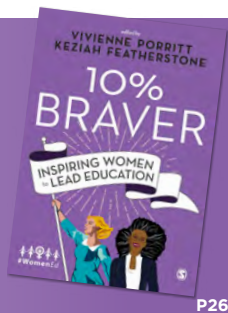


# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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## The school issues that could swing the next election

- ☒ Over 25 schools now closing early over squeezed funding
- ☒ Councils not coping with secondary school places bulge
- ☒ Spielman intervenes to downgrade off-rolling school
- ☒ Fact check: Are exclusions fuelling knife crime?



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Headteachers'  
Roundtable

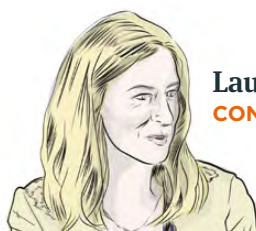
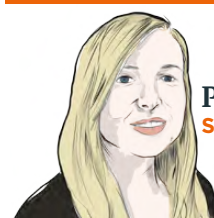
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SCHOOLS  
WEEK

## Meet the news team

**John Dickens**  
EDITOR@JOHNDICKENSSW  
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Laura McInerney**  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR@MISS\_MCINERNEY  
LAURA.MCINERNEY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Cath Murray**  
COMMISSIONING EDITOR  
& HEAD OF DIGITAL@CATHMURRAY  
CATH.MURRAY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Freddie Whittaker**  
CHIEF REPORTER@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Jess Staufenberg**  
SENIOR REPORTER@STAUFENBERGJ  
JESS.STAUFGENBERG@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Pippa Allen-Kinross**  
SENIOR REPORTER@PIPPA\_AK  
PIPPA.ALLENKINROSS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**Shane Mann**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

## THE TEAM

Head designer:

Nicky Phillips

Designer:

Simon Kay

Photographer:

Ellis O'Brien

Financials:

Helen Neilly

Sales team leader:

Bridget Stockdale

Sales executive:

Clare Halliday

Administration:

Georgina Heath

PA to managing director:

Victoria Boyle

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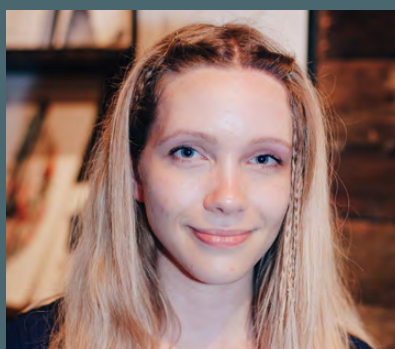
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LEARNING & SKILLS EVENTS,  
CONSULTANCY AND TRAINING LTD  
161-165 GREENWICH HIGH ROAD  
LONDON SE10 8JA  
T: 020 8123 4778  
E: [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK)

## The editor's top picks



**Oracy is more than a tool  
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## Everyone agrees schools should be held accountable for excluded pupils, but how?



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# Investigation: School funding

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## More cash-strapped schools send kids home early

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

INVESTIGATES

More headteachers will be forced to cut the length of the school day if the government doesn't address the current funding crisis, says the head of the Association of School and College Leaders.

Geoff Barton's warning comes as a Schools Week analysis finds that 26 schools, most of them in Birmingham, have made or are considering changes to their timetable to cut costs.

Ministers came under further pressure to boost school funding this week after an MP revealed her son's school had become the latest to switch to a four-and-a-half-day week.

However, new polling data released yesterday suggests the total could be much larger. Of 3,466 school staff surveyed by TeacherTapp, 2 per cent said their school had already reduced its hours, while another 2 per cent said the move was being considered.

This suggests hundreds of schools could be affected.

Barton says that it is "highly likely that we will see more schools following suit as the funding crisis continues to worsen".

"The government only has itself to blame. It is extremely difficult for schools whose budgets have been cut to the bone to continue



to provide the planning, preparation and assessment time needed by teachers because staffing levels are so constrained."

One headteacher, who did not wish to be named, said parental opposition had forced their school to scrap plans to close early on Fridays, but it now used teaching assistants rather than qualified teachers to keep the school open until the usual time.

"It means we can now meet the costs."

Jess Phillips, the Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley, this week challenged Theresa May and

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, over school funding after tweeting the text of a letter from her son's school.

In the letter the school's head spoke of the need to make savings "by reducing the number of teachers employed by the school and reducing hours worked by support staff", before expressing their "deep regret" over the negative impact the change would have.

The letter also confirmed the school was exploring running on-site childcare at parents'

Continued on next page

EXCLUSIVE

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

## School forced to cover £270k healthcare costs

A school has been forced to pay £270,000 for nursing assistants to help three pupils with long-term disabilities because the local health agency refuses to cover the costs, according to the headteacher.

Sabrina Hobbs, head of a specialist academy in Shrewsbury, said her local clinical commissioning group (CCG) paid for the pupils' healthcare at home, but expected her to pick up the bill when they were in school.

The Severndales specialist academy has been paying £90,000 a year over three years for three pupils to have nursing assistants, Hobbs told *Schools Week*.

The wraparound care is detailed in a

continuous healthcare plan, which is separate to an education health and care plan (EHCP) and should not be covered by school budgets, she said.

"This is not about access to education. The pupils would need this support if they went shopping. We should not have to fund this from the education budget."

Robert Halfon, the chair of the powerful education select committee, has warned many schools were having to pay "a lot for the health side of special educational needs".

Halfon raised the case with Caroline Dinenage, the minister of state for care, at the committee's inquiry into special educational

needs on Tuesday.

"It's a lottery," he said, adding some schools were "paying a lot for the health side of special educational needs and can barely afford it".

He demanded a "ruling from the government that health authorities as part of their budget have to pay for this".

But Dinenage claimed that earmarking CCG's budgets would "fly in the face of them making decisions for their own areas".

Halfon said the situation was "not fair on schools".

A spokesperson for Shropshire council said it had tried to intervene to support the school.

# Investigation: School funding

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expense until 3pm on Fridays, but had not yet determined whether it would be possible.

Complaints about childcare have been prevalent in other cases where schools have proposed earlier closures.

"I'd like to once again invite Theresa May to come to my constituency... on a Friday and pick my son up from school at 1pm as his school can't afford to stay open. In fact I think I'll leave him on the steps of 10 Downing Street," Phillips tweeted.

The MP's son's school has not been named.

A further five schools in Stockport, Leicester, Cambridgeshire, Berkshire and east London have also moved to close early one day a week, while seven others have made or are considering making cuts to the length of each school day.

Burntwood School in Wandsworth, south London, has shortened its school day by 55 minutes, closing at 2.55pm rather than 3.50pm, while City Academy Hackney in east London and Selly Oak Trust School in Birmingham have both cut 30 minutes from their school days.

Peter Woodman, the headteacher at the Weald community school in West Sussex, has been considering early closure since 2016.

"We're doing everything we can not



Jess Phillips  
@jessphillips

Follow

Dear @DamianHinds and @theresa\_may cheers for this. Here is an email from my son's school I just received.

#welcometomyworld

1. We are proposing to close early to pupils on Fridays (1pm), with effect from September 2019. This measure will mean that we can make savings by reducing the number of teachers employed by the school and reducing hours worked by support staff. We can minimise losses to learning time by rearranging the weekly timetable. (Please note that we will be exploring options for on-site childcare - paid for by parents - up to 3pm; however it will take a little time to determine whether this will be possible or not.) Nursery school hours will not be affected.

