

SCHOOLS WEEK

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Have we reached the tipping-point for academisation?



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£260k to run one school

- Fourth pay hike in a row makes academy boss one of sector's best paid
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- Ministers urged to consider forcing trusts to get sign-off for hefty salaries

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Roundtable**

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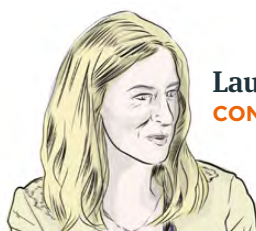
SCHOOLS WEEK

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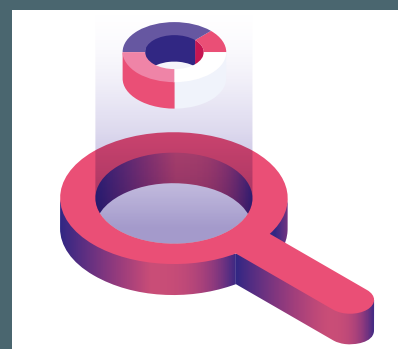
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The editor's top picks



Debra Rutley: The Ofsted framework made me skip with joy

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Bright Tribe emails reveal 'upsetting' treatment of campaigner



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News

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Steiner school squares up to Ofsted

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted is facing another legal showdown after a Steiner school pledged to challenge an "inadequate" grade in the High Court.

Steiner Academy Bristol (pictured), one of two Steiner schools placed in special measures following unannounced inspections in November, was warned by inspectors about ineffective safeguarding policies, weak teaching and low expectations.

Now its governors are raising money to launch a judicial review against the judgment, claiming it is unfair.

It follows an admission from Ofsted boss Amanda Spielman this week that the watchdog has seen an increase in legal challenges against its judgments.

The school, one of four set up across England under the free schools programme to follow the teachings of the philosopher Rudolf Steiner, was rated "inadequate" across the board in a report published this week and has been placed in special measures.



Inspectors noted "frequent" bullying incidents, insufficient progress among SEND pupils and a failure by leaders and governance to ensure an "acceptable standard of education" for pupils.

But now governors, who had their request for a re-inspection of the school refused by Ofsted, have launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise £15,000 to take the watchdog to court. Nearly £7,500 had been raised as *Schools Week* went to press.

"Unfortunately, we feel that the position Ofsted has adopted throughout this process has left the board of governors with no other

option than to pursue a legal challenge," said governor Ray Douglas.

However, an Ofsted spokesperson insisted that it "inspects without fear or favour" and said the inspectorate stood by the judgment. "We considered and responded to all the points made by the governors of Bristol Steiner Academy while the report and evidence went through our rigorous quality-assurance procedures."

It comes after Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of schools, revealed that the number of challenges has been "going up quite substantially".

In a recent high-profile case, Durand Academy Trust succeeded in challenging its "inadequate" Ofsted rating, only to have it reinstated after the watchdog won an appeal in the High Court.

Steiner Academy Bristol is one of three "inadequate"-rated Steiner free schools. Steiner Academy Frome was also rated "inadequate" this week, and Steiner Academy Exeter was issued with a "minded to terminate" warning last October after receiving the lowest possible Ofsted grade.

The fourth Steiner free school, Steiner Academy Hereford, is rated "good".

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Unconditional offers could be illegal, warns regulator

Universities that use controversial unconditional offers to "put pressure" on school pupils could be breaking the law, the higher education regulator has warned.

The intervention from the Office for Students comes after the body revealed that a massive 117,000 offers with an unconditional element were made to almost 90,000 pupils in the UK last year, up from 3,000 in 2013.

It follows a pledge last April by the regulator to investigate the sharp rise in the use of unconditional offers, which promise university places to pupils regardless of their A-level results.

The increase has been attributed to increased competition between universities and has prompted concerns among headteachers that the offers encourage pupils to make less effort in their final year of sixth form.

Now the OfS has warned universities that the indiscriminate use of unconditional offers

is "akin to pressure selling and could put them in breach of consumer law".

"We are concerned about the rapid rise in unconditional offers, particularly those with strings attached, which are akin to pressure selling," said Nicola Dandridge, the OfS's chief executive.

"It is plainly not in students' interests to push them to accept an offer that may not be their best option."

Dandridge said universities should "clearly be encouraging students to make the decision that is right for them, and not the decision that best suits the university", and pledged to take action if the practice is found to have a serious impact on pupils.

"If we identify cases where unconditional offers are having an obvious negative impact on students' choices or outcomes, we are of course prepared to intervene."

The OfS also warns of a rise in "conditional unconditional" offers, whereby a university

initially requires pupils to meet certain entry criteria to gain a place, but then drops those conditions once a pupil names the university as their first choice.

More than 66,000 such offers were made to 18-year-olds in 2018, whereas there were none in 2013.

Angela Rayner, shadow education secretary, warned that the current system "gives universities a perverse incentive to make more unconditional offers, and it is disadvantaged students, who are most likely to have lower predicted grades, that are losing out".

Damian Hinds, education secretary, has also urged universities not to use such offers "just to get people through the door".

Sir Peter Lampl, from social mobility charity The Sutton Trust, has now called for a "move to a post-qualification applications system where students apply only after they have received their A-level results".

Doomed academies handed £4m in bailouts

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

Academies handed “exceptional” bailouts totalling £4 million over the last two years have still closed soon after, with the government’s funding chief now warning that she doesn’t want to create a “culture of dependency”.

A total of ten payments worth £3.5 million were made in the 2017-18 financial year, half of which went to academies that have since closed, are due to close or were rebrokered.

The new figures, obtained by the Local Schools Network, also show university technical colleges claimed six of the payments, amounting to just under £1 million.

The funding is given to trusts in “exceptional cases ... where additional funding is absolutely necessary to stabilise the school’s finances and ensure minimal disruption to pupils’ education”.

It means that 14 such payments were made to doomed academies, including the high-profile Lilac Sky and Schools Company Trust, between September 2016 and August 2018.

However, Eileen Milner, chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, told the Education Show conference on Thursday she did not have “a book of blank cheques to hand out” to struggling schools.

When questioned by *Schools Week* over the grant figures, Milner conceded it was “inevitable that we have a recourse to this”.

But she added: “We wouldn’t want a dependency culture, where people feel able to get this cheque, because the bar for getting access to this money is high.”

Last year, two schools received over £700,000



INVESTIGATES

each in grants. Kingsway Academy in the Wirral, run by the Northern Schools Trust, received £746,000 before it closed in August 2018.

Plumberow Primary Academy in Essex, run by the Academies Enterprise Trust, got £773,000 and remains open.

A spokesperson for AET said the funding was part of a “wider agreement” to support the trust “during its turnaround and to cover the costs of the substantial restructure needed at the organisation”.

She said the DfE chooses to make the funding payments to just one academy, rather than the trust’s central account, hence why Plumberow received such a large sum.

Phil Reynolds, senior manager at accountants Kreston Reeves, said: “It’s a shame so much money is having to be used to make sure children still receive an education where there have been issues with schools.”

The figures come after warnings from auditors that academy trusts with better powers of persuasion are accessing funding pots not offered to others.

But Antony Power, partner at Michelmores law firm, said: “Local authorities do the same. It has happened for years but the difference is that at least the DfE and the ESFA expect you to do something for the money, whereas local authorities have been bailing out schools for years and letting kids be failed.”

Schools Week understands academies that remain open may be expected to pay back some of the money.

The Isle of Portland Aldridge Community Academy in Dorset was given £218,000 in 2016/17. In September 2017 it was rebrokered to the Aspirations Academies Trust and became Atlantic Academy Portland, and received a further £518,000 under that name in 2017/18.

Julia Harnden, funding specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was important to “be sure public money is being used well and if schools are later closing down that is clearly a concern”.

The DfE said grants are provided to trusts “in exceptional circumstances to protect the education of children”.

EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

£111m refit for ‘shelved’ new DfE offices

The Department for Education has spent £111 million to refurbish new offices it has no plans to move into.

Schools Week revealed in 2017 that the department’s planned move to the Old Admiralty Buildings in Whitehall, from its current base in Sanctuary Buildings, had been shelved indefinitely.

The move, first proposed in 2014, was to save the DfE £19 million a year.

BAM Construct UK was initially appointed to

undertake a £50 million renovation, including a new gym for staff and an art gallery, but the work had not started when *Schools Week* inquired almost two years ago.

Now it has emerged that “ongoing” work to refurbish the offices, which was previously the home of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has cost more than double BAM’s original contract and far more than the £63 million spent ahead of the FCO’s arrival in 2001.

Work is due to be completed this summer,

and the building will then house “other government bodies”, the DfE said.

However, although the £111 million came from DfE budgets, it is understood the money was sent by the Treasury. The cash was for the specific purpose of readying the new premises and therefore does not leave the department short.

The total refurbishment cost was revealed after a freedom of information request from *Schools Week*.

Trusts told to tweet as DfE celebrates academies landmark

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Policy experts have claimed that the academisation process is now practically “irreversible” as new figures show more than half of pupils are studying in academies. Their belief is that the sector is now approaching a “tipping point” where the ratio of academies to non-academy schools means that the latter will have little choice but to academise.

The finding was celebrated as a landmark by academy supporters and some politicians, with education secretary Damian Hinds urging schools to make the “positive choice” to become academies.

However, there are concerns that headteachers may find themselves being forced into academisation as cash-strapped councils find it increasingly hard to provide services for their dwindling number of schools.

The academisation push also came on the day that a new study by the government found that conversion does not consistently cause pupil performance to improve – with improvement actually being “arrested or reversed” in some cases.

Schools Week can also reveal that the DfE emailed selected academy trusts, on the day of its announcement, encouraging them to “showcase” the difference that trusts are “making on the ground every day, serving your local communities”, using the Twitter tagline “#academies our schools are great because...”.

This focus on structures is something of an about-turn by Hinds, who at the Conservative Party conference last year focused instead on school standards.

Sam Freedman, a former senior policy advisor to Michael Gove while he was education secretary, said it would be “better if schools converted less because of panic and more because there is a clear strategy and vision for the system”. He said there’s “no chance” of the government reverting to its former policy to force all schools to academise.

The Labour Party, meanwhile, has pledged that it will not allow new academies to open if the party comes to power.



Freedman added: “It would be much better to see a clear plan from the centre, rather than schools being left on their own to make short-term decisions. Early on, there was a clear vision for the system, and that isn’t there at the moment.”

However, Mark Lehair, former head and founder of Bedford Free School, highlighted that around 1,000 schools a year are becoming academies, with the Catholic church instructing large numbers of its schools to make the change en masse.

Lehair added: “In a democracy nothing is irreversible, but this is as close to it as you can be, as there’s such a momentum behind academisation now, and the things driving schools to academise are not going away any time soon.”

Many councils are struggling. Bath and North East Somerset Council proposed last year to change its policy to “encourage” all schools to become academies, adding it was “no longer financially viable” to continue providing high-quality services. But the proposals were overruled by councillors, who said they should still support schools that do not want to convert.

Most research on the impact on pupil performance by academy trusts suggests that the picture is mixed. This week’s multi-academy-trust league tables show that 40

per cent of trusts are below the national average for progress 8 scores.

Anntoinette Bramble, chair of the Local Government Association’s children and young people board, added that “converting to an academy is not always the best solution for a struggling school”.

While Hinds has also reiterated that academies hand more autonomy to headteachers, there are concerns that autonomy will actually be reduced under the current direction of academies joining or forming multi-academy trusts as a result of concerns about sustainability. But Lehair said this joining a Mat can free up heads to “get on more with stuff”, adding, “they can think of it as giving up some autonomy but for a greater good – and is it worth doing that”.

Jonathan Simons, director at policy and PR consultancy Public First, stated that he believed the academisation programme was now an “irreversible programme”, with the acceleration of conversions “beneficial from a system point of view”.

“The current split system is overly complex, expensive and burdensome for DfE to manage. One overall system of school governance and structures would allow heads, CEOs and the DfE to focus on how to improve schools and narrow gaps and build capacity in a consistent way.”

