is having an utterly detrimental effect on the quality of education our children receive.

@teacher\_farm

The academy scandal just keeps on rolling. Will @NickGibbUK call for this man to lose his knighthood?

## Ignoring teacher pay recommendations was a 'difficult decision', says DfE funding boss

@peterrhodes22

If they are going to ignore the STRB, they might as well save money by not having an independent board.



# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## SATURDAY

The schools minister Nick Gibb found himself in the middle of an identity crisis over the weekend, when he read a column in this newspaper by government adviser and ResearchEd blazer-wearer-in-chief Tom 'Behaviour' Bennett.

Bennett argued in his piece that traditionalists are the REAL progressives in education. Unsurprisingly, Gibb, a huge fan of everything produced by Bennett and his ilk, enjoyed every word, tweeting how "fascinating" he found the article, and pondering whether he should "regard myself as a neoprogressive rather than a neotraditionalist".

We won't hold our breath...

## MONDAY

It's been years since one-time public accounts committee chair Margaret Hodge grilled Sir Greg Martin, the then head of Durand Academy, about his £400k+ salary. But the spirit of that astonishing exchange echoed around parliament's committee rooms again this week as the seemingly never-ending saga of the ownership of the school site reared its ugly head again.

MPs' jaws hit the floor once again when it was revealed that Martin is still on the receiving end of "most" of the money made by the leisure facilities – to pay off the £850,000 final payment he secured when he and the trust parted ways.

But who in government made the decision to sign the school site over to private firm the Durand Education Trust back in 2010, setting in motion this sorry state of affairs, I hear you ask?



It's worth calling for him at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, where we have it on good authority he now takes up residence.

## WEDNESDAY

Former regional schools commissioner Jenny Bexon-Smith did a sterling job as hype girl to her former colleague Dominic Herrington ahead of his speech to the Schools and Academies Show.

Herrington, the new interim national schools commissioner, appeared on the main stage straight after lunch to set out his vision for the academies system, and it fell to Bexon-Smith, the former RSC for the east midlands and the Humber, to introduce him.

"I know Dominic is absolutely delighted he's got this slot," she said, as Herrington beamed from his seat, "so I hope nobody's going to snooze after their lunchtime endeavours".

We hope Jen isn't speaking from experience...

Earlier that day, Herrington's boss Lord Agnew took to the same stage to lecture

headteachers on cost-cutting. His stump speech about buying hubs and cost-saving consultants passed without incident, but the venture capitalist really grabbed the audience's attention during the Q&A.

In what will go down in history as a legendary miss-reading of his audience, Theo offered to personally find waste in the schools of gathered

heads, promising them a bottle of champagne if he couldn't.

To add irony to injury, Agnew delivered the astonishing challenge whilst

clutching a copy of a

book called "The Future of

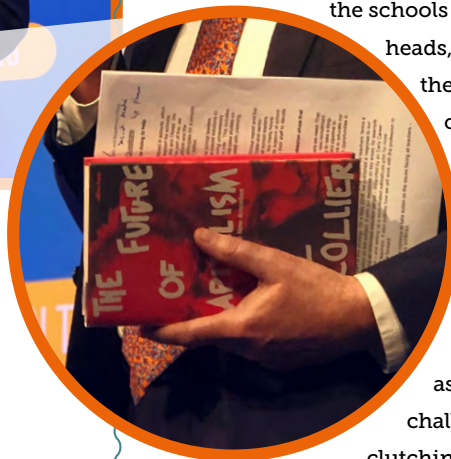
Capitalism".

We're not sure if this was intentional.

## THURSDAY

The announcement of a £10 million contract to bring more career changers and PhD graduates into teaching came as a surprise to some in the sector.

Maybe the reason the awarding of the cash to government favourites Now Teach, Cognition Education and the Brilliant Club caught people off-guard was the fleeting tender process. It launched on August 8 and closed on September 12, meaning a decent chunk of it took place during the school holidays.



# sparx

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### AMNUAY SILPA SCHOOL, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Amnuay Silpa, the leading bilingual school in Thailand is dedicated to preserving the Thai Language and Culture in our students by successfully implementing a unique Synchronised Dual Teaching Model, incorporating the UK and Thai Curriculum (taught by Thai teaching staff). Providing high quality education to over 1000 pupils aged 3-18, Amnuay Silpa is an exciting, dynamic place to teach, with a very clear vision for the future. In 2013 ANS was accredited by Exeter University as the First Thinking School in Asia and in 2016 awarded Advanced Thinking status. As the hub of excellence in the thinking approach, we are able to provide excellent professional development opportunities for those successfully appointed. In June 2017 ANS became a CIS Member School.