I deeply regret the negative impact of this proposed measure on pupils, staff and families, an impact which is being experienced by a growing number of schools in our city.

to close early. If we weren't full with pupils, then shortening the school day would have been what we would have looked at."

Leaders claim schools have already been cut to the bone following an 8 per cent real-terms cut in funding, but ministers insist more money can be saved.

In December, Lord Agnew, the academies minister, told Schools Week of his frustration that more schools had not taken up the government's offer of help to find cost savings.

Meanwhile, headteachers continue to campaign on school funding, despite complaints from politicians that they politicised the issue in the run-up to the 2017 general election.

Members of the National Association of Head Teachers have written to more than a million families in the past three months to warn them of the negative impact of funding cuts.

"The idea that some schools are considering moving to a 4.5 day week ought to be ringing serious alarm bells with the government," said Paul Whiteman, the association's general secretary.



Jess Phillips

School funding was also discussed in parliament on Monday, prompted by a petition signed by more than 100,000 people.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Any changes made to the school day need to be reasonable and parents need to be adequately consulted before changes are made, so that they can make alternative arrangements for childcare."

However, the DfE's official guidance on attendance says that school governing bodies have the power to revise the length of the school day as they see fit, with "no requirement to consult parents".

**Additional reporting by Jess Staufenberg.**

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

## Trust raids £7.7m reserves to dodge cuts

EXCLUSIVE

An academy trust has set aside half of its reserves to prop up its budget rather than make cuts to balance its books.

Trustees at Southfields MAT used £1 million from its reserves last year as a "contribution" to the budget of Southfields Academy, and plan to use another £3 million until 2020-21.

The London-based trust which has two schools, Southfields Academy secondary school and Linden Lodge, a special school that joined in September, had £7.7 million of reserves in August 2018.

Julie Corinder, an education funding specialist from the consultancy School Financial Success, said the trust was "not doing anything wrong" by using its reserves.

"They should be planning over a multi-year period," she said.

But Antony Power, a partner at the law firm Michelmores, warned that contributing £1 million a year could just be a "sticking plaster".

He said lots of schools have been predicting "eye-watering deficits in five years", but most reorganised and found savings.

The 2017-18 accounts state Southfields Academy will use reserves to "maintain the current assets and to invest back into the school" after a reduction in pupil numbers and flat funding rates had increased "financial pressure".

"Reserves will be used in the short term

to maintain the level of education and the trustees have approved a five-year plan to review all costs and work towards increasing student numbers."

In 2016-17, average reserves in a multi-academy trust were £791,000. That year, Southfields reported reserves of £8.3 million.

Power said it was "an extraordinary amount of money".

"We talk about building up reserves and prudent planning for the future, but effectively that money is meant to be spent in year to cover the teaching of the children," he said. "To manage to rack-up £8 million as a single secondary, I find that amazing."

The trust declined to comment.



# Spielman ordered sanction of off-rolling school

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The chief inspector intervened to downgrade the Ofsted rating of a school found to have off-rolled pupils, *Schools Week* can reveal.

Inspectors visiting Discovery Academy in Stoke-on-Trent in January were advised by Amanda Spielman (pictured) to rate the school's leadership and management as "requires improvement", rather than "good", after they discovered evidence of off-rolling of year 11 pupils.

The report, which rated the school overall as good, has prompted calls for clearer guidance on what constitutes off-rolling, after it emerged the practice was widespread across Stoke and supported by the local council.

Discovery is the third school identified by Ofsted as off-rolling pupils. It will toughen its stance further from September.

Inspectors said the pupils' move was "carried out in the best interests of the school rather than the pupils", which Ofsted defines as off-rolling.

Their main concern was the timing. Ten pupils were transferred to the rolls of alternative providers in early January 2018, before the spring census. It meant their results did not count towards the school's league table position last year.

Well-placed sources say that Discovery was due to be rated as good across the board, but the leadership and management grade was changed following Spielman's intervention. Ofsted did not deny her involvement.

Sarah Robinson, the chief executive of Discovery sponsor Alpha Academies Trust, also confirmed to *Schools Week* that Spielman and Sean Harford, Ofsted's national director of education, were "all over our inspection and our report and the final judgments that they came to."

"Amanda Spielman personally got involved."

Stoke Council this week confirmed that

## Stoke-on-Trent Learning Pathways Protocol for Off-Rolling

(Pursuant with amended Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

1. The following protocol applies to all secondary establishments in Stoke-on-Trent and pupils in Year 11 only. This protocol is overseen by the Learning Pathways Board convened by SASCAL. This protocol is a sub-section of the SASCAL Learning Pathways Board Service Level Agreement (SLA). It is subject to, and conditional on, the full and complete adherence to all clauses of this SLA.
2. This protocol applies when pupils are educated via offsite provision (known as the 'Provider') as a result of their identification as at risk of exclusion or otherwise.



it has ended its support for the movement of pupils on to the rolls of alternative providers.

The council previously supported the city's 13 secondary schools to make such movements, under an agreement forged between officials and the Stoke Association of School, College and Academy Leaders.

Despite initially appearing to back the council's policy in an interview with *Schools Week* on Tuesday, Janine Bridges, Stoke's cabinet member for education, later confirmed it had been abandoned.

She said all secondary schools had been advised of the Ofsted guidance "and we will not support the process of students moving to alternative provision rolls".

The agreement, seen by *Schools Week*, said that schools could delete pupils from their home school rolls "if a pupil is registered at more than one school and has ceased to attend the school, and the proprietor of any other school at which

he/she is registered has given consent to the deletion".

Such a move could only go ahead for pupils enrolled to receive full-time education in alternative provision, and with the agreement of parents or carers.

The pupil also must not attend their home school, and not be due to return.

It is this clause that seems to have been used to justify the movement of Discovery's year 11 pupils, many of whom had been attending alternative provision since year 9.

Robinson said her trust took the view that "if a child had been with a provider for two or three years, then moving roll was about accountability.

"By the time all the paperwork was completed, and because the local authority wanted to keep open the option of returning to mainstream until the last possible moment, the transfer of rolls did not take effect in year 9 when the child changed provision, but at the start of year 11."

Robinson called for clearer guidance from Ofsted and the government on what schools could and could not do in relation to pupil movement.

"It's clear what off-rolling is, but the circumstances around when a child might change a school roll, some clarity around that would be helpful," she told *Schools Week*. "What we have done is not illegal, but it is perhaps now not seen as the best practice."

An Ofsted spokesperson confirmed that from September, schools found to be off-rolling were likely to be rated inadequate for leadership and management.

# Analysis: School places

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## More pupils miss out on first choice of secondary school

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

Half the councils expecting the biggest rise in demand for secondary school places have offered fewer pupils their first choice of school, *Schools Week* analysis shows.

It comes as a pupil population bulge moves out of primary and into secondary schools, leaving one council at least 400 places short.

More than 600,000 pupils were last week told which secondary school they will attend this September.

Latest government figures forecast there will be an extra 9,751 secondary places needed by 2019-20 – more than three times the almost 2,600 extra places needed this year.