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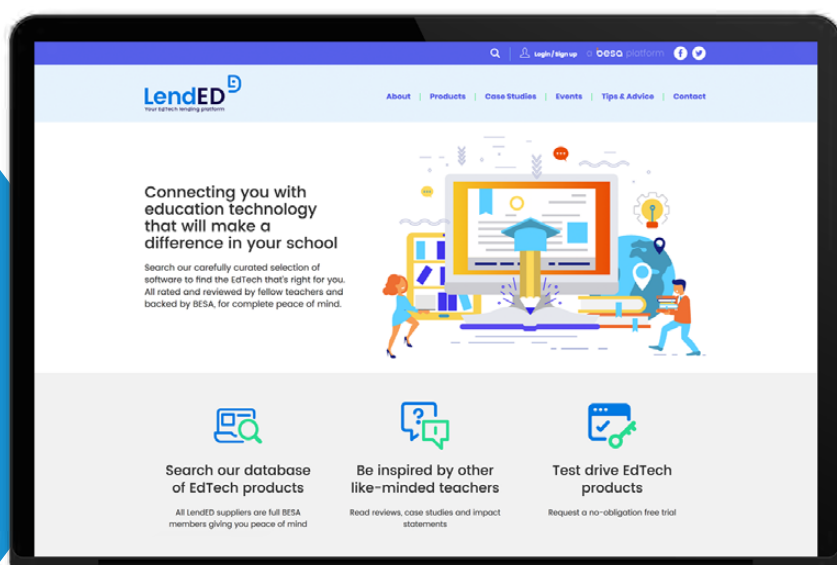
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News: CEO pay

Single-school trust head earns £260,000

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

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EXCLUSIVE

A single-school academy trust has upped the pay of its top executive to £260,000, making him one of the best-paid academy bosses in the country.

It means that the pay of Colin Hall, listed as "head" of Holland Park School, west London, has doubled in seven years, despite a letter from the government in 2017 as part of its crackdown on high CEO pay.

Ofsted has rated the school, once dubbed the "socialist Eton", outstanding.

The trust has another three employees on more than £100,000, including David Chappell, the academy head and accounting officer, who was paid between £180,000 and £185,000.

Holland Park trust, founded in 2013 after the school of about 1,400 pupils became an academy, is not the only small trust to hike pay. Brampton Manor Trust, which has two schools in east London, paid its head Dayo Olukoshi at least £220,000 last year, an increase of £20,000 on 2016-17.

Other trusts, however, are beginning to reduce leadership pay (see box below) and the National Governance Association has advised its members not to let recruitment concerns make them feel "pressured" into agreeing to high salaries (see box on page 9).

In new guidance published today the



Colin Hall, Head of Holland Park School

organisation also floated the idea of whether trusts should be required to seek government approval to award salaries of more than £150,000, as is the case in NHS trusts.

Accounts for Holland Park show Hall's pay rose from between £245,000 to £250,000 in 2017 to between £260,000 to £265,000 last year – a rise of at least £10,000.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary at the National Education Union, said: "It's

very hard to see how huge salaries can be justified, particularly when considered against headteacher remuneration in similar local authority schools."

Hall is now thought to be the third best-paid academy head in the country. However his pay works out at around £186 per pupil – way above the £13.75 per-pupil received by Sir Dan Moynihan, the country's highest-paid academy boss who earned at least £440,000 for running 44 schools last year

Continued on next page

Trusts save £££s by slashing salaries

Some smaller trusts are slashing inflated leadership salaries – with one saving a six-figure sum in the process.

Four trusts, each with just two schools apiece, have reduced pay after facing government scrutiny for the amount pocketed by their chief executives.

The Transforming Lives Educational Trust, with one secondary and one infant school in Warwickshire, came under fire last year after it emerged its acting chief executive, Lois Reed, was paid £270,000.

Reed, who was also headteacher of Ashlawn secondary school in Rugby, left her post

amid the controversy in June. *Schools Week* understands she received a £30,000 payout.

James Higham, the former headteacher of the Henry Hinde Infant School, is now serving as interim part-time chief executive and the trust's chair, Stewart Jardine, said he is earning "significantly less" than Reed.

A spokesperson said they have separated the headteacher and CEO posts, a move which they said "not only makes our governance and accountability structures stronger, but also ensures that we are saving well in excess of £100,000 a year".

The Greater Manchester Academies Trust paid

its CEO Lynne Heath £115,000 in 2016/17.

However, this dropped to just £30,000 last year when the role became part-time. Heath resigned in August and her role has now been taken over by executive director Ian Waite, who confirmed that his salary falls in the lower band of £80,000-£85,000.

Meanwhile the Graveney Trust, based in south London, cut the pay of its CEO Graham Stapleton from £165,000 to £90,000 in 2017/18, according to the accounts.

And Angela Trigg, head of AIM Academies Trust in north London, had a pay cut of £5,000, to bring her salary to £145,000.

News: CEO pay

at the Harris Federation.

It has also emerged that Holland Park trust is arguing over who pays the bill for "significant defects" such as "loose" stone panels and "glass breakages" to its £80 million building, which was finished in 2012.

The stone façade has not been properly secured, making the heavy panels "loose and prone to falling off". The accounts said a panel had once fallen, but did not specify what damage or injuries were caused.

There have also been 17 separate incidents of "glass breakages" requiring a "full upgrade" of the installed glass – the school has glass classrooms and roof – while flooding in the school's basement has caused "potential irreparable damage" to the swimming pool.

However, the trust's lease of the land and buildings has not yet been finalised, accounts show, with discussions ongoing "with a view to determining who bears responsibility for carrying out this work".

The Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency were in "extended dialogue" between the school and council.

Holland Park opened in 1958 as one of the first comprehensives in the country and was dubbed "the socialist Eton" when left-wingers, including the former Labour cabinet member, Tony Benn, and the founder of the SDP and former Labour home secretary, Roy Jenkins, sent their children to the school.

HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL



According to its accounts, decisions on setting pay were considered by the trustees' performance committee. But they also show that trustees have asked an external auditor to look at the financial operations and trust procedures, including a "detailed review of payroll procedures".

All the trust's members are also trustees, which goes against government guidance that says most members should remain independent from the board.

The trust also lists Sally Bercow, the wife of the Speaker, among its trustees – although the accounts use the term "governor".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, declined to comment on Holland Park specifically, but said: "Trusts must be able to show that the salaries of chief executive officers represent good value for money that

benefits pupils and is measured against a clearly defined set of objectives."

In December 2017, Holland Park was one of the first 29 trusts to receive a letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency asking for justification of high salaries.

A spokesperson for the DfE said trust salaries should "reflect the individual responsibility and must be justifiable".

He added: "We are aware of the building issues at Holland Park and are keeping in touch with the local authority and academy as they work to negotiate a solution. We have received assurances that both parties are fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff."

The trust did not respond to a request for comment.

COLIN HALL'S SALARY

(BASED ON MINIMUM PAY BRACKETS)

2010-11:	£130,000*
2013-14:	£180,000
2014-15:	£190,000
2015-16:	£220,000
2016-17:	£240,000
2017-18:	£260,000

*as reported by *The Evening Standard*

EXCLUSIVE

Make ministers sign off top pay deals, suggests NGA

The academies sector should consider adopting an NHS-style pay system where government approval is needed to award high salaries to bosses, according to the National Governance Association.

New guidance from the NGA said the sector should "have a debate" about whether it should follow the system of NHS trusts, where those wishing to pay more than £150,000 per annum must have approval agreed by ministers.

"This does not mean you can't pay more than £150,000, but you must be clear about what you took into account and how you arrived at the figure," the guidance said.

Sam Henson, director of policy and education

at the NGA, said it is important for trusts to make sure "executive pay is proportionate and viable in terms of the whole organisation".

"We have heard enough people in the sector say that executive pay is a real issue and it's causing issues for the reputation of the sector as a whole," he said.

The guidance says that "good" educational and financial performance is not sufficient to justify high pay, as it "ought to be a basic expectation that the schools in the trust provide a good standard of education".

"If performance is good then that is a performance award – which may be an increment or a one-off bonus – not an astronomical base

salary."

The guidance advises trustee boards to benchmark salaries in comparison with MATs of similar sizes, and to speak to other boards to find out how their salary level was set, in order to avoid the dangers of a "race to the top".

The guidance also recommends trustees to consider pay ratios, and warns boards not to allow the recruitment issues around senior leaders to act as "blanket justification" for higher pay.

The guidance states: "sometimes the answer has to be, no, this is the salary for the role and if you want a higher salary you need to seek a role in a different setting."

Union ordered to reinstate sacked employee

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

England's second largest teaching union has been ordered to reinstate a sacked employee after an employment tribunal found it was "likely" he was dismissed for whistleblowing.

The NASUWT fired Richard Harris last October after he accused Chris Keates, the union's general secretary, of lying, wasting police time and "acting like a despot", a tribunal ruling shows.

Harris sent the accusations, in an email, to union executive members after Keates ordered a colleague to report Harris for suspected drink-driving. No police action was taken.

The union suspended him in late 2017 amid allegations of gross misconduct.

However, he claims Keates wanted to get rid of him because of his activity within the GMB union, which organised strikes against the NASUWT last year, and was using the row as a "pretext".

Paul Housego, an employment judge, ruled that Keates's actions in reporting Harris to the police and removing his company car "do not seem...likely to be justifiable", even in the context of a "no-holds-barred political struggle".

He added that Harris "had a point" when he accused Keates of acting like a despot, and that there "seems no authority for the general secretary to remove a car".

The NASUWT has been forced to restore the former regional organiser's contract, pay and benefits after the tribunal granted him "interim relief" following his dismissal.

The judgment, issued in December and seen by *Schools Week*, offers a glimpse into ongoing internal disputes at the union, which just months ago faced a staff walkout when their pensions were changed.

The union has appealed against the judgment and Harris is now pursuing a broader claim for unfair dismissal.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act of 1998, employees who "blow the whistle" on wrongdoing by their employers are protected from action if their revelations are considered to be in the public interest.

Judge Housego ruled that Harris's



Chris Keates

disclosure about the drink-driving report was in the public interest because "if the general secretary of such a union were to be wasting police time, that is by its very description a matter of public interest".

His disclosure about the removal of his car also qualified because the treatment of employees of a union representing more than 300,000 teachers "has public interest written through it".

Keates wrote to Harris to demand the return of the car on October 9 last year following accusations from colleagues that he drove drunk from a GMB meeting. She also ordered Pete McCollin, the union's head of HR, to report Harris to the police.

In response, Harris accused the general secretary of defamation and demanded an apology, the withdrawal of the police report, to know the names of his accusers and the return of his car. He also forwarded the exchange to NASUWT executive members.

But the executive ruled that the emails were "seriously defamatory and abusive of the general secretary", that Keates had acted appropriately and that Harris's conduct in sending the letters "should be accepted as bringing his employment to an end".

Judge Housego said there was "no evidence that any of the committees gave

NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

the slightest thought as to whether the claimant might have a point", and that they were "unlikely to be disposed to be critical of the general secretary whom they allowed to be present throughout.

"It seems to me not just likely but inevitable that a full tribunal will consider that the principles of natural justice were not observed."

The union claims it was the manner in which Harris wrote to Keates that led to his dismissal, rather than his complaints. But the judge said this "cannot be reasonable" because the staff review committee "knew nothing of the back story".

"The reason the staff review committee objected so strongly was that the claimant said that he would go to the press if his public interest disclosures were not acted on.

"They had no intention of acting on them. That is the principal reason that leaps from the pages. Accordingly, it is likely that the principal reason for the dismissal was the public interest disclosures made by the claimant."

The union's appeal means that Harris will not return to work.

In a statement, it said the claim was being "strongly defended".

"Proceedings are ongoing and it would clearly be inappropriate to litigate the matter through the media," a spokesperson said.

"What we can say at this stage is that there is a complex factual background to the events that led to the dismissal of Mr Harris and a full understanding of those events will be crucial for the employment tribunal."

The spokesperson added that Harris had "neither been reinstated nor re-engaged; the employment tribunal ordered the continuation of his contract for pay and benefits purposes only, pending the outcome of the appeal".

Bright Tribe emails reveal 'upsetting' treatment of campaigner

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

EXCLUSIVE

A former Bright Tribe boss told the headteacher of Whitehaven Academy to "think" about the application of a campaigner's son to continue into its sixth form.