**Required for April 2019 (the start of the Thai academic year) and July 2019:**

- Primary Class Teachers (EY, KS1, KS2)
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- Secondary Science Teacher and Science HoD
- Secondary Art and Art/DT Teacher
- Foundation Phase Deputy Headteacher

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- Small, well-resourced classes

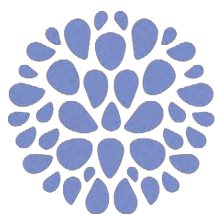
To apply please contact the School Principal, **Mr Joseph Pine** at [applications@amnuaysilpa.ac.th](mailto:applications@amnuaysilpa.ac.th). Applications are by the official application form only. Further information can also be found on the school website [www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th](http://www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th)

**CLOSING DATE: 30th November 2018**

ANS is committed to Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding students and all candidates are expected to provide an Enhanced Police Check and complete a self-disclosure form.

Interviews will be held in London from **Sunday 9th December 2018** onwards.

[www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th](http://www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th)



The Shared Learning Trust

## THE LINDEN ACADEMY

# KEY STAGE 1 LEADER

The Linden Academy have an exciting opportunity for a Key Stage One Leader with a strong commitment to raising standards to join our progressive team. The purpose of this post is to provide the children within the allocated key stage the very best care and education possible. This role will suit an outstanding classroom practitioner and person who is willing and able to support the school in its journey towards great through systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation of current practice. This post is perfect for people genuinely passionate about school improvement, in supporting and coaching others and wanting to move into school leadership.

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### JOB SPECIFICS:

- Start date: **January 2019** or as soon as possible thereafter
- Salary: Leadership Scale: 1-4 - **£39,965 - £43,034**
- Job Role: **Full time, Permanent**

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- Join a lovely close-knit team of teachers and SLT that are genuinely here to support you and want to see you succeed

### Teacher Testimonial:

*"What first attracted me to The Linden Academy was its ethos. All members of staff were extremely welcoming and I loved the rapport between the staff as well as the relationships they had created with the children. Staff were passionate about the children's learning and progress, not just academically but personally. It was something I wanted to be a part of. During my time here, I have developed both professionally and personally. I started my employment as a timid graduate with little confidence of standing in front of a whole class. With great support and guidance, I have progressed from a Teaching Assistant to Class Teacher. Our Senior Leadership Team have greatly supported and built my confidence and ability in becoming a teacher. They have always been approachable and understanding with a genuine care for their staff's wellbeing. Staff across the school continue to support each other in any way they can to make sure we are promoting learning and progress to the highest standard for our pupils. It's a great community to be a part of."*

- Jessica Day

Contact name: Katherine Anderson

Tel: 01582 211 226

Email: [k.anderson@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk](mailto:k.anderson@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk)



## ASSOCIATE DEAN - LEARNING DESIGN (MATERNITY COVER)

London, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Leeds

**Salary:** £54,000 - £59,000 + £3,000 LWA

(if applicable)

**Interview date;** Week commencing

10 December 2018

**Hours;** 37.5 hours

**Closing date;** Dec. 9, 2018, 11:59 p.m.

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10 December 2018

**Hours;** 37.5 hours

**Closing date ;** Dec. 9, 2018, 11:59 p.m.

Ambition School Leadership has merged with the Institute for Teaching to become a new organisation dedicated to supporting teachers and school leaders to keep getting better. We legally merged in September 2018, but will launch publicly as the new organisation in early 2019.

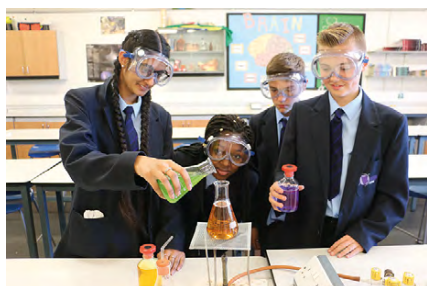
We know that great teaching and school leadership are the most powerful levers for transforming children's outcomes. Effective leaders set the culture and create the conditions for improvements in teacher expertise, and expert teachers can close the attainment gap. Yet too much professional development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

**To apply for any of our vacancies please visit**  
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For any questions or queries please email us at  
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## Trust Headteacher

This is an exciting new role for an experienced Headteacher to work directly with the Trust Executive to offer school improvement capacity across our 6 Schools. Candidates will ideally have experience in both primary and secondary contexts and will certainly have a track record in school improvement. The role will involve working directly with each of the schools and leading a specialist network of high performing subject leaders.

Though not a named Headteacher role initially, this post could involve stepping in as an interim Headteacher as required to meet the needs of a growing Trust.

Following the shortlisting of applicants, if you are selected to attend an interview you will be contacted by CORE Education Trust by email.

For further enquiries please contact Emma Chapman on **0121 389 2824**.

**Position:** Trust Headteacher

**Apply by:** 12 noon Monday 3rd December

**Interview Date:** Tuesday 11th December

**Job Start:** ASAP

To apply visit; [www.core-education.co.uk/jobs-with-us/](http://www.core-education.co.uk/jobs-with-us/)

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