*Schools Week* has analysed National Offer Day figures for the ten councils facing the largest increase in demand for secondary places by 2020, using data collated by the Local Government Association.

Five have offered a lower proportion of pupils their first choice of secondary school place compared with 2017-18.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the government must come up with a "national strategy" to guarantee school places.

The government's own figures showed 418,000 more secondary school pupils were expected by 2027; he warned of "huge disappointments for pupils" if the issue was not sorted.

Councils lost the power to plan places in 2011, but Whiteman said a local or regional authority must have that power again.

In Leicester, which is facing the steepest hike in pupil numbers, 78 per cent of pupils



got their first choice of secondary school, down six percentage points.

Eight per cent (374 pupils) were "not offered any place" according to a spokesperson, up from 172 pupils (4 per cent) in 2017, although every pupil who applied on time was offered a place in the city.

The city council had to find 2,673 additional places for next year.

Sandwell in the West Midlands was the only other council in which the proportion of pupils not getting any of their choices went up. A total of 410 (8 per cent) didn't get any of their choices, compared to 177 (4 per cent) in 2017.

Oldham had the highest proportion of pupils who did not get one of their school choices, with 362 pupils or 11 per cent "redirected".

Meanwhile, in Rochdale the proportion of pupils offered their first choice fell six percentage points from 94 per cent in 2017, to 88 per cent next year. The council is expecting an extra 490 pupils in 2019-20.

And in Luton, which had to find an estimated 323 extra school places next year, the proportion of pupils getting their first choice fell from 80 to 77 per cent.

But five councils overcame the pupil population bulge to improve the proportion getting their first choice.

The biggest rise was in Westminster. Despite facing an increase of 447 places, the council offered 65 per cent of pupils their first choice, up from 56 per cent in 2017-18.

Anntoinette Bramble, the chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people board, said her organisation had "long warned that the number of children needing secondary school places is growing at a far faster rate than the number of places available".

Councils must be allowed to open new maintained schools and order academies to expand, she said.

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said if enough school places were not found for pupils, a school could be forced to take in "more children than it is assessed to take, which will create larger class sizes and even be a problem for safety on the site".

A Department for Education spokesperson said it had created 825,000 school places since 2010, which will rise to a million by 2020.

LOCAL AUTHORITY	ADDITIONAL PLACES NEEDED FOR 2019-20	PUPIL NUMBERS AS % OF SCHOOL PLACES IN 2019-20	% OF PUPILS OFFERED FIRST CHOICE IN 2019-20	% POINT CHANGE IN PUPILS OFFERED FIRST CHOICE FROM 2017-18	% OF PUPILS OFFERED NO CHOICE IN 2019-20	% POINT CHANGE IN PUPILS OFFERED NO CHOICE FROM 2017-18
Leicester	2,673	114%	78	-6	8	4
Manchester	3,444	111%	77	2	7	-1
Oldham	853	105%	75	2	11	-1
Westminster	477	104%	65	9	5	-6
Rochdale	490	104%	88	-6	NA	NA
Sandwell	726	103%	72	-2	8	4
Luton	323	102%	77	-3	NA	NA
Hackney	282	102%	64	-0.3	7	0
Kingston Upon Hull	200	101%	88	6	4	-3
Southend-on-Sea	95	101%	79	3	6	-1



## Fact check

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## Are exclusions to blame for knife crime?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

School exclusions are in the news again this week after a group of police chiefs and London's mayor demanded action from the government to tackle knife crime.

In a letter to Theresa May, Sadiq Khan and seven police and crime commissioners linked a "broken" school exclusion system in England to a rise in knife crime.

In their letter, Khan and the commissioners said there was "growing evidence to show that our vulnerable children are more likely to be excluded or off-rolled from school" and noted that "excluded children are at much greater risk of becoming either perpetrators or victims of serious youth violence".

Both of these statements are technically true. Pupils eligible for free school meals, those with special educational needs and children from certain ethnic groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are disproportionately more likely to be excluded from school.

Excluded pupils are also twice as likely to carry a knife as their peers.

But while there's plenty of research showing a correlation between exclusion and involvement in crime, there's little evidence proving a causation – essentially that excluding a pupil is a primary cause of their involvement in gang violence or knife crime.

A study released by the Ministry of Justice



last year found that although young people caught carrying a knife were more likely to fail at school or be persistently absent, only a "very small proportion" committed their offence shortly after being excluded.

The department found that although it was "not possible to identify from this analysis whether there is an association between exclusions and knife possession offending", the low volumes of offences following exclusions "mean any such association could not be a significant driver of youth knife possession offending overall".

Ofsted joined the debate this week, insisting it had seen "no convincing evidence that exclusions, in and of themselves, lead to knife crime or gang violence.

"It was, however, likely that exclusions are caused by the same underlying factors as violent crime and therefore affect many of the same young people."

A recent report from Anne Longfield,

the children's commissioner for England, highlighted "extensive evidence linking school exclusions with gang involvement", and warned that some alternative provision for excluded pupils has become "gang grooming grounds".

But Longfield's report also points to wider problems beyond the school gates.

For example, gang members are 95 per cent more likely to have social, emotional and mental health issues than others who were assessed by children's services, and they are much less likely to get extra funding if they have a special educational need or disability.

In a letter to *The Times* this week, Tom Bennett, the government behaviour adviser, warned that it was a "mistake" to attribute knife crime to exclusions, and warned of confusing correlation with causation, adding that "most knife crime occurs either simultaneously with exclusion or more than a year later.

"These are symptoms of the same causal forces, such as poverty and gang culture, which are complex and hard to solve easily," he said.

School leaders also seem to be concerned about the recent rhetoric from leading figures around these issues.

Many have pointed out that schools are unfairly being blamed for wider societal problems such as poverty and the effects of austerity, of which poor behaviour and subsequent exclusion from school may be a symptom, rather than a cause.

## Still no date for Timpson review

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

The government is still not ready to say when it will publish a long-delayed review into exclusions, says a senior cabinet minister.

Andrea Leadsom, the leader of the House of Commons, told MPs on Thursday that the Timpson review would be published "soon", but that "no exact date" has been set for its release.

Ministers have come under renewed pressure this week to release the document following an intervention from Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, and seven police and crime commissioners (PCCs) from across England.

In a letter to Theresa May, Khan and the PCCs

warned that the school exclusion system in England was "broken", linking it to a rise in knife crime.

The Timpson review, conducted by Edward Timpson, the former children's minister, was supposed to be published by the end of last year. Last month, ministers promised it would be out this term.

Now, with about a month to go until schools close for Easter, the government is still unable to say when the landmark review will be published, despite claims from MPs that it has been completed.

Victoria Atkins, the Home Office minister, said the government was "awaiting delivery of the

Timpson report on exclusions".

Asked by the Conservative MP Tim Loughton when the report would be published, Atkins said: "We expect to publish the Timpson report shortly." He said he understood the review had been completed.

Pages of the draft report, seen by *Schools Week* last month, show the review will demand the government revives plans to make schools retain responsibility for the results of pupils they exclude.

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, said: "This government is utterly paralysed by Brexit and their own internal divisions."

# News

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## Plans falter for new VA-schools

EXCLUSIVE



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

The Catholic church has admitted its dioceses are finding it "challenging" to open new voluntary-aided schools, after new figures showed the government has received just 14 bids for capital funding.