The comment was made in an email from the trust's former chief operating officer Mary McKeeman after inquiries from parent Julie Rayson regarding to whom Rayson should report concerns at Bright Tribe.

Rayson was a vocal campaigner during the trust's controversial tenure at the Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria, where it oversaw falling exam results, buildings in disrepair and an "inadequate" Ofsted rating.

The email from McKeeman, sent in June 2017 to the school's then head, stated McKeeman had not responded to Rayson's request in "over 4 weeks".

"We just keep sending her down cul-de-sacs until her son leaves. You need to THINK about his application to your sixth form!!!" she wrote.

Schools Week understands no action was taken against either Rayson or her son.

Bright Tribe is being closed and its schools rebrokered. MPs were told last year that government investigations into the trust were due to be completed by Christmas 2018.

One of those investigations, by the ESFA, is probing claims made by BBC Panorama of repeated false claims for building and



Julie Rayson

maintenance grants by the trust.

Angela Rayner, Labour's shadow education secretary, said the new disclosure "only adds to the case for a proper inquiry and complete transparency to get to the bottom of what happened at Bright Tribe".

Bright Tribe replaced local governance at its schools with regional accountability, review and challenge (ARC) groups, which were advised by school-level "drive teams".

Emails, seen by *Schools Week*, were sent from McKeeman to other staff following attempts by Rayson to find out how to share concerns with the ARC groups.

McKeeman urged the head to "not respond to this individual", adding Rayson had been escorted off site, was close to being issued with a harassment warning, and was now having to pay for freedom of information requests after submitting so many.

However Rayson, whose son chose to leave Whitehaven Academy when he finished his GCSEs in 2017, has insisted all three allegations are entirely false.

"It was upsetting," she said. "I think if I had seen this email back then it would have really terrified me. I think she thought I would back off if they used delay tactics and

saw to it that my son wasn't in the school any more. But she was wrong about that. I'm still going now."

A public accounts committee report this week found that parents and local people "have to fight to obtain even basic information about their children's schools" under some academy trusts.

Local MP and education committee member Trudy Harrison, who was once escorted away from Whitehaven Academy by trust staff after trying to check on flood damage, said: "It's incredible to think these actions would belong in the British education system. It's awful.

"If the parents and campaigners at Whitehaven Academy had been taken seriously three or four years ago when they first raised concerns, we wouldn't be in this position now.

"It's right and proper that a full investigation takes place. It has to be made public. We don't want other schools to suffer in the way Whitehaven Academy has."

McKeeman, who declined to comment, left the trust in November 2017 after nine months at the helm. She is currently the headteacher at a Kent special school.

A spokesperson for Bright Tribe said its new leadership has "worked tirelessly to rectify the mistakes of the past. Central to achieving this has been building trust with the schools, parents and students so they are supported at all times.

"We are very disappointed if these principles have not always been demonstrated in the past."

Computing test regime confirmed

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

Ofqual has confirmed that pupils' programming skills in the computer science GCSE will be assessed via an exam from 2022 onwards.

But the regulator will leave it to exam boards to develop their own "innovative" tests – although using a traditional pen and paper approach has not been ruled out.

The practical coursework element of the qualification was removed for pupils taking their exams from 2018 to 2020, after tasks from the test were leaked online and downloaded "thousands of times" in October 2017.

Ofqual launched a consultation before Christmas on proposals for GCSE computer

science to become a permanently exam-only subject.

Following 394 responses to the consultation, the exams regulator has confirmed exam boards will be "free to adopt approaches to assessing programming skills by examination that they feel are most appropriate" from 2022 onwards.

"This affords them the opportunity to consult with stakeholders and be innovative in their approach."

The consultation document states "the approach to assessments allowed under our proposals would mean that boards could

implement innovative forms of assessment such as online or on-screen testing".

Schools and colleges will need to confirm to their exam board that their pupils have been given the opportunity to complete a programming task as part of their course.

Meanwhile the current arrangements whereby schools must set aside 20 timetabled hours for students to undertake a programming task as coursework will remain in place for pupils sitting exams up to 2021. After that, the obligatory 20 hours will be removed.

News

EXCLUSIVE

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'Funding gap has forced me to cut SEND places'

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

A headteacher is reducing the number of special needs pupils she accepts in a bid to balance the books after a government funding warning.

Julia Maunder, head of Thomas Keble secondary academy in Gloucestershire, a single-academy trust, says she was left with no other choice when the trust was given a financial notice this month. It followed a request for about £200,000 in recoverable deficit funding last year.

She said the deficit was partly the result of the school having to plug a £130,000 gap in funding for the high proportion of pupils with special needs.

Her school will reduce the number of places for pupils with education health and care plans (EHCPs), which replaced the old statements, from 35 to 22 over the next four years.

It would "continue to be an inclusive school, but to be able to balance the books under the current funding policies, we have had to cap the level of provision we can offer.

"It goes against the principles of the trust, but we have no alternative."

Thomas Keble has been told to explore joining a multi-academy trust, but Maunder is reluctant.

Her current deficit amounted to 3 per cent of the budget, but a trust would slice 3 to 5 per cent of that budget for its central services, and she was not convinced the school's financial situation would improve.

Analysis by *Schools Week* also shows that more than half (11) of the 20 most recent



Julia Maunder, head of Thomas Keble secondary academy

"It goes against the principles of the trust, but we have no alternative."

financial notices to improve were handed to single-academy trusts.

Of the nine multi-academy trusts given notices, four had fewer than five schools, suggesting that as funding continues to be squeezed smaller trusts will be forced to join or form a MAT.

Julia Harnden, a funding

specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said the government had failed to ensure there was enough money in education to ensure "schools are financially sustainable on their own". She said they should not have to join a MAT.

But Micon Metcalfe, a fellow at the Institute for School

Business Leadership, said joining a MAT would allow trustees to erase any deficit by pooling surplus funding from other schools, as well as reducing back-office costs.

Gloucestershire has one of the lowest per-pupil funding rates of all local authorities.

Maunder said she had been forced to dig into her core budget every year because the amount she received for EHCP provision did not cover staffing costs.

Gloucestershire provides about £615 for each hour of support outlined in an EHCP, but the school spends £866 to pay for experienced teaching assistants, who have become costlier as pension and national insurance contribution rise.

Maunder said: "The funding issues the trust has experienced is the direct result of the subsidy we have to pay between the funded amount for EHCPs and the actual staffing costs."

Meanwhile, 101 of the school's 666 pupils on roll have additional needs, but do not have an EHCP with attached funding. The government expects schools themselves to fund the first £6,000 of extra support for these pupils.

Yet the school has low numbers of pupils who attract pupil premium funding, so there is less cash to meet this £6,000, Maunder says.

The trust must now commission an independent review of financial management and governance and provide monthly budget updates to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

If it fails to meet these requirements, the trust will be at risk of having its funding agreement terminated by the government.

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League tables

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

MATs slip below the national average for progress and EBacc entry

Pupil progress and entry rates to the EBacc in multi-academy trusts is falling behind the national average, new government statistics have revealed.

Multi-academy trust league tables, published on Thursday by the Department for Education, rank the performance of the 85 chains that had been in charge of at least three schools for at least three years by last summer.

Just a day after the education secretary, Damian Hinds, urged more schools to become academies, the new statistics showed that the average progress 8 score for multi-academy trusts was -0.04 in 2018, compared with 0.01 in all state-funded mainstream schools.

The progress 8 score of 33 per cent of MATs was also below the national average last year, with 7 per cent "well below". This compares with 27 per cent that were above the national average and 4 per cent that were well above.

However, more generally, progress scores in academies and free schools are higher than the national average.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said: "It's been clear for some time that standards are rising in our schools and the data underlines the role academies and free schools are playing in that improvement, with progress above the national average and impressive outcomes for disadvantaged pupils."

Star Academies, formerly known as the Tauheedul Academies Trust, topped the MATs league table with a progress 8 score of 1.42.

The trust was one of three with an average progress score that was "well above" the national average. The other two were Dixons Academies Trust, with a score of 0.83 and the Diocese of London on 0.67.

Star also topped the league tables in terms of its progress score for poorer pupils. The trust achieved an average score of 1.3 for disadvantaged pupils.

Mufti Hamid Patel, Star's CEO, said he was "delighted that the effort and dedication of all our talented pupils and staff has been recognised with such exceptional results".

BEST PERFORMERS FOR PROGRESS 8:



TAUHEEDUL
EDUCATION TRUST
1.42

DIXONS
ACADEMY TRUST
0.83

DIOCESE OF
LONDON
0.67

4	HARRIS FEDERATION	0.49
5	THE CAM ACADEMY TRUST	0.46
6	THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER ACADEMY TRUST	0.43
7	THE GORSE ACADEMIES TRUST	0.36
8	EAST MIDLANDS EDUCATION TRUST	0.34
9	CITY OF LONDON ACADEMIES TRUST	0.32
10	THE THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST	0.32

"All of our efforts are geared towards giving young people in some of our most deprived communities a real chance to make something of their lives."

As with last year, very few of the trusts at the top and the bottom of the league tables were large.

Of the 12 trusts with 10 or more schools included in the secondary performance tables for 2018, six had progress 8 scores that were "below average", one had an "average" progress score and five were "above average".

Of the trusts with the top 10 progress scores, just one, the Harris Federation, had more than ten schools included in the data.

Six academy trusts had progress 8 scores that were well below average in 2018.

The University of Chester Academies Trust, which is in the process of being wound up, had a score of -0.83, followed by the Fylde Coast Teaching School on -0.78 and Midland Academies Trust on -0.70.

Aldridge Education had a score of -0.63 while Wakefield City Academies Trust, which has given up all of its schools, had a score of -0.61.

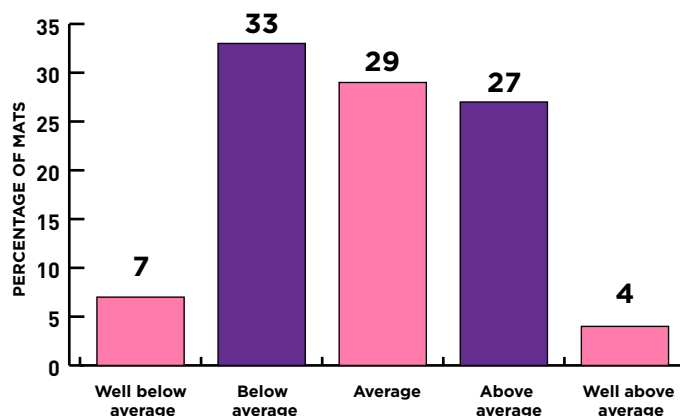
UCAT also had the worst progress among disadvantaged pupils, with a score of -1.16.

The stats also show that multi-academy trusts lag behind other schools in terms of their entry rates to the EBacc performance measure.

MATs had an EBacc entry rate of 35.2 per cent last year, compared with 39.1 per cent among all state-funded mainstream schools. At the same time, 56 per cent of MATs have an EBacc entry rate below the national average.

They also score lower in terms of the government's new average point score for the EBacc, which in 2018 was 3.78 among MATs, compared with 4.12 for all state-funded schools.

PROGRESS OF MATS



WORST PERFORMERS FOR PROGRESS 8

1	UCAT	-0.83
2	FYLDE COAST TEACHING SCHOOL LTD	-0.78
3	THE MIDLAND ACADEMIES TRUST	-0.70
4	ALDRIDGE EDUCATION	-0.63
5	WAKEFIELD CITY ACADEMIES TRUST	-0.61
6	EDUCATION CENTRAL MULTI ACADEMY TRUST	-0.57
7	WOODARD ACADEMIES TRUST	-0.46
8	EASTERN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST	-0.42
9	BROOK LEARNING TRUST	-0.38
10	THE HEATH FAMILY TRUST	-0.37

League tables

Deep dive: What the numbers tell us

FEWER SCHOOLS BELOW THE 'FLOOR'

The number of secondary schools falling below the government's "floor standard" fell last year, but only after the results of some schools were excluded from the data.

Government statistics also reveal a huge regional variation in the proportion of schools falling below the standard, which is no longer used to prompt intervention in schools.

In 2018, 346 schools were below the floor standard, equivalent to 11.6 per cent of state-funded mainstream schools, down from 365 schools, or 12 per cent, in 2017.

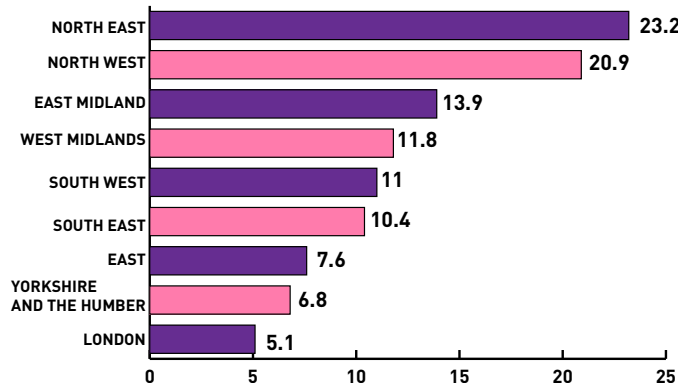
However, the government claims the

figures are not comparable, because UTCs, FE colleges with 14 to 16 provision and studio schools were not included in the data in 2018.

Meanwhile, in the north-east of England, 23.2 per cent of schools fell below the floor, compared with just 5.1 per cent in London.

The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their better-off peers at secondary school also grew – by 0.6 per cent – between 2017 and 2018. This is in contrast to the disadvantage gap at primary level, which narrowed by 3 per cent last year.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS BELOW THE FLOOR BY REGION



SLIGHT SHIFT IN EBACC ENTRIES

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those with low prior attainment entering the EBacc increased last year, while entries from better-off and previously high-attaining pupils decreased.

In 2018, 10.8 per cent of pupils with low prior attainment entered the full slate of EBacc subjects, up from 9 per cent in 2017. Meanwhile, the proportion of pupils with high prior attainment entering the EBacc decreased from 58.3 per cent to 57.2 per cent.

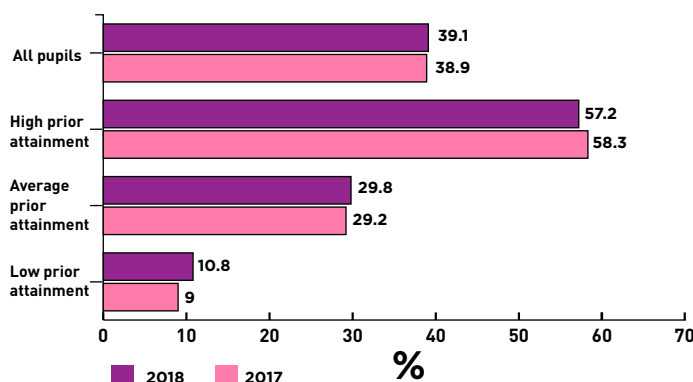
This rise in entries among previously low-attaining pupils has driven an overall rise in the EBacc entry rate

in state-funded mainstream schools from 38.9 per cent in 2017 to 39.1 per cent in 2018.

The EBacc entry rate for disadvantaged pupils rose from 25.4 per cent in 2017 to 26.4 per cent in 2018, while entries among other pupils decreased from 43 per cent to 42.8 per cent.

Dave Thomson, chief statistician from FFT Education Datalab, said the changes were "likely to be caused by increased entry in science and humanities among disadvantaged pupils and those with low prior attainment and a fall in entry in languages among other pupils".

EBACC ENTRY RATES BY PRIOR ATTAINMENT



WHITE PUPILS STILL FALLING BEHIND

White pupils remain the lowest-performing ethnic group based on progress 8 scores, while Chinese pupils continue to outshine all others.

White pupils had an overall progress 8 score of -0.10 in 2018, compared to -0.02 among mixed pupils, 0.12 among black pupils, 0.45 among Asian youngsters, and 1.03 among Chinese pupils.

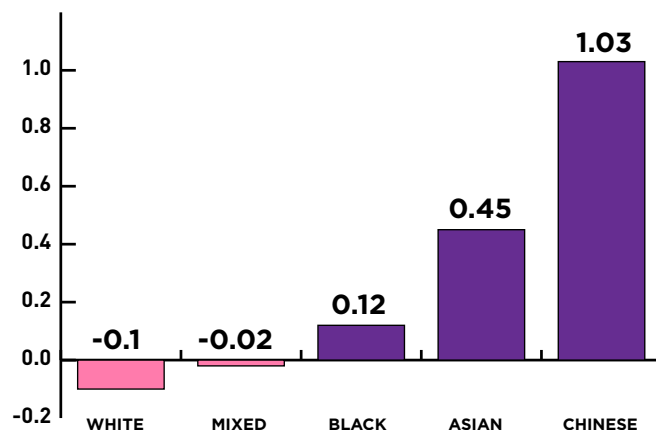
It follows warnings that progress 8 is loaded against schools in poorer areas with majority white British populations, and in favour of those in more multicultural areas.

Pupils with a first language other

than English also continue to do better than native English speakers on a number of metrics. For example, EAL pupils had an average EBacc points score of 4.28, compared with 4.10 among all mainstream school pupils. And the average progress 8 score of EAL pupils in mainstream schools was 0.49, compared with -0.10 among native speakers.

But the Bell Foundation warned that the figures "mask the real picture" because the term EAL "covers a vastly different group of students, from advanced bilingual learners to those new to English".

PROGRESS BY ETHNICITY





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News

DfE ditches policy for delivery in digital makeover

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The Department for Education is set to improve its digital services for schools from next month under a new £560,000 scheme, as heads face time-consuming battles to submit data because portals keep crashing.

Processes such as data collection from schools, applying for a teaching vacancy, for a school place or for free school meals' eligibility for pupils could all be simplified.

The DfE is seeking a company that will create a "better experience" for its website users to "transform from a policy department to a delivery department" for schools, according to a contract for the scheme.

A source, who did not wish to be named, told *Schools Week* the department's current digital services are "awful – always crashing and difficult to use".

School business managers in particular struggle to submit their budget returns to

the Education and Skills Funding Agency because the portal crashes, said the source. Business managers also have to submit financial data to numerous portals across the DfE's site, but each has different log-ins.

Submitting information to keep designations as teaching schools or national leaders of education is also "time-consuming", they added.

The department has 400 digital services for education and last year identified 250 that it wants to improve during the initial stage of the project.

A blog from that year stated the department found it needed to "look deeper into several areas", particularly how it collects data from schools. "The way we collect it and offer it back to schools could be approached differently."

The chosen partner will test new ways of using DfE services over two months as part of a £160,000 contract. If successful, these will be rolled out over four months as part of the £400,000 contract. The contract is

due to start on February 11.

It follows Jonathan Slater, permanent secretary at the Department for Education, writing in a blog in November that he wants to replace the "traditional divide between 'policy' and 'delivery'" by bringing people from both backgrounds on to the same team.

According to the unnamed source, a new team was set up as a "one-stop shop" for schools' policy and delivery before Christmas, headed by senior civil servant Andrew McCully.

Jonathan Simons, director of policy and public relations consultancy Public First, said Slater's idea to merge the teams was "very sensible" because historically there has been "competition between policy people and delivery people" at the DfE.

But he added "change will only happen if the DfE understands how the Education and Skills Funding Agency, regional school commissioner teams, local authorities and schools will actually put the plans into practice".

EXCLUSIVE

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

EMOTIONAL NEEDS FOCUS FOR NEW SEND SCHOOLS

More special education free schools are set to open in 2020 than in the previous five years combined, with almost a quarter focusing on social and emotional needs for the first time.

Thirty-four special free schools are due to open in 2020-21, compared with just 32 in the period from 2015-20, data from the pro-free schools charity New Schools Network (NSN) shows.

Of those, eight schools will specialise in social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs for the first time.

The data comes as government statistics show 32,000 more pupils were added to the SEN register between January 2017 and 2018, rising to 14.6 per cent of all pupils from 14.4 per cent in 2017.

It also follows a government call in March last year for bids for a "special wave" of free schools for excluded and SEND pupils. Ministers said at the time they expected many more schools to open from 2020 on.

Barney Angliss, a SEND consultant, welcomed the increase in schools, but warned they must

not be allowed to become places for mainstream schools to dump their "challenging" pupils.

Anne Heavey (pictured), the national director of Whole School SEND, said she had "big questions" about how the government would recruit enough specialist teachers to staff the new schools.

The Department for Education needed to target its recruitment efforts "not just in a general sense" but also on the specialist sector, she said.

Vacancies in special schools and alternative provision have tripled since 2011, and were 100 to 150 per cent higher than in mainstream secondaries, the National Association of Head Teachers claimed last year.

The Children and Families Act, which introduced sweeping SEND reforms, included SEMH as a formal needs classification for the first time in 2014.

Another eight free schools specialising in autism are due to open in 2020-21. With SEMH schools, this makes up 47 per cent of all approved free special schools for that year.

Others focused on severe learning difficulties



(SLD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and speech, language and communications needs (SLCN).

A NSN spokesperson said the schools offered "fantastic opportunities for families who have been marginalised for far too long, and who now have an opportunity to receive the right education for their children".

The schools would provide "high-quality provision in their area, instead of having to travel long distances every day".

News

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Hinds assembles new panel for ed tech revolution

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The education secretary will assemble a panel of school leaders to identify education technology that can help with tasks such as lesson preparation and parental engagement.

It follows warnings of "difficulties" in the current ed tech market and "nervousness" about new products in schools.

At the Bett Show on Wednesday, Damian Hinds outlined the ten focus areas for a new "ed tech strategy". It was announced alongside a £10 million fund to support innovation in ed tech across England – the equivalent of around £450 per school.

Efforts by the government to act as a matchmaker between the schools community and technology industry stem from concerns that involving the latter has actually increased teacher workload. It follows a recent move by the government to quality-mark education apps for young children (to help parents choose which apps their children should use at home).

Hinds told delegates on Wednesday that

despite "astounding examples" of education technology, the sector "sometimes gets a bit of a bad name".

"This is one of the few sectors where technology has been associated for some people not with a decrease in their work, but an increase," he warned.

He also accepted it can be "very difficult" for leaders to know "what is good" from a "vast range" of ed tech on offer. England's devolved system of academies and maintained schools "can also make it hard for the seller to reach the buyer", he said.

This, coupled with a "nervousness" in schools about unfamiliar brands and a concern that they will get "locked in" to bad deals, creates "particular challenges" for the ed tech industry, he added.

The government's ed tech strategy will assemble a group of schools and colleges to "aid the development, piloting and evaluation of innovative technology".

Alongside solutions for lesson prep and parental engagement, the panel will also look for tech to support essay marking, flexible working, special needs support, early learning, basic skills, adult learning,

continuing professional development and tackling cheating.

Hinds, who revealed that he worked for IBM in Manchester in the late 1980s, said the government needed to do more to link schools and tech companies. "I do believe we are truly on the cusp of amazing things in education technology...but in some ways I still feel we're in 1987 – that we have a lot of these brilliant innovations but we need to make more connections."

The politician also urged schools that are not already reviewing their policies to "shift away from an email culture".

Frank Norris, director of the Co-op Academies Trust, which has conducted a recent staff-led review into teacher workload, said the sector needs to "encourage flexibility".

"I know some have tried to embargo emails outside of working hours but with mixed results. Whilst it has worked for some, others have seen staff pine for the 5:35pm email so they didn't have to deal with it the next day. Some colleagues like to get into school early in the morning while some come in a little later."

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News

How trusts can improve accountability

The public accounts committee this week warned how high-profile academy failures have “damaged” the education of pupils in England. Here’s the key recommendations of its report on improving accountability in the sector.

1 Make trusts provide school-level financial information

The report found trusts not doing enough to help parents and communities understand what was happening at individual schools; too many published accounts highlighted trust-wide finances.

It said trusts should publish school-level data and increase transparency over governance and decision-making.

The recommendation is quite controversial, as academy supporters will argue their finances are already much more transparent than in the local authority-maintained sector. The Department for Education (DfE) has also criticised the recommendation, claiming academies have “higher levels of accountability and transparency than local authority schools”.



2 Improve the annual academies report

The DfE has been told its annual academy sector annual report was “not adequately meeting the needs of users”.