The church was urged by the government to set up new VA schools last year as a compromise after ministers reneged on an earlier promise to lift the cap on the number of pupils who can be recruited based on their faith in new free schools.

The Catholic Education Service (CES) had been lobbying hard to overturn the cap, claiming there was demand for up to 40 new Catholic schools.

But Lord Agnew, the academies minister, has now revealed that the Department for Education has so far received just 22 expressions of interest and 14 bids for cash to open a VA school. *Schools Week* understands not all of the bids were from the Catholic church.

It is understood that a requirement for the proposers to front up 10 per cent of the capital in exchange for a 90 per cent contribution from the DfE is slowing the church's school growth plans, as some dioceses face having to come up with millions of pounds.

"It has been less than a year since the government announced the voluntary-aided route as a pathway for opening new Catholic schools," a spokesperson for the CES said.

"Considering the last Catholic VA took more than a decade to go from concept to completion, it's understandable that dioceses are finding

this challenging.

"Prior to 2010, Catholic dioceses had a long-term strategy for opening new schools that gave them the time necessary for the Catholic community to raise the capital contribution. In essence, the demand for Catholic schools hasn't changed, but the education landscape in which church can open them has."

The capital funding stream for VA schools was reopened last year as a compromise to encourage Catholic dioceses to open new schools.

They had refused to do so under the free schools programme, which required faith-based admissions at oversubscribed new schools to be capped at 50 per cent.

The compromise was announced by Damian Hinds, the education secretary, after the government decided not to lift the cap.

However, Hinds almost immediately sought to lower expectations of Catholic school growth under the new policy, admitting last May that he could not say how many new institutions would open.

The CES previously predicted there was demand for about 20,000 places, equating to between 35 and 40 new schools, and several dioceses were poised to open a number of institutions if the cap was lifted. East Anglia, for example, had plans to open eight schools.

In a written answer to a parliamentary question, Lord Agnew said the capital scheme for voluntary-aided schools "is designed to be small".

He said a list of the bids that the department received will be published "in due course". The DfE would not provide any further details.

## Where now for Catholic sixth form colleges?

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

The government is "exploring" how to enable Catholic sixth-form colleges to convert into academies, but doesn't have time to change the law this year.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, told MPs this week that his department was looking at "how to put in place the right conditions to enable Catholic sixth-form colleges to convert to academy status with their existing freedoms".

Catholic sixth-form colleges have been fighting for a change to the law for several years. Non-faith 16 to 19 institutions were given the right to convert in 2017, enabling them to enjoy the same VAT exemption afforded to other academies.

But EU law means Catholic colleges cannot do so if they want to keep their religious character, something they are allowed to maintain and develop under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

In a debate about the future of the institutions on Tuesday, Gibb acknowledged that the situation had moved on since 16 to 19 academies were first established.

"At the time, our view was that EU directive 2000/78/EC prevented the creation of new post-16 vocational institutions with a religious character.

"We had adopted a blanket approach, so that no post-16 provision could be established with a religious character. We are now exploring how to put in place the right conditions to enable Catholic sixth-form colleges to convert to academy status with their existing freedoms."

However, the minister admitted there was no time in the current parliamentary "session" – which ends in July – to put through primary legislation to make the change.

"We will of course keep this under review in future parliamentary sessions, and we will continue to work with this group of colleges and with [colleagues] to try to find a solution to this problem."



## News

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## Businesses on board to push modern languages

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The Department for Education has turned to an oil firm and bankers to help create a plan for modern foreign languages as part of careers lessons in primary schools.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, announced on Tuesday that businesses such as the oil company BP and the Swiss bank UBS would form a network to create an "action plan" for pupils to learn the languages their future careers might need.

The plan is part of a suite of initiatives from the government to encourage more pupils to take languages. One survey has revealed more than a third of schools now allow pupils to opt out of studying a language in year 9.

BP, which reported earnings of \$12.7 billion last year, defended its expertise in language learning, although it admitted its education endeavours usually focused on STEM subjects.

"While our focus in recruitment is principally on STEM skills alongside the core employability skills [...] we do look for multilingual candidates for a number of roles," said a spokesperson.

Peter Mather, head of BP in the UK, met Nick Gibb, the schools minister, in his role as a member of Business in the Community. Mather's LinkedIn page says that he is fluent in French and German and can speak good Spanish and Russian.

UBS said it had been "invited by the DfE to help set up a group" to let pupils and schools know the business value of a second language.

The bank's representative in the network is Richard Hardie, a senior adviser to UBS who is also the president of the Chartered Institute of Linguists.

Other linguists from UBS will "act as role models" in business-to-school networks, the spokesperson said.

Gibb also met with the global law firm Linklaters, the financial services company Greensill, and business representatives,

including the Confederation of British Industries.

Meanwhile Hinds pledged that all primary schools would offer careers-related learning, following government research that showed 96 per cent of primary schools offered such initiatives.

Hinds said he was "pleased to know so many primary school pupils have access to career-related learning" but added it should be available to all and "of the highest standard. That is why we are working with industry experts to produce support for primary schools".

However, Department for Education officials said there was no specific timeframe for meeting the 100 per cent target.

A spokesperson said that ministers were speaking to the companies about languages in careers advice because "they're huge employers and they understand the importance of languages to a global economy and are well-placed to set out why these skills are important".



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# Investigation

## Trust was wobbling before DfE awarded it £500,000

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

Senior Department for Education officials were alerted to a string of concerns at a high-profile academy trust before it was handed more than £500,000 under a flagship government policy for "top performing" sponsors.

In November 2015, Nicky Morgan, the then education secretary, announced Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) as one of five "outstanding" sponsors to share £5 million under the government's flagship Northern Powerhouse scheme.

The cash was to boost standards at schools in the north – but WCAT later collapsed and is being wound up after widespread failures.

An investigation by *Schools Week* can now reveal that government officials were aware of serious concerns – including potential irregular payments and poor financial management and governance at the trust – before the cash was awarded.

An investigation into one of the trust's schools, which later warranted an independent inquiry, was even raised with Morgan's office just days before the announcement.

Emails seen by *Schools Week* show the official who sanctioned that WCAT remain on the list for funding, despite the investigation, felt "a little uncomfortable about this".

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: "The



Nicky Morgan

decision to award this extra funding is incomprehensible and shows a dereliction of public duty."

*Schools Week* asked the DfE, under the freedom of information act, for any documents outlining risks and mitigation plans for providing WCAT with the northern hub cash.

We received a tranche of emails that reveal the inside story of how the money was awarded (see timeline below). Issues were first flagged in June 2015. An email from an official in the academies operations and strategies team highlighted "ongoing concerns" with WCAT from the Education Funding Agency's risk analysis team. Auditors identified "21 concerns", the email said.

The advice was to keep WCAT on the list for funding, but only award the northern hub grant "on the condition that the EFA funding issues have been resolved".

An email in July of that year, from the

office of Paul Smith, the then RSC for Lancashire and west Yorkshire, said the RAD [presumably the EFA's risk analysis division] was concerned over "potentially irregular payments" made by WCAT.

The RSC office warned the "nature and volume of issues may be indicative of wider financial management and governance issues across the MAT".