MPs want it to explain more about the “financial sustainability of the academies sector as a whole”, an analysis of the performance of trusts based on location and size, and trends among in-year deficits.

Neil Carmichael, the former education select committee chair, has previously called for more information to be published in the report. The DfE has to respond by March



3 Make trusts publish complaints procedure and have a “named individual”

The report said it was not always clear who parents could turn to if they needed to escalate concerns about the running of academies and their trusts. The DfE was also unable to confirm all trusts had appropriate arrangements for complaints.

MPs want every academy trusts to have a published complaints procedure, which should include a named individual for parents to take their concerns to.

The report highlighted the Bright Tribe scandal, where parents had to “fight” to get information about their children’s schools.

Meanwhile, the DfE should also have a named employee who parents could contact if they were unhappy with a trust’s response. This person’s name should be “clear and accessible”.



4 Strengthen sanctions against trustees

The DfE did not have an “effective regime” to sanction those responsible for serious failings at academy trusts.

MPs also warned there was nothing to stop those involved in malpractice from acting as trustees or governors elsewhere. Schools Week has previously highlighted a discrepancy between the action taken against headteachers compared with trustees.

The PAC wants the DfE to write to its members by March with a plan to strengthen its sanctions, as well as details of any sanctions imposed to date.



5 Publish academy finance reports within two months

The report criticised the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for not being “sufficiently transparent” about inquiries into academy trusts as the results were not always made public or were subject to lengthy delays.

This is another issue highlighted by Schools Week – for instance, the investigation into the collapsed Lilac Sky Schools trust has still not been published.

To rectify this, the ESFA should have to publish the results of financial management and governance reviews into academy trusts within two months of completing the work.



What the DfE said

“We don’t accept this negative characterisation”

The department said that it did not accept the PAC’s “negative characterisation of academies”.

It had taken steps to increase accountability by publishing lists of trusts who did not return accounts on time, challenging high executive pay, and requiring trust to report all related-party transactions,

with approval needed for those over £20,000.

A spokesperson said: “The majority of academies are delivering a great education and – as recognised by the PAC – we are taking robust action in the small minority of cases where they are not meeting the high standards expected.”

FIGHTING FOR A LEVEL PLAYFIELD IN ENGLISH AND MATHS

At NCFE, we understand that every learner, just like every school, is different and that it's important to develop a diverse and engaging curriculum that helps every learner achieve their full potential.

Under current guidelines in schools, English and maths GCSE learners are subject to a compulsory re-sit if they achieve a grade 3 (or D under the old-style qualifications). This is proving problematic and leading, in some cases, to learners taking the exam up to 9 nine times in order to pass. Sector leaders within further education have called for more flexibility in the way that English and maths qualifications are awarded and resits carried out, as various research papers and independent studies have shown that in fact many students obtain lower grades in re-sits than they did first taking the exams. Continual assessment in this way can also prove to be not only impractical but also inaccessible to learners, meaning at times, they'll be unable to re-sit and therefore left without these fundamental qualifications. Add to this the psychological impact on learner confidence and self-esteem from subsequent attempts failing to improve results, it becomes clear that it really is time to look at what else we can do to ensure that young people achieve these skills in a different way.

Technical alternatives for those learners who don't want to choose traditional academic routes are becoming more important than ever and we believe that NCFE is fantastically placed to help learners get the most from technical learning.

Functional Skills qualifications from NCFE give learners useful, transferable skills in English, maths and ICT. Functional Skills help learners to function more confidently, effectively and independently in their work, as well as life in general. We know how

important flexibility is to our customers which is why our online assessments are available 24/7 and our paper-based exams can be taken five days before or after the scheduled assessment date. Our customers also benefit from no marking windows, results in 6 days and certificates issued within 24 hours of claiming.

NCFE also offers a huge range of bite-size English and maths qualifications that schools can mix and match to meet their specific learner needs. With no external assessment, these qualifications are low on administration for schools but are a fantastic intervention tool to uplift learner understanding of different topics within English and maths.

We're also delighted to announce our new Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Everyday Life which is open for registrations from 1 September this year. We've worked with Professor David Burghes and his colleagues from the Centre for Innovation in Mathematics Teaching (CIMT) to develop this new Core Maths qualification, designed to help combat the issue of poor progression in mathematics from age 16.

David and colleagues have been involved in the Core Maths initiative from the outset and have been able to share their knowledge and expertise of the subject area to enable us to develop a truly innovative qualification that meets the original purpose.

This qualification enables post 16 learners not studying AS or A level maths the opportunity to undertake a Level 3 maths course alongside their main programme of study. It will enable them to retain, deepen and extend their mathematical understanding through using maths to solve meaningful and relevant problems which will prepare learners for university, academic or vocational learning, employment and life.

We'd like to see more access to GCSE and A Level alternatives and a shift from the current situation many learners find themselves in with an inability to progress and move on without achieving the GCSE grade C benchmark widely adopted by HE, FE and employers. These barriers to progression are often unnecessary and if there were more alternative and equivalent options for learners, we'd see improvements in learner wellbeing and pass rates.

We've seen the impact in recent years on the early years sector when Functional Skills qualifications were removed as an alternative qualification to GCSE for those wanting to undertake the Level 3 Early Years Educator. This led to huge upheaval in the sector, a shortage in qualified practitioners and many learners unable to progress into their chosen profession. The Save Our Early Years Campaign, led by CACHE, was set up and supported by thousands of childcare organisations, concerned parents and educators from across the country calling for one thing: a level playing field so that Functional Skills was accepted as an equivalent to count in the ratios for Level 3 Early Years Educators. Thanks to their hard work, Government policy was changed and Functional Skills reinstated but the upheaval could have been avoided if attitudes to technical alternatives were different in the first place.

We are doing all we can to shift perception and champion the importance of technical alternatives and vocational education full stop. Learners are at the heart of everything we do at NCFE and we want to ensure that every young person has the ability to reach their goals and aspirations in life.

If you'd like to find out more about the work we do and the qualifications we offer, please visit our website: <https://www.ncfe.org.uk/>

News: Round-up

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

New fund encourages foreign exchanges

Schools can apply for a slice of £2.5 million to take disadvantaged pupils on trips abroad.

About 2,900 secondary school pupils are expected to be funded for either foreign exchanges with partner schools or trips abroad under a new Department for Education programme that will be targeted at schools with above-average numbers of pupil premium children.

The move is intended to improve the language skills of pupils and comes as the government scrambles to boost the numbers of pupils taking modern foreign languages at GCSE.

It also follows an investigation by Schools Week on a change to safeguarding guidance, which suggests schools should carry out criminal background records checks on foreign host families and on English families

hosting foreign pupils.

The paperwork and potential issues arising from the checks are said to be “killing off” language exchange trips, particularly ones in which pupils live with native speakers, heads have warned.

The government’s new programme, which will encourage pupils to stay with host families, will be run in partnership with the British Council. Its research has previously found only 39 per cent of state-funded secondary schools run foreign exchanges, compared with 77 per cent of private schools.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, said the money would help schools that “may not have much experience organising trips abroad, to ensure their pupils don’t miss out on all the fantastic benefits these experiences can bring”.



Minister promises review of Prevent

The government has announced an independent review of its anti-extremism programme Prevent, which has received hundreds of referrals of pupils since its inception.

Launched in July 2015, Prevent requires teachers to identify pupils at risk of radicalisation and report incidents they believe are linked to extremism or terrorism.

The programme has proved controversial. A joint committee on human rights warned that some teachers were “over-enthusiastic” in their use of the programme, and that young Muslims felt they were being targeted by schools because of their faith.

Ben Wallace, the security minister, said on Tuesday that “the time is now right to initiate a review of Prevent”.

However, the government made it clear it wanted the approach to continue, as Wallace challenged critics to come up with “solid evidence of their allegations”.

Figures published in December showed referrals to Prevent from the education sector rose by almost a quarter to 2,462 in 2017-18.

Education continues to be the biggest referrer to Prevent, responsible for about a third of all referrals.

Wallace said communities had “got behind the policy and are contributing to it because they want, as we do, their own young people to be protected from grooming and exploitation by terrorists”.

Further details will be announced in about six months, and the review will report to Parliament within 18 months.

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA_AK

Durand writes off boarding school assets

The Durand Academy Trust was forced to write off assets worth more than £1.6 million from its failed boarding school project.

Accounts for the 2017-18 academic year show the trust has “written off some leasehold improvements and fixtures and fittings” at its satellite boarding school in Sussex, with a net value of £1,656,323.

The trust is being wound up after the government withdrew its funding last year, following a long-running dispute over the trust’s finances.

In a move that was enthusiastically supported by the former education secretary, Michael Gove, Durand opened a satellite boarding school on the site of the former St Cuthmans school in Sussex in September 2014.

The school catered for pupils in certain year groups from Durand’s Lambeth site, and was the first in the country not to charge parents.

However, after Durand repeatedly failed to secure planning permission to develop the site, the Department for Education withdrew

its funding offer and the boarding school closed in September 2017.

The accounts said the assets written off were mainly “immovable” and therefore could not be taken after the boarding school closed. Schools Week understand it relates largely to classroom, kitchen and dining equipment.

Durand’s leaders have blamed the DfE for “failing to deliver” more than £17 million in promised funding to help support its boarding project.

EDITORIAL

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

It's time Hinds set a clear vision for our sector's future

Another week, another half-baked "announcement" from education secretary Damian Hinds.

To coincide with the BETT show, Hinds announced his new "ed tech strategy", including a £10 million fund to support innovation in schools.

To put that in perspective, that's the equivalent of around £450 for every school in England.

There will also be an expert panel appointed to help "aid the development, piloting and evaluation of innovative technology".

Hopefully Hinds will heed concerns from the sector after just three of the 14 members of his last expert panel, set up to create a "model" music curriculum, were actual school leaders.

Hinds's announcement also comes hot on the heels of his "ambition" that all schools will go plastic-free by 2022, and the activity passport urging pupils to ditch gadgets and climb trees.

All these ideas are rooted in sound values, but amount to a slap in the face to a sector that's craving a real vision for what the future holds.

Just this week the government boasted that more than 50 per cent of pupils are now studying in academies.

With the political instability and the potential that a future Labour government will stop new

academies opening, leaders are unclear about how to make the best decisions for their school communities.

If the government wants all schools to take up the benefits of becoming an academy - particularly the potential to make efficiency savings - then it should be explicit and make it policy, as Nicky Morgan proposed.

As Sam Freedman says this week, schools shouldn't be converting in a state of panic, they should be academising because of a clear strategy and vision for the system.

However, the DfE doesn't appear to have authority from Number 10 to do so.

Instead, we have the half-baked system which isn't helping councils, or the DfE.

Some in the sector are claiming academisation is reaching a "tipping point". But while the data shows becoming an academy isn't a silver bullet to school improvement, and with strong opposition from unions and the Labour party's proposals lingering, uncertainty will remain among many school leaders.

It's time for Hinds to look at the big picture and be honest with schools about where the government wants the sector to go. And the sooner the better.

SCHOOLS WEEK

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OR CALL 0203 4321 392



The Debate

Stuart Lock, executive principal, Bedford Free School



No excuses v nurture: what's the best behaviour policy?

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY_

Hannah Wilson heads up Aureus School in Didcot, whose strapline is "nurturing hearts and minds". Stuart Lock runs Bedford Free School, which adopts the "no excuses" approach. We invited them to discuss the differences and similarities in how they manage behaviour.

How do you create your behaviour culture?

Stuart Lock: We're very routines- and structures-based. We start the day with a talk about our values in the playground, with all the pupils in silence, facing the person who is talking.

Our routines include silent corridors, and pupils have to watch the teacher when they're talking. We have very firm expectations – our staff "sweat the small stuff". But we do everything with "purpose, not power", which means if we can't explain a routine to parents or pupils, we shouldn't be doing it.

I think some of our most vulnerable pupils find school calmer than outside, particularly because of the low noise levels, and because very few unexpected things happen. In an anonymous pupil survey, 100% of our pupils said they feel safe in school.

Hannah Wilson: Ours is a values-based approach. We have 12 school values we refer to constantly, then three words: "ready, respectful and safe", which are catch-alls for everything. Our values underpin the rewards and consequences; we say that if you make a choice to contravene the values, there are consequences.