It recommended any award of funding be conditional on the government review findings.

But in an email a few days later, a DfE official said the WCAT issues "should not otherwise impact on the recommendation" to award the trust cash – although in an email to Sue Baldwin, the then DfE director, she said the WCAT submission could include a caveat if a review did not "establish evidence of adequate progress".

Then, in October, a month before Morgan was due to announce the flagship fund, officials were told WCAT had launched

### The email trail

Continued on next page

**JUNE 15, 2015**

DfE officials warned of "ongoing concerns" from EFA's risk analysis team after auditors found 21 concerns with WCAT finances. Advised that WCAT is awarded the Northern Hub grant "on the condition the EFA funding issues have been resolved".

**JULY 28, 2015**

RSC recommends WCAT handed more than £500,000 in Northern Hub cash, but highlight auditors' issues around regularity of finances. EFA also undertaking a MAT review; early signs show "no signs of irregularity or significant failings".

**OCT 30, 2015**

DfE official, in an email to Jonathan Duff, says findings into WCAT's Yewlands investigation won't arrive until the day after Nicky Morgan, the education secretary, is due to announce northern hub funding. "Obviously there's an element of risk here – but I don't think that outweighs the consequences of not going ahead." Duff says this is the "right call".

**JULY 24, 2015**

Regional schools' commissioner's office flags "potential irregular payments" made by WCAT, plus poor financial management, governance and internal control, adding "nature and volume of issues may be indicative of wider financial management and governance issues across the MAT".

**OCT 20, 2015**

RSC warned DfE official "not good news for NF [Northern Fund] by looks of it" after investigation launched into WCAT school Yewlands, with "grounds" for most the allegations. Calls for a "hastily convened meeting".

**NOV 2, 2015**

WCAT is announced as one of five trusts to share £5 million Northern Hub funding. Morgan calls them an "outstanding" sponsor. James Wharton, the minister for the northern powerhouse, added that it brought "experience, leadership, and a strong track record of success".



# Investigation

an investigation into issues at one of its schools, Yewlands Academy in Sheffield.

An email said there were "grounds to all the allegations raised apart from the financial one". Further details were not explained.

A senior DfE official told Smith in an email that it was "not good news for NF [northern fund] by the look of it".

But she added the department needed "more info" on "how serious this is given they found no evidence of the financial concerns". She said they should consider a "hastily convened meeting this week on next steps, given HMT [the treasury] are talking dates to us".

On October 30 an official from the sponsor and development and support team told Jonathan Duff, the deputy director for academies, that results of the investigation wouldn't arrive until one day after Morgan was due to announce the fund winners.

The official wrote: "I feel a little uncomfortable about this . . . it would have been more reassuring if we had received the report before the speech so we could make a proper judgment."

But the official stated it would be "completely disproportionate" to not go ahead with the announcement because of issues at one school. "Obviously there's an element of risk here – but I don't think that outweighs the consequences of not going ahead." Duff said this was the "right call".

Ten days after Morgan announced WCAT as a fund recipient, DfE officials were told the trust had commissioned a second, independent investigation into Yewlands.

Yewlands' head, a WCAT director, was

suspended later that month. But a DfE email said there were "no grounds" to reconsider, and officials were told to issue WCAT's grant letter with a possibility to claw the funding back if there were issues "down the line".

WCAT was given the funding to set up a hub in Bradford for four to seven schools. *Schools Week* revealed in April 2017 that it took over three schools, after pulling out of sponsoring Hanson School in Bradford and University Academy Keighley.

It was announced in September 2017 that WCAT would close, with all 21 schools transferred to other sponsors. It is the largest trust to shut.

Two investigations into the trust were published in November last year after its last schools had been rebrokered.

The latter, from October 2016, found WCAT had breached funding rules 16 times and was in an "extremely vulnerable position" because of "inadequate governance, leadership and overall financial management".

Annual accounts previously revealed the trust had breached rules over payments of more than £430,000 to a firm connected to Mike Ramsay, its former interim chief executive.

Raj Unsworth, a governance expert, said: "Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but if the government had an inkling of wrongdoing, it should have not gone ahead."

The DfE said all risk assessments were carried out. "The Northern Fund grants were awarded through a competitive process, with clear frameworks for assessment and at the time of assessment, WCAT application met the terms of the grant."

## Deloitte 'gagged' over WCAT closure

A Big Four accountancy firm that was paid nearly £200,000 to help to close the multi-academy trust WCAT has a "gagging clause" that stops it from saying anything that would "embarrass" the Department for Education.

A freedom of information request obtained by *Schools Week* shows that Deloitte was paid £198,570 to support the DfE for 12 months to shut WCAT.

The department needed financial and insolvency expertise to put the trust into insolvency and transfer its 21 schools.

But a copy of the contract shows Deloitte is banned from saying anything that would "embarrass" the government or any other crown bodies, which includes the prime minister's office.

Under the header "publicity, media and official enquiries", the contract says that Deloitte cannot "cause, permit, contribute or is in any way connected to material adverse publicity" relating to the DfE.

Nor can it bring it into "disrepute by engaging in any act or omission which is reasonably likely to diminish the trust" the public places in the department.

*The Times* revealed last year that about 40 charities and 300 companies had such "gagging clauses" in government contracts totalling £25 billion.

Theresa May pledged to review the wording in contracts, adding they "do not stop" providers from "fairly criticising government departments or government policy".

## The email trail

**NOV 12, 2015**

DfE officials told WCAT had commissioned an independent investigation into Yewlands, with the school's head suspended.

**NOV 16, 2015**

Officials told the suspended head was a WCAT director. But there were "no grounds" to reconsider the decision, and officials told to issue grant letter with possibility to claw the funding back if there were issues "further down the line". Emails show Yewlands had been flagged with Morgan's office and advisers before announcement.

**JAN, 2017**

WCAT pulls out of sponsoring two schools in Bradford.

**NOV, 2018**

The last of WCAT's 21 schools moves to a new trust.

**NOV, 2015**

EFA's first financial management and governance review shows WCAT's board had not been operating legally, with financial misdemeanors over credit card expenditure and travel expenses. The report wasn't published until November 2018.

**OCT, 2016**

The EFA's second review of financial management and governance at WCAT finds funding rules had been breached 16 times. WCAT in "extremely vulnerable position" because of "inadequate governance, leadership and overall financial management". Report not published until November 2018.

**SEPT, 2017**

WCAT announces it will give up all of its schools and close after widespread failures.

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## News: Ofsted

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## School keeps top grade despite failing emergency inspections

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

A private school is still rated "outstanding" after failing emergency inspections that found pupils were not safe and some were unlawfully excluded.

The Heathside preparatory school in north London, which charges up to £18,000 a year, got Ofsted's top grade in September 2017.

But just months later it failed two additional inspections on independent school standards.

Inspectors found strangers had access to the school site, serious concerns about a pupil were not passed on to the local authority, and school records showed pupils were "excluded unlawfully".

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, wants to know how Ofsted missed "basic" warning signs during its full inspection.

"The fact inspectors missed these basic safeguarding issues casts huge doubt on the quality of the inspections. How can these things have been missed?"

The case proved an Ofsted grade was "no guarantee to parents they will get the information they need".

An Ofsted spokesperson said it recognised the current rules meant judgments for private schools "can be misleading". It was consulting on providing up-to-date judgments following additional inspections.

Inspectors have to check that private schools meet eight independent school standards, including welfare, safety and suitability of staff and premises.

The watchdog plans to introduce new powers from September that would allow it to "bring forward" standard



EXCLUSIVE

inspections and "recognise sooner where schools have improved or declined".

Heathside, which has about 500 pupils up to year 8 and a boarding school, was first graded outstanding in 2013, with an emergency inspection the next year finding standards were met.

Two years ago Ofsted's glowing report said that leaders gave the "utmost priority" to pupil safety.

But an additional inspection nine months later – prompted by a tip-off – revealed "chaotic" school trips, "disorganised" pupil files and staff "fearful" of reporting concerns.

Parents were notified the day a trip was happening and the head kept "scrappy handwritten notes" of discussions with parents. Some child protection records had been opened, but remained in their envelopes instead of being filed.

The school failed to share serious concerns about a pupil with the local authority, meaning no action was taken to protect them.

Meanwhile Ofsted found pupils could not always access a member of staff in an emergency at the boarding school.

A second inspection in September last year concluded "leaders and staff do not know how to keep pupils safe", with concerns that members of the public could make contact with

pupils at a Territorial Army base and synagogue used as school sites, and through a shop with a door on to the school premises.

Inspectors also found the head had not told the local authority 27 pupils left the school the previous year, meaning they were at risk of going missing in education.

A mattress was also found blocking a fire exit, with leaders

"unsure who left the mattress there".

The school met all standards at a third inspection published last month.

Yet the school's website has kept its "outstanding" Ofsted banner since 2017 and currently invites parents to read a "very positive Ofsted result".

Stephen Rollett, the curriculum and inspection specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said serious safeguarding failings should be "reflected immediately in a school's overall Ofsted rating [...] regardless of the type of school".

A spokesperson for the school said: "This is the system today and we followed Ofsted's procedures", adding it was proud to be an outstanding school and had tightened procedures.

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## Investigation

## The new masters of the curriculum

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

**Academy trusts are leading the way with curriculum development, but it comes at a price. *Schools Week* looks at what's being done, whether it's working and whether the results should be free**

When Ark announced it was developing Ark Curriculum Plus, a new curriculum to cover "all the major subjects, including music, science and geography", the story seemed to hit a nerve amongst the Twitterati.

Would be right for Ark, with its millionaire hedge-fund sponsors, to charge – and make a "profit" – from providing its products to other schools, tweeters thundered. (Hundreds of schools already use Ark's Mathematics Mastery and English Mastery curricula.)

James Williams, a lecturer in education at the University of Sussex, questioned who the profit should belong to if curriculum materials, developed by teachers, were sold on.

"Trusts will need to be very transparent around the funding and how that funding is being used, otherwise we may well have accusations that monies generated by such sales are actually paying for the salaries of high-up executives who may have nothing or very little to do with the materials produced."

The trust has insisted the programmes are non-profit and all revenue is reinvested back into curriculum work. The curricula are also produced by specialists employed directly by Ark.

The standard Mathematics Mastery for secondary schools costs £7,500 in the first year, which includes resources and planning support for year 7, a mathematics course and six induction training places for teachers, while English Mastery costs £6,000. A spokesperson for Ark said the price reflected the cost of delivering training and materials, and no profit was made.

John Blake, Ark's curriculum design lead, said the trust's curriculum programmes needed investment from schools as they included a "development programme" so



INVESTIGATES

that "teachers can be made the expert in the room on their subject".

"Only the teacher in the classroom is going to know that class and those children in that way. But at the same time all children have a common entitlement to a high-quality curriculum so you need to build around teachers the resourcing, the professional development and the subject communities," he said.

#### The trusts sharing curriculums for free

One of the early curriculum leaders was Future Academies Trust, which established a curriculum centre in 2012 to develop programmes that focused on "education as an emancipatory force".

It was reported in 2016 that the daughter of the trust's founder – Lord Nash, a former academies minister – had helped to draw up the curricula, despite being unqualified as a teacher.

The trust's hub of primary schools in south London have a common curriculum that includes Latin, ancient history, British history, English and geography.

Future said it had "shared our work freely" with schools and teachers outside the trust. But a spokesperson added: "As our curriculum offer grows and subject expertise develops across our schools, it is possible that we would offer our curriculum

resources as part of a package for schools that includes training, guidance and support.

"The commercial aspect of this would be to recoup the costs of such an enterprise and ensure it can continue in a sustainable way – not to generate profit."

The Inspiration Trust, founded by Lord Agnew, the current academies minister, appointed eight subject specialists last year to develop a "knowledge-led" curriculum, alongside a specialist curriculum centre.

*Schools Week* revealed in January that Inspiration had almost doubled the amount it top-slices from its secondary schools' budgets to fund the curriculum overhaul – up to 9.94 per cent last year. The top-slicing brought in an extra £1.5 million last year alone.

But Inspiration will give its curriculum materials away free.

Dame Rachel de Souza, its chief executive, said that the trust had spent £2 million, but money had also come from the government's strategic school improvement fund.

"We feel it is important not to lock them away somewhere. We're here to improve education for all children, not just those in our schools, and we're just not interested in spinning off a publishing arm or a consultancy company," she said.

Continued on next page



# Investigation

However, she said there were "costs we have to cover" for creating and sharing professional development courses, but the trust aimed to "keep the price as low as we can".

Tom Sherrington, an education consultant and former headteacher, said the concern over academy trusts selling curriculums was "odd" when "you might buy a scheme from Pearson and no one bats an eyelid".

"I'm not particularly worried about the whole concept of marketisation. If a school is going to invest the money, if a multi-academy trust is going to build the capacity in its centre to devise the curriculum, they need some revenue stream for that. The money doesn't come for nothing.

"If there's quality being generated from somewhere in the system when it wasn't there before, then we should be happy about that."

## 'Curriculum money should be targeted at all schools'

But are certain trusts being favoured?

In 2017 Justine Greening, the former education secretary, announced a £7.7 million curriculum fund to pilot ways of delivering the 2014 national curriculum and to tackle workload.

The first £2.4 million of that was only made available to knowledge-rich programmes. The 11 schools to share the funding – announced in January – were all academies, two then run by Future and Ark. Just 23 per cent of applications for the pilot came from local authority schools.

The Department for Education said it undertook a "fair and transparent process", but Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, accused the government of "once again privileging the voices of its favoured academy chains and sponsors".

## Mixed results on curriculum implementation

Developing the curriculum is also only half the battle, with the jury still out on whether the new programmes work.

The Education Endowment Foundation will test Ark's English Mastery programme in 110 schools over two years to find out if it boosts pupil progress.

The trial will build on promising results from a smaller trial undertaken by the Brilliant Club last year, which found that pupils in schools using the programme

## "You might buy a scheme from Pearson and no one bats an eyelid"

made four months more progress on average than similar students in similar schools that did not use it.

Most of Ark's recent inspection reports commend curriculum, but not always.

An inspection in October of Ark Burlington Danes Academy, west London, said the curriculum "does not enable pupils to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding", while Ark Dickens Primary Academy, Portsmouth, in June 2017 was found to have a curriculum that "lacks coherence and is narrowly focused on English, mathematics and science".