We start the day purposefully, with mindfulness, so the children go into period one ready for learning. While we don't impose silence in corridors, we do have an acceptable level of talk in the classrooms versus the corridors.

We have coaching time, which is our tutor time, at the end of the day so the children can unpick the day before they leave the building.



"Our staff sweat the small stuff"

Do you use rewards and sanctions?

HW: We have a 12-step rewards ladder and really high tariffs for our rewards. I've worked in schools where people were over-rewarding and it becomes devalued.

SL: We talk about internal motivation, and doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do.

HW: So you don't have extrinsic motivation for rewards, but you do for sanctions?

SL: We have a very simple sanction system. They gain a credit for every lesson, and they can also lose them. At the end of the lesson, you mark off your credit in your planner – unless the teacher has your card. So your parents can see you've got a credit for every lesson that day. I guess it's a combination of a reward and a behaviour system.

Do you use detentions?

SL: If our students lose two credits in a lesson, they're immediately in a 40-minute

"correction" the same day. We call it correction, not detention, because it's about correcting your behaviour.

HW: We don't do detentions. We do restorative conversations, starting with 40 minutes after school. On a Friday we finish at 1pm and restoration time with deputy heads is 1-2pm. The really unpopular one is once a month on a Saturday morning in school uniform to do a community task with me. That has been really preventative.

SL: You do something that sounds like a detention!

HW: Some of my kids say, "You just use posh words. You've just rebranded detentions!" But no, it's completely different. And when you explain it, they do get it.

SL: But your rhetoric is that it's effective because they don't want to do it, not because it's positive.

HW: That's a fair challenge. We don't sit in silence doing sheets. We unpick the

No excuses v nurture: what's the best behaviour policy?

The Debate

Hannah Wilson, executive headteacher, Aureus School & Aureus Primary School



"We don't do detentions"

behaviour – talk about what went wrong and how we can do it better next time.

SL: We do that! We do readmission meetings for every fixed-term exclusion, and after an isolation we talk through what went wrong and how to stop it happening again. But I wouldn't choose to invest my senior staff's time in restoration meetings. My attitude is, let's get the sanction over and get on with it. I think they've just been naughty. I suspect that you think there's more work to do.

Is fixed-term exclusion a bad thing?

HW: We use the restorative time to try and bring down exclusions. But I think the misnomer is that if you do restorative practice, you don't ever make those difficult decisions to exclude. We do. We also isolate. But not in a room where you face the wall and get no fresh air all day – ours is more humane.

SL: I think if the pupils weren't in isolation, we'd exclude them. So if you're campaigning to get rid of booths, exclusions would go up. Our stats show

that isolation has a very strong effect: more than 50 per cent of our pupils don't repeat any behaviour that gets them into isolation.

I also think sometimes the alternative is that you artificially manage exclusions down, which ends up lowering expectations for everybody. I think we have to be really careful about judging schools. Fixed-term exclusions are a valid way of trying to moderate behaviour.

HW: I agree. We don't want to be the school that excludes children all the time, and I get challenged by my governors to bring exclusions down, but I think it's a longer journey of correcting behaviours in children who have been allowed to behave like that for a long time.

Are "no excuses" schools self-selective by nature?

SL: Of course, if you don't think Bedford Free School education is for you, then you won't come. But we're hugely over-subscribed and there are lots of schools in Bedford with spaces. I can't tell who doesn't want to come to my school, but it doesn't

seem to me that anybody local doesn't want to.

HW: I don't lose any sleep over people not choosing our school. You want people to self-select. We are black and white at open events about what we stand for, and what we're not: we don't do homework, we don't do detentions, we don't do setting. That's not for everyone, but can you see your child working within our values? If you don't agree, we'll be falling out!

What about children with SEND?

SL: About 26 per cent of pupils come to BFS with an identified SEN and by the end of year 7 it's down to 6-7 per cent, because most of our routines are set up for people who are vulnerable. We take them off the SEN register if they make progress. Having said that, we are attracting more and more pupils with EHCPs, because of our routines and structures.

HW: That's self-selection! Because we're nurturing and holistic and we've got a nurture room where children can self-refer to recalibrate, we've got 33 per cent SEND. We do what we call the inner curriculum – plugging the gaps.

SL: I don't use any of that language! I just talk about routines and structure.

Do you make exceptions for home circumstances?

HW: You know who your vulnerable kids are. Take a kid who's got a split family, and they left their shoes at the wrong house. So they come in and say, "I'm really sorry, miss, I can't find my shoes." We've bought a supply of plimsolls, so they go to reception and borrow some.

SL: In the vast, vast majority of cases where behaviour doesn't go well, it's because a pupil has chosen to misbehave. But we do always have the distinction between the child who won't behave and can't behave. And that's when you go and buy them a pair of shoes. But of course, you don't make that public.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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DEBRA
RUTLEY

Executive headteacher,
Aspire Alternative Provision

There's lots to love in the new Ofsted framework

Debra Rutley rejoiced when she read the new Ofsted framework. "At last we in AP could tell our story"

The day the new Ofsted framework came out I was at an event for alternative provision chief executives, where two Ofsted HMIs, Nick Whittaker and Dan Owen, were speaking.

None of the attendees had had a chance to look at the framework, so we were relying on what the HMIs said. The reaction was positive; personally I loved what I heard so much that I practically skipped home. At last we in AP could tell our story: "all AP contexts are different".

The key word from Whittaker and Owen was aspiration, which is fabulous for Aspire, our AP trust. Having high aspirations for all young people is key in all AP settings, which is why I ask our staff to reflect daily and ask, "Is this good enough for my child?"

On the train home, checking reactions in the press and on social media, it became clear that a lot of people didn't share my enthusiasm. I began to doubt myself and what

I'd heard, so there was nothing for it but to read the whole lot: handbook and annexes.

I'm not saying that I love Ofsted and being inspected, but my

“ It soon became clear that not everyone shared my enthusiasm

conclusion at the end of the 96 pages was that if it has to be, then this framework is good for me. I love the simplicity of it, and the invitation, as explained to us by Whittaker, to each tell our unique story through intention, implementation and impact.

I love that Ofsted recognises that not only are no two AP settings or pupil-referral units the same, but also that different provision with the one AP can be different. What's your ambition (intent) in that provision, with those children and in that community? How do you do that? (implementation) and how successful are you (impact)? Basically, we're being asked to start

with the WHY.

I love the flexibility for those who have the courage to stick to and explain their "why". I love that it's not black and white. Attendance isn't a raw score, but a look at improvements, given the unique cases that we have. Even the use of part-time timetables is evaluated based on the story and the ambition we have for that child. I love that Ofsted acknowledges and understands the turbulence factor of a constantly changing cohort. New students each week upsets the delicate balance, and the atmosphere in an AP setting can be transformed overnight from a

reality given our context and challenges.

3. Partnership working.
Families, families and more families with support.

4. Aspirations. "Is this good enough for my child?" linked with all aspects of PRU life such as attendance, reintegration, goal setting, improving attitudes and behaviour.

5. Are young people prepared for the next steps?

These five areas fit in with all of the different provisions we have at Aspire, from complex mental health, hospital school provision, key stage 3 reintegration programmes and year 11 full-time provision. We have a why and a story for each.

My only note of caution, where I would suggest careful storytelling and use of case studies with Ofsted, is around reintegration. We in AP are often judged on something that takes two organisations to make work. Mainstream is the other partner in this success or failure, and too much emphasis on our responsibility masks the barriers we and our students often face.

Ofsted HMIs are welcome anytime to Aspire. I'd happily discuss what we do and why, within all our provisions, and, in this new context, I might even have the courage to talk without fear about our challenges.

Swiss finishing school to Beirut.

There are five main areas where we can tell our story. (This is based on the Ofsted draft handbook, with a bit of my own interpretation!)

1. Knowing your students.

Assessing students on entry is key to working out what kind of provision they need and making an ambitious plan.

2. Curriculum (the three Is)

i) In this setting, for this young person our ambition is...

ii) Over time we are building knowledge and skills against the background of our assessment.

iii) Is our plan translated into

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Most people helping to shape, fund or implement education policy in much of the world do so without expert advice. It wouldn't be allowed in any other field, says Jonathan Simons

As I entered the World Economic Forum last year it was there on the wall: 65 per cent of the jobs of the future, this poster confidently told the various masters of the universe attending Davos, do not exist yet.

Similarly, if you go to New York and listen to the various education meetings at the UN General Assembly, they'll be abuzz with discussions of soft skills and 21st-century learning. Or fly to the Middle East to attend a global education jamboree and it's impossible not to hear a speaker discussing the importance of the fourth Industrial Revolution and dismissing rote learning.

My point is not that current UK policy is right and the rest of the world is wrong. It's that what I rarely heard or read in two years in global education was any actual debate – or, indeed, any recognition that there was a debate to be had. Most people helping to shape, fund or implement education policy in much of the world – including the fast-growing education systems in south Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America – do so with scarcely a nod to the fact that many of the policies considered, whether they are ultimately pursued or not, are deeply contestable.

And this really matters. Consider sub-Saharan Africa where 10 per cent of the world's teachers work, but where training programmes, funding and content of curricula combine so that three quarters of seven-year-olds in some of the region's countries



JONATHAN SIMONS

Director, education and social policy,
Public First

Don't knock prog-trad debate – at least we're having one!

cannot read fluently, in their home language, the sentence "the name of the dog is puppy". Thousands more schools and millions more teachers are needed as population rapidly expands. The scale of the challenge that is facing these governments – how to massively expand the number of schools, staff them, revamp curricula, all on a fraction of UK per

any other field. Yet in education, this doesn't seem to happen at political level.

What's doubly frustrating is that there are organisations dedicated to improving this – by developing better data and statistics, building technical capacity in ministries of education, or evaluating specific programmes to share lessons learned. But these

“ The policy space has a cacophony of voices

pupil funding – cannot be overstated. There would be vigorous debates about how best to deliver this if it were in any remotely comparable project in

micro initiatives don't shift the macro conversation: because some influential people and groups aren't always education experts (foundations



can span a number of policy areas); ministers aren't around for a long time; strong teacher unions defend the status quo; and many of the places where a minister would hear ideas in a more developed country – think tanks, academics, ministry staff – are absent or thinly resourced.

So for all the sound and fury on social media, the UK education policy environment is positive because this debate is so live. If schools minister Nick Gibb wants to push phonics or the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner wants to scrap key stage 2 SATs, then they can do so in the knowledge of both sides of the argument. (They may not always "follow the evidence", but that's a different argument.) It's also easier than it ever has been for different voices to make their case.

When I started as a civil servant in education almost 15 years ago, there was a list of about ten people who would regularly see ministers, one education newspaper, and a handful of headteachers who would make their point on a weekend or during a visit. Now, the policy space has a cacophony of voices, and, from amongst the noise, I believe we get good signals.

One of the smart things that the Department for International Development has pledged to do in its education strategy is to consider areas where UK education expertise can be exported to other countries. It may not be as sexy as funding a big new programme, but my first suggestion would be to simply export the fact that there is a debate.

Opinion

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PAUL
CARNEY

Art education consultant and council member
of the National Society for Education in
Art and Design

Creativity cannot be left to chance, it must be taught

A knowledge-rich curriculum is vital, says Paul Carney, but students must learn what creative processes are and how they might be used in their own thinking

In his book *Making Kids Cleverer*, David Didau eloquently argues that the best way of improving children's welfare is to teach them a knowledge-rich curriculum because this will make them cleverer.

I don't have a problem with that – as long as we can be sure that our definitions of knowledge are broad enough to encompass metacognition and conceptual knowledge, as well as factual and procedural knowledge. In fact I agree with Didau that increasing knowledge is vital to success. The best teachers don't simply teach dry facts, they also teach students to understand that knowledge and make connections.

My bone of contention surrounds Didau's ideas about creativity. He argues that creativity is a by-product of knowing more; the more stuff we put in, the more we have to be creative with. He claims that we have evolved to find creativity easier than learning secondary knowledge and so it is secondary knowledge we

need to teach first before we can be creative. Except, in my experience, creativity doesn't work like that.