Inspiration Trust's Great Yarmouth Primary Academy was put in special measures by Ofsted last week.

Although the curriculum was described as "coherent, well planned and based on worthy intent", inspectors said teachers were "not well trained to deliver the curriculum. They frequently lack the expertise to ensure pupils make adequate progress."

With the new maths curriculum, teachers were said to "read from a given script and pass over tasks they do not understand" and the report said some teachers "are yet to be convinced of the value of this curriculum". Inspiration said this refers to an externally developed maths programme, not their own.

Inspiration has disputed Ofsted's findings. But Mike Cameron, a governor and former teacher, said the findings should be a "wake-up call to everyone".

"If a well-organised, well-resourced and supremely well-connected MAT like Inspiration can get it so wrong, what chance does the rest of the system stand?"

## Ofsted: schools will have transitional year to sort things out

The stakes were upped last year when Ofsted announced it was placing curriculum at the centre of its new inspections from September, although concerns over whether inspectors can be adequate judges have been well-reported.

Matthew Purves, Ofsted's deputy director

of schools, said inspectors would focus on what schools wanted their pupils to learn through the curriculum, and were open to a range of ideas.

He said inspectors would look at the key concepts and what order they were taught in, how the school's curriculum aims were conveyed in lessons, and overall school performance.

"We're not asking inspectors to make a judgment on whether a particular curriculum is good or bad. We're saying 'show us the curriculum you're teaching and let's talk about how you constructed that,'" he said.

Ofsted had built a transitional year into the inspection handbook to reassure schools they would not be penalised if curricula were not finalised by September.

"What we don't want is to provoke a knee-jerk reaction. The best curricula are ones you think about for a long time and implement, you revise and develop.

"We want to give people the space for that process rather than saying they've got to have everything sorted instantly."

## 'Really daunting task for primaries'

But Andrew Percival, the deputy head and curriculum lead at Stanley Road Primary School in Oldham, said it was a "huge task that is really daunting" for primaries.

Stanley Road had been working for two years and was "nowhere near" a finished curriculum. "It's about taking a pragmatic approach to curriculum development and not just throwing everything out. You need to think strategically about what is realistic and what is important for children to know."

The curriculum focus may also favour larger academy trusts. Sherrington said trusts with centralised teams of experts – such as Ark and Inspiration – could be an "incredible asset" for schools missing expertise in some areas, but also emphasised the need for teachers to have proper training and "ownership" of resources.

Sam Twiselton, the director of the Sheffield Institute of Education, said there was "a danger of schools taking something completely off the shelf" and ending up with a "deficient learning experience".

"You don't necessarily need to have designed a curriculum from scratch, but you need to have been involved in the process enough that you've thought about it, why it matters to these children and why you do it in this way," she said.

## News

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## Late accounts trigger finance warning

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

The government won't explain why a Steiner academy has been given a finance warning for failing to submit its audited accounts on time.

Steiner Academy Frome has been formally warned to improve financial management, control and governance after it missed the December 31 deadline to submit its accounts.

It is the only academy or trust to be issued with a financial notice to improve for this reason alone – although it had a similar warning in 2016.

The Department for Education usually "names and shames" trusts that are late with their accounts; in November it named 88 trusts that failed to file two or more returns on time in 2017.

The DfE would not explain why the new notice has been issued or whether they would be issued to other trusts late with their accounts.

According to government figures published on Monday, 6 per cent of trusts missed the December deadline last year.

A spokesperson for the department would only say the notice to the academy had been issued "due to concerns about financial controls".

The Steiner school, which follows the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, was put in special measures by Ofsted in January, the same month it was given a funding termination warning by the DfE.

The finance warning urges it to consider joining a multi-academy trust to "secure the academy's future". It said that failing to submit accounts on time breached funding rules.

In a letter published on Friday, Mike Pettifer, the DfE's academies director, said the warning "reflects the weak financial position of the

trust and continued concerns on governance and oversight of financial management by the board".

The trust has been told it must review its governance arrangements and the roles of current trustees "to ensure that the pattern of repeated financial mismanagement is addressed" and must hold more regular board meetings.

As well as submitting its accounts, Steiner Academy Frome must also work with a schools resource management adviser to "identify cost-efficiencies".

Steiner Academy Frome's Ofsted report warned that leaders had "failed to provide pupils with a safe and effective education".

In March 2016, the academy received a financial notice to improve after failing to submit audited financial statements on time for two consecutive years. That notice was lifted in January 2017.

Steiner Academy Frome is one of three state-funded Steiner schools in England rated "inadequate". The others are Steiner Academy Bristol and Steiner Academy Exeter.

All three have termination warning notices, meaning they could be transferred to new trusts unless improvements are made.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's chief inspector, has demanded an investigation into whether the Steiner philosophy – which advocates a holistic, creative approach to education – is contributing to the failures.

But Damian Hinds, the education secretary, would not commit to such an investigation, instead asking Ofsted and DfE officials to jointly review inspection findings.

Hinds did grant Ofsted extra powers to inspect all Steiner schools in England, including 21 private schools.

Steiner Academy Frome did not respond to a request for comment.

## ESFA in cyber crime warning

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

School leaders have been urged to take action following a "significant increase" in cyber crime against academy trusts.

According to an update published this week by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), some trusts have also "already experienced incidents of fraud".

Data from the Information Commissioner's Office, as revealed by *Schools Week* last year, showed the number of cyber-attacks on schools rose 69 per cent in a year.

Between July and September 2017 there were 26 such reports. In the same period last year there were 44.

At the same time, the ESFA received 39 notifications of fraud and theft last year, and dealt with 31 cases of fraud or financial irregularity allegations.

"We are aware of a significant increase in incidents of cyber crime against academy trusts in the past year and that some of you have already experienced incidents of fraud," the ESFA said in its update.

"You should therefore have addressed potential internal control and procedural weaknesses to reduce further risks arising."

Leaders should "familiarise" themselves with government guidance on reducing risk of financial irregularities and "take any necessary action to improve your counter-fraud arrangements".

"Fraud, theft and irregularity are a constant risk to public funds. The government estimates that fraud costs the public sector between £31 billion and £49 billion per year."

Government guidance urges organisations to use firewalls, antivirus software and strong passwords, routinely back-up data and train staff to ensure they check emails are from genuine senders and understand the risks of using public wi-fi and not following payment checks and measures.

Last March, *Schools Week* revealed how fraudsters impersonating headteachers managed to con schools out of £145,124.

In May 2017, schools were urged to develop stringent "hack plans" following a global cyberattack that took down the NHS's computer systems.



# Switch off the colour and save money, says DfE

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Schools should monitor printer logs to crack down on staff who are "exceptionally high users of colour printing", the government has said.

New financial guidance from the Department for Education calls for "high-level monthly line-by-line examination" of unexpected overspends by schools seeking to balance their books.

This is not the first time the government has suggested schools monitor their printing and copying habits in a bid to save cash.

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, faced a backlash last year after he suggested that cutting down on "staggering" copying bills was "one small example" of how schools could save money.

Many school leaders said they had stopped colour photocopying years ago.

However, data collected by Teacher Tapp last year showed that three in five teachers had "unlimited access to colour photocopying".

Half of secondary teachers had unlimited access, compared with more than three-quarters of primary teachers.