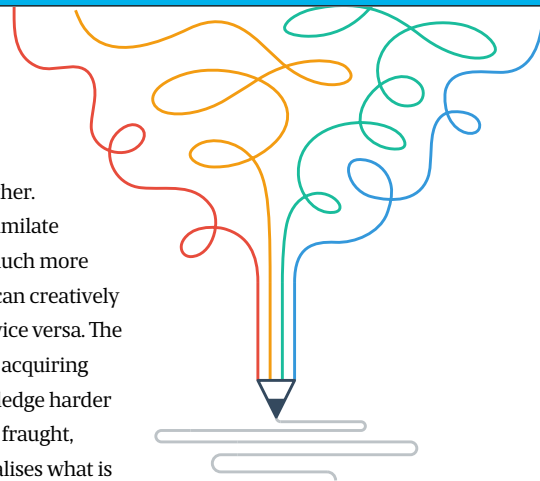
Creativity can be seen as a spectrum between the everyday type of creativity that we use to draw a picture, compose a piece

of music or to decorate the house, and large-scale Creativity with a capital C that describes innovations that have been absorbed into, and affected the domain to which they belong.

Everyday creativity, or small "c" creativity, is the type that Didau talks about. If we define low-level creativity as any deliberate process or action we make, regardless of its quality, then most people would rightly agree that it is easy enough to achieve. But as soon as we begin to stipulate criteria for creative success it gets harder. So hard, in fact, that many people struggle to be creative, even at a low-level. Creativity at the higher end of the spectrum is harder still.

We are variable, unique, and

haven't all evolved to identify one thing more easily than the other. Some people assimilate facts and skills much more easily than they can creatively apply them and vice versa. The idea that we find acquiring secondary knowledge harder than creativity is fraught, because it generalises what is a very individual trait. Besides, we wouldn't say to a child who is very knowledgeable "you don't need to learn any more knowledge", so why do we say it about creativity?



“Many teachers don't know creative processes exist

Creativity cannot be left to chance, it must be taught. When we study how the world's greatest innovations came to be we can find familiar patterns. Sometimes a discovery is not made by increasing knowledge, but by accident as in the case of penicillin, or by sheer hard slog and diligence. Innovation often occurs through playfulness such as Delbrück's "principle of limited sloppiness", or as Richard Feynman did, by playing with patterns.

Innovation often isn't about acquiring new knowledge, but by seeing the knowledge you already have from fresh perspectives; or even through conflict and argument such as Galvani and Volta's famous electricity debates. Sometimes, innovation occurs through a lone

genius with incredible insight, but not often. It's collaboration that usually gets the job done.

The ability to visualise, to construct complex thoughts and actions is an essential trait of innovation, but we rarely make specific reference to it in our teaching. We teach visualisation indirectly such as predicting outcomes or sequences, rotations and transformations for example, but I don't hear of many schools specifically measuring their students' ability to visualise (even in art).

I'd love to be proven wrong, but the truth is that many teachers and educators don't know that these creative processes exist, let alone how to teach them. Yes, we need to instil greater knowledge, we need a knowledge-rich curriculum, but we also need to teach creativity at the same time, not afterwards, because our future creativity depends on it.

Drawing for Science Invention and Discovery by Paul Carney, Loughborough Design Press

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Including children and young people with special educational needs: How far have we come since the Warnock Enquiry – and where do we go next?

Edited by Rob Webster

Reviewed by Emma Hardy, MP

Published by Routledge

This collection of essays from specialists in the field of special educational needs provides a welcome update on how far we have come since the well-respected Warnock Enquiry, which fed into the 1981 Education Act and brought a sea-change for children with SEND and their families.

One thing that is clear from this book, however, is that there still isn't a consensus on what inclusion is, and to what extent it is desirable.

Tara Flood, director of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, makes a strong case for full inclusion of disabled children in mainstream, with "a commitment to removing all barriers to full participation", pointing out that families don't currently have real choice. The "presumption for mainstream" that is enshrined in law is not borne out in practice, she says, often because of arguments about affordability. In short, the system is "biased towards segregated provision".

SEND trainer and author Peter Imray challenges the notion that every child can be included in mainstream, making a case for "different" rather than just "differentiated" education: "Children with complex needs learn differently. If they learn differently, we ought to be teaching them differently and teaching them different things."

He returns to Warnock's suggestion that rather than being concerned with "All children under one roof" perhaps we should focus on including all children in the "common goal of education". Looking beyond the so-called "national" curriculum (which, he notes, is completely inaccessible to some) to the concept of preparing learners for

life and work, Imray notes that "there is really no point to educational inclusion if it supports social exclusion".

We read about progress made since Warnock, for example, in terms of the language used; headteacher Vic Goddard credits the report for "emphatically tackl[ing] much of the offensive labelling of children and young people with disabilities". However, there are also areas where little seems to have changed.

The most dispiriting observation, for me, was that 40 years on, we are still having the same conversations about teacher training. Dr Alan Hodgkinson's chapter offers a brief history of initial teacher training since the 1970s, revealing just how much rhetoric has been proclaimed about the need for teachers to be trained in SEND, while very little has actually been achieved. In fact, the Carter review of ITT in 2015 again concluded that there was an urgent need to improve pre-service training in this area. While higher education institutions are now required to ensure that all trainees understand the SEND Code of Practice, it remains to be seen how much of an impact this will have.

Parents of children and young people with SEND are still not getting the support they need, as evidenced in the chapter co-written by teacher and author Nancy Gedge and actor Sally Phillips – a view that was also presented to the education committee SEND inquiry last year.

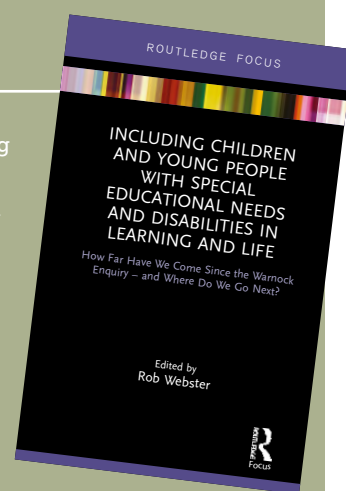
When Baroness Warnock addressed the first evidence session of the same inquiry, she pointed out that while the report itself was written in a time of

more generous public spending (mid- to late 1970s), the 1981 Education Act coincided with the worst of the Thatcher cuts, which prevented much of it from being implemented.

Rather than commission another report that may offer more realistic ambitions in the current economic climate, the book's editor – education academic Rob Webster – thinks we should revisit the Warnock Report and use it to inform the development of more inclusive practice. In his final chapter, he moves the debate away from the question of where we *should* educate children with special needs, to the very practical question of where they *will* be educated. The figures don't augur well. Keeping pace with projected demand would require the government to open 30 new special schools a year, for five years. (Six per year is the current average.)

Webster's answer is for ALL mainstream schools to play a more active role in educating pupils with SEND, but he goes on to examine the barriers to that happening – including funding and the shrinking role of the local authority due to academisation.

Finally, to respond to the book's subtitle: where do we go next? From my perspective, the education committee will continue its work scrutinising inclusive practice and policy, and this book will surely help to inform that debate.



Research

Every month the Research Schools Network – run by the Education Endowment Foundation and Institute for Effective Education – shares some advice from a research-based initiative it has implemented

How research can help to address students' recurring mistakes

Caroline Creaby, director of Sandringham Research School, St Albans, Herts

I can't begin to estimate the number of times I have written the same feedback on a student's work – time and time again. Other teachers tell me that I am not alone. But help is at hand from the research evidence.

For example, the Education Endowment Foundation's *A Marked Improvement* report distinguishes between mistakes and misunderstanding. A misunderstanding is where a student hasn't fully grasped or has misinterpreted an idea or concept, whereas a mistake is something he or she can do but hasn't this time. The research evidence suggests that mistakes and misunderstandings should be marked differently. So how should we approach this?

One example of a mistake, in my experience as an economics teacher, is the skill of application. This refers to a student's ability to use examples, data and contextual information about an economy appropriately in answers – from their own knowledge or from the exam paper. When I ask my students what is the important skill that they should include in their answers, they parrot "application" back to me. If I ask how they can apply, they can tell me. And I have seen evidence of this skill in most students' work at some point. As a teacher, I could be forgiven for thinking that because students appear to confidently know what to do, they would then proceed to demonstrate this consistently in their work.

Yet, when faced with piles of answers, it's not uncommon to find that some students will have written entire answers without any application at all. I am left poised with my green pen considering what to write. I could ask them to go back to the exam paper, identify a specific piece of data and weave this into a newly drafted paragraph. Certainly this approach would require the student to



think about application, but would it rectify the mistake in the future? Or might I be faced with a similar answer in the weeks to come?

The goal of feedback should be to change the student, not the work – a maxim commonly attributed to Dylan Wiliam. More specifically, he has said that the goal of feedback should be to improve the work of students on *tasks they have not yet completed*. Hence my attention should be on the student's next piece of work, not necessarily supporting them to perfect and correct their last piece. I need to support my students to attend to their mistakes when they're writing their next answer, in-the-moment, when they're inevitably focusing on describing and analysing the main concepts and ideas in the question and overlooking the fact that they should also be applying.

This is where the research on metacognition and self-regulation is helpful. According to the EEF's recent guidance report on metacognition, expert learners are able to automatically plan, monitor and evaluate when undertaking a task, whereas novice learners need more help. In the report,

the following questions were suggested for art students to monitor their work:

- "Am I doing well?"
- "Do I need any different techniques to improve my self-portrait?"
- "Are all of my facial features in proportion?"
- "Am I finding this challenging?"
- "Is there anything I need to stop and change to improve my self-portrait?"

The team at Sandringham Research School and I have adapted these questions for our own subjects, creating monitoring checklists for students to use when completing a task. To model this process in class, as students work on a task, we have stopped them periodically and prompted them to refer to their checklist to reconsider and amend their approach, before setting them off on their task again. It's early days, but students are becoming more conscious of what they're doing, how they're doing it and are able to address mistakes as they go. In my own classes, evidence of application is becoming more visible.

Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Robin Conway, who is director of research and innovation at John Mason School

@JMSREFLECT

Forming good habits, breaking bad habits: what works?

@HFletcherWood

Harry Fletcher-Wood's work is always engagingly written and combines relevant educational or psychological research with practical advice. This blog is true to form as he explores the challenges of breaking old habits and the "central components" of successfully forming new ones. He links the ideas to supporting students with building better study habits, although he warns that "the time and effort it takes to form a habit means choosing the most powerful habits to form is crucial". The ideas need not only apply to pupils. I found myself thinking about my own habits and the uses to which I might put his ideas when trying to improve my teaching, as well as students' learning.

Data's Veil of Ignorance

@adamboxer1

I really enjoy blogs that make me think about something in a new way, something that this one did. Data is such a controversial and heavily debated topic in education that it is rare to read anything that is original and thought-provoking without being highly technical.

TOP BLOGS of the week

Adam Boxer's piece manages all of these. In applying Rawls' *Veil of Ignorance* (the idea that "you decide to structure society – its rules and its norms – **before** you know which role you will take within that society") to the principles of data-gathering, Boxer challenges us to reconsider fundamental judgments about what data is needed and by whom. This aim is not to offer practical solutions, but the piece would make a great starting point for conversations and policy meetings.

Letting the learning shine

@EnserMark

I recently read a great blog by Alex Ford *Who shot JFK? and other historical problems* that probed the dangers of poorly framed enquiries and lesson activities that are fun, but which reflect poor subject scholarship. Inspired by his ideas, Mark Esner uses this blog to reflect how his teaching has changed over time. He particularly focuses on the shift he has made from novelty activities where "the nature of the task dominated the lesson" to tasks that focused rigorously on subject-specific learning. I definitely have fallen into the trap of focusing on the excitement generated by the task rather than the underlying history. Esner's recurring analysis of his own lessons sees

him asking where the geography was to be found in such activities and shifting away from those he found lacking. I love creative learning tasks when they work to open or challenge students' thinking in a rigorous way but as Esner argues, it is important that the subject is "the most important element in the lesson".

The Rosenshine papers

@steveadcock81

Rosenshine's principles of instruction have been around for some time. In this blog Steve Adcock shares the journey of the schools in his trust as they use Rosenshine to help in "ensuring that each school's approach was anchored in a shared understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching". Adcock explains why they chose Rosenshine and how they have used his principles to deepen their understanding of learning across schools and subjects. Thorough and critical engagement with the research helped to build a shared understanding of how they could be applied in the classroom. The journey is ongoing, but Adcock's reflections make for interesting reading and his summary of the intention behind the principles is succinct and practical.

Judging the quality of student work

@DoWise

Douglas Wise's posts tend to be concise, practical and relevant with examples and resources shared generously. This one is true to form sharing six key things to look for when reviewing students' work to help assess quality, rather than simple policy compliance. He also offers discussion questions for each point. My first thought was that this would have been helpful in my early days as a subject leader. Then, like many of the best blogs, it stuck with me and I returned for a second look. It has much to offer more experienced leaders and teachers experiencing "book monitoring". A short, clear piece, worth saving for future reference.



Educational psychologists forced to identify pupils' needs 'in one visit', MPs told

Jo Nye

Again, this is not something new. EPs have been doing full assessments for EHCPs in one visit for years.

Assessment of SEND pupils SHOULD take place throughout a pupil's time in school rather than just once or twice. However, more SEN teacher training is desperately needed – they are often responsible for identifying needs, they spend the majority of time with the children during the school day, teachers then need the autonomy to give recommendations, along with parents. More regard needs to be given to the parents' views, maybe then there would be less misdiagnosis and less need for multiple assessments.

Does Ofsted's draft inspection framework pass the inclusion test?

Julie Taplin

Ofsted needs to consider and include those children and young adults who are dual or multiple exceptional – those who have both high learning potential and SEND. Education should be inclusive for all learners; providing each of them with a quality of education that is meaningful for them; giving each of them the opportunity to be challenged in their thinking, to develop their resilience, to learn and to enjoy learning; whilst ensuring that they are provided with the tools and strategies to help them overcome any barriers to their learning.

Ex-minister's academy trust ignores governance guidelines

@inclusive_head

So tired of rules being applied differently. The Handbook is quoted like a font of all wisdom when it suits but ignored when it doesn't. It is reducing transparency and creating a two-tiered system across many areas of the school system.

'Don't answer emails outside office hours', education secretary tells teachers

A. English

I am not a teacher but I have a child who teaches. Demanding and unreasonable parents make her life intolerable, adding to the ever-increasing demands from the school to work out of contracted hours, including giving up weekends and holidays for general workload and other school activities. Heads and school governors are unsympathetic to the problems of teachers

REPLY OF THE WEEK **Debbie Wheeler**

'No game-changer': Ofsted framework proposals won't reduce stress, say unions

After attending 2 sessions outlining the changes and now reading the draft, I think it falls far short of the breath of fresh air the revised framework was being labelled as. I am thoroughly disappointed by the content of the framework.

There is now the curriculum hoop to jump through IN ADDITION to the standards agenda. Our curriculum is rich, deep and broad.... but there is a significant amount of work required to package it in the way the revised framework requires.

Very much feels like a catch-you-out document too... one-to-one conversations with key staff, phone call at 10am and in at 12.30. This will increase teacher stress.

Standards haven't gone either.... league tables and SATs remain.



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

and are more concerned with their school's reputation and in keeping parents on-side. It is little wonder that teachers, especially the more capable ones, are leaving the profession in droves to seek employment where they are more appreciated and better paid.

@NikiHil69330384

Great sentiment but I would actually find it far more stressful to have a full inbox on Monday morning than to be answering them as they come in.

@agplunkett58

"Office hours"?!!

Over 40 per cent of 'underperforming' schools improve when Progress 8 includes pupil background

Tony Cotton @tonypat40

More research to tell us what we already know. Michael Gove removed the "Contextual Added Value" measure from Raise on Line – a measure which always provided recognition for schools in challenging circumstances.

@KeithMaxwell21

"League tables" should be scrapped. Schools aren't football teams.

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

It's not just Brexit causing quarrels in the Conservative party camp.

Lord Agnew had to reject claims by a fellow Tory minister that the EBacc is having a detrimental effect on the take-up of arts subjects in schools.

The academies minister, during a House of Lords debate, was even pushed into denying the performance measure is "fundamentally flawed".

Agnew was asked about a recent intervention from Margot James, a Conservative MP and the government's minister for digital, who said the impact on music and creative subjects was "very concerning" and that the EBacc was in-part to blame.

He added: "We have put great emphasis on the arts and do not feel that they are disadvantaged by the EBacc."

TUESDAY

Three cheers for Jonathan Slater, the DfE's outspoken permanent secretary, on being named as Stonewall's senior champion of the year.

As the board sponsor for the LGBT+ Network, Slater is credited with having championed the introduction of gender-neutral toilets in several DfE offices, pushed for more inclusive procurement and making inclusive guidance available

across the civil service.

While Slater is clearly a worthy recipient of the accolade, it comes at a time when his department is still out of favour with many LGBT campaigners for its efforts to shake up relationships and sex education.

Just last month, activists targeted south London schools with fake Ofsted banners to protest over the "insufficiency" of the draft RSE guidance.

The draft guidance tells schools they should make LGBT content "integral", although it will be up to individual institutions to determine how they address LGBT-specific content, and campaigners are worried some schools will ignore the issue.

Of course, the lack of teeth in the new RSE guidance isn't Slater's fault. We understand ministers faced pressures from a number of movements, religious and otherwise during the development process, which will almost certainly have had an impact.

WEDNESDAY

Damian Hinds had the finest examples of education technology at his fingertips when he addressed the Bett Show this week, so we were heartened to see the education secretary turn to

Microsoft Powerpoint for help with his speech.

Although the politician was almost left without a "clicker" to operate the slides when a late-running presentation was interrupted so he could start his speech on time, Hinds seized control of the situation to deliver a gripping speech about his upcoming "ed tech strategy", something called "Lotus 1-2-3", anecdotes about how he worked at IBM once, and how he enjoyed coding as a child.

What a nerd.

THURSDAY

After Hinds used his speech on Wednesday to urge teachers not to check their emails outside working hours, his entire staff found themselves unable to check their emails DURING working hours.

All emails, internal and external, went down in Sanctuary Buildings for the whole day on Thursday, leaving press officers having to actually call journalists to tell them that there's more money in schools than ever before and that there's 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools.

Meanwhile the ESFA's Eileen Milner and Mike Pettifer missed the email madness by taking to the stage at the Excel Centre.

However, the pair were visibly disappointed when so few people came to their talk at the Education Show, optimistically called "The ESFA and How It Works For You".

Milner admitted to feeling "silly" on the podium, so a roundtable huddle was hastily suggested instead.

This seemed like a good idea, until the civil servants realised their discussion would only include one teacher, one school business manager and no fewer than two education journalists. Cosy!





Department
for Education



School Teachers' Review Body – Vacancy

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is an independent body which makes recommendations to the Government on the pay and conditions of school teachers in England.

The STRB assesses evidence from Government and organisations representing schools and the teacher workforce, and visits schools and local authorities to develop its understanding of issues facing teachers. In recent years, the STRB has been asked to report on a variety of matters, including establishing a stronger link between teachers' pay and performance, and providing greater flexibilities for governing bodies to produce individual pay policies for their schools.

Further information on the STRB is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/school-teachers-review-body

The STRB is now seeking to fill a vacancy, and is looking to recruit a member that demonstrates the following criteria:

Essential Criteria:

- Recent senior leadership experience within an educational setting, for example, a former headteacher.
- A detailed knowledge and understanding of workforce issues and operations within an educational setting, including recruiting, retaining and motivating an effective teacher workforce.
- An understanding of pay, remuneration, performance management and reward issues and an appreciation of the policy, financial and operational constraints that impact on remuneration decisions.
- The ability to analyse and interpret a large amount of complex and sensitive information, providing insight and a working knowledge over the impact of any potential decisions on the teacher workforce.
- An ability to communicate effectively in collective decision making, providing sound argument and assessing/debating conflicting opinions within a group to form a coherent set of recommendations.
- A sound understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities, public service values and principles of public life and the ability to act impartially and uphold the independence of the STRB.

Eligibility and disqualifications from appointment

Serving teachers and headteachers

Serving teachers or headteachers may apply but can only be appointed if they resign from their post. Serving civil servants may also apply but can only be appointed if they resign from their Civil Service post.

Consultant headteachers

The eligibility of consultant headteachers very much depends on the nature of their work. Advisory work as a consultant headteacher would not in itself disqualify a candidate, as long as the work is distinct from actually being a headteacher.

Most importantly, consultant headteachers work should not be able to be interpreted as benefiting from the decisions taken by the STRB or taking payment for providing an STRB perspective. All candidates must declare actual or potential conflicts of interest as part of their applications.

Appointment

This position will provide an influential and intellectually stimulating challenge for the right individual, who will contribute to the recruitment, retention and motivation of an effective teacher workforce. As a member of the STRB you will bring your own expertise, alongside a high degree of analytical ability, strong communication skills and, ideally, an appreciation of public sector reward issues.

The time commitment for this position is approximately 25 days per year, for which an attendance allowance of £300 per day is payable, along with reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs. This is a ministerial appointment and will initially be for up to three years.

The closing date for applications is 7 February 2019.

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit.

Please visit the public appointments website for full details of this vacancy and information on how to apply, available at:
[Home - Centre for Public Appointments](http://Home-Centre for Public Appointments)



DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

£60,000 - £70,000 (dependent on experience)

Driver Youth Trust is a national charity uniquely committed to improving the outcomes of young people who struggle with literacy.

Our vision is for every young person in England to receive an education which is responsive to their literacy needs. We work to ensure that this is at the top of the agenda for schools and those in power through educational programmes, political advocacy and digital media.

This is an exciting opportunity for anyone who has the drive and expertise to help take the Trust's education impact to the next level and who would enjoy the chance to work within multidisciplinary team of educators.

We are looking for someone who is:

- experienced as a leader in education or the third sector
- credible to represent the Trust externally and to network with influencers and decision makers at senior levels

- informed by robust evidence from across the sector
- highly capable manager, able to juggle and prioritise a demanding mix of projects and tasks

You will make a visible and sustained contribution to the Trust's broader strategic goals. Your priority will be to expand and improve our educational services, but there is also the expectation that you will contribute to our policy and communications as well as the direction of the Trust as a whole.

You will have project and line management responsibility for a number of educational staff and will play an active role in many aspects of our policy and communications outputs.

The role reports to the Chief Executive and is based at our modern central London office. DYT offers a generous pension and there will be plenty of development opportunities for the successful candidate. The salary offered will be commensurate with experience – please state current and expected salary in your cover letter application.

Please submit CV and application letter to Chris Rossiter at chris.rossiter@driveryouthtrust.com no later than 1700 on Friday 15th February 2019.



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For more details please contact Richard Lucas at Academicis on:
E: rlucas@academicis.co.uk T: 01223-907979

Closing Date: 12:00 noon Wednesday 6th February 2019

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school opened in September 2018 with over 700 pupils enrolled. A remarkable starting number which is testimony to the quality of the project, its exciting vision and the support of partners, parents and the wider community. There will be significant further growth in student numbers for 2019/20 and the opening of new classes from early years to secondary grade levels. At capacity, the school will cater for more than 3,000 students.

The facilities at RDFZ King's College School are outstanding. We have successfully developed an educational environment that makes the most of our world-class campus and combines the best of Chinese and western approaches to learning and academic excellence, in a context of first-rate pastoral support and opportunities to excel outside the classroom.

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- Teacher of Mathematics (Middle and High School)
- Teacher of Early Years/Primary PE
- Head of Music
- Teacher of Music (whole school)
- Teacher of Early Years/Primary Art
- Teacher of Art (whole school)
- Teacher of Drama (Early Years/Primary)
- Teacher of Physics (High School)
- Teacher of Computing
- Head of Boys' Boarding

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Salaries are excellent with a benefits package that includes: accommodation allowance, annual return airfare (employee and dependents), medical and accident cover (employee and dependents), bonus scheme and full tuition coverage for employees with school age children

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please send a CV to oliver.knapman@dipont.com and contact for further information. Interviews will be held in January at King's College School, Wimbledon for UK based applicants with online interviews arranged for candidates in other locations.

www.rkcshz.cn

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