But many said they were careful about making copies.

Advice on academy trust financial management and good practice, released



last Friday, tells trusts to analyse their income and expenditure every month to make sure they know if their budget is "broadly on track".

It says that "high-level monthly line-by-line examination" of unexpected overspends "can prompt timely intervention", including some staff using too much coloured ink.

"Investigation of copier logs could reveal that certain members of staff are exceptionally high users of colour printing compared with others.

"If so, steps could be taken to remedy the situation now to bring the printing budget back on track."

In May last year Agnew, the founder and former chair of the Inspiration Trust, told the Association of School and College

Leaders' conference for business leaders in Nottingham, that Inspiration removed the colour tab from its printers after finding that "colour was being used indiscriminately".

"That's just one small example of how you can actually make a difference in something that is not painful," he said.

The Department for Education's new guides on financial management and good practice offer trusts advice on operating as a going concern, working with external auditors, deficit recovery and risk management.

The guides were put together based on input from the Academies Finance and Assurance Steering Group, made up of academy finance directors, business managers, and staff from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## Breathe easy: yoga can ease exam stress

@STAUFENBERGJ | @STAUFENBERGJ

New guidance from the exams regulator says exam stress is "not necessarily a bad thing", advocating yoga as a coping strategy.

In *Coping with Exam Pressure* released last Friday, Ofqual said although it could be overwhelming, stress could be a "great motivator".

Yoga and mindfulness classes could also reduce stress, it said.

The watchdog has launched a series of blogs for teachers on supporting pupils with test anxiety. They follow attempts last year by Damian Hinds, the education secretary, to downplay the impact of new GCSEs on pupils' mental health.

Ofqual's six-page document, released with the Liverpool John Moores University, says stress can help pupils to find the "get up and go" they need.

Some were "indifferent" to stress, while for others it could be a "bad thing" that made exams overwhelming.

The recommendation to practise yoga follows trials in three schools in Norfolk that tried a 12-week yoga programme to reduce exclusions.

The pilots, part-funded by the NHS, were a response to "over-diagnosis of attention problems", GPs said last month.

Many teachers say that the tougher GCSEs introduced in 2015 have had a detrimental

impact on pupils.

And in a poll of 600 headteachers by the Association of School and College Leaders last August, nine in ten said the new exams have harmed pupils' mental health, even triggering panic attacks and self-harm.

Meanwhile, two-thirds of 650 secondary teachers told a National Education Union poll that new A-levels made more pupils extremely anxious.

An Ofqual blog last Friday by Kevin Woods and Rob Buck, both at the University of Manchester Institute of Education, said studies indicated 100,000 of the 600,000 pupils doing GCSEs each year experienced "high levels of test anxiety".

# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)

## The next general election campaign is taking shape in front of our very eyes

If this week taught us anything, it's that three big issues are already in sharp focus ahead of the next election, whenever that may be.

Both Theresa May and Damian Hinds were given a dressing-down on school funding after Labour MP Jess Phillips told her near 130,000 Twitter followers her son's school was closing early on Fridays.

Our investigation on pages 5-6 shows at least 26 schools have now cut their Friday hours, or are looking to.

That means thousands of parents face having to pay for extra childcare for their children.

As former government aide Sam Freedman tweeted: "Stuff like this will kill the Tories at the next election. They simply have to increase funding for schools and colleges."

Even prominent Conservative supporters are now arguing schools need more funds.

But the government isn't for budging, yet. In a parliamentary debate, schools minister Nick Gibb repeated the widely-used but totally misleading line that there's more money than ever going into schools. But voters, who trust teachers over politicians, will see through the

government's flimsy argument.

Next up on the list of campaign issues that have reared their ugly heads this week is school places. As our investigation on page 8 shows, some councils are struggling to cope with the bulge in pupil places working its way from the primary sector into secondaries.

In one area, hundreds of pupils didn't get offered a place at any school. With over 400,000 more secondary school places expected by 2027, will councils be able to cope?

Problems with knife crime have also dominated the mainstream press, with several reports and prominent figures suggesting school exclusions are at least partially to blame. But as we point out on page 9, all the evidence shows there is no causal link between exclusions and knife crime.

The same reports also point to off-rolling as a contributory factor to pupils pursuing a life of crime, but as we reveal on page 7, this issue seems to be widely misunderstood.

What is clear is that these issues are very much in the public eye now, whether the government likes it or not.

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*Sir David Carter, Executive Director, Ambition School Leadership*

**SNOW schools (schools no one wants) even in this context |**  
*Keziah Featherstone, Headteacher, Q3 Academy, Tipton*

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# How could schools be held accountable for excluded pupils?

**CATH MURRAY**

@CATHMURRAY\_

Various government reviews, at least since the 2010 white paper, have claimed that the way to improve alternative provision is to make schools take greater responsibility for the pupils they exclude.

Leaked documents suggest the Timpson review of exclusions will repeat this recommendation, but how might it work? Cath Murray takes a look

Last autumn Edward Timpson, the former Tory MP, visited Cambridgeshire local authority to find out more about their approach to alternative provision.

This will not surprise anyone familiar with the subject. Delve into government reports of the past ten years and you will find the local authority's name bandied around as an example of good practice in two areas: devolution of the AP budget from local authorities to schools, with greater accountability for those pupils.

Anna Wahlandt, the county's alternative education provision manager, has been developing its approach for four years and now wants to see it replicated across the country. "I've seen so many positive outcomes. I cannot entertain that there's still any local authority that doesn't know where their most vulnerable children are," she says.

What's interesting about Cambridgeshire's model, is not just that funding is devolved to schools – it started doing this ten years ago and 24 per cent of local authorities now do the same to some extent – but the oversight and support mechanisms Wahlandt has developed.

"Part of the backbone of our process is we have a live register and I know today we have 562 children on that register. I know where they are, how many hours they're on, what provider is being used, whether they've got a plan," she says. "Schools can't really hide the money from me now. I'm responsible for that budget and I have to know how they're spending it."

But not everyone is gung-ho about handing full control of the high-needs AP budget to schools. "If schools are given the funding, like they are with some SEN funding, some will argue that not all of



**"There are still local authorities that don't know where their most vulnerable children are"**

that money would be spent on children who need it and are in need of AP," says Debra Rutley, executive headteacher of the outstanding-rated Aspire Alternative Provision in Buckinghamshire. "How are we going to ensure children who are struggling, disengaged and very needy get the support that would have been available in AP?"

Wahlandt thinks this can be solved by local authority support and oversight. "Part of my offer is I go into schools and do a full AP audit, offer staff training, offer recommendations, write reports for heads and governors," she says.

Cambridgeshire has two 35-place AP academies, plus about 40 independent AP providers that are quality assured by the council for health and safety, safeguarding,

outcomes and curriculum.

As part of the service-level agreement under which AP funding is devolved, schools can only choose from approved providers or use their own inclusion hubs, which also fall under the council's quality assurance (QA) regime.

Wahlandt meets regularly with Ofsted's Eastern regional lead for unregistered provision. "He wrote the [QA] guidance and comes back and dip-samples providers," she says.

Even with devolved funding and accountability, Wahlandt is convinced the council has a coordinating and monitoring role: "You need someone in every local authority who is the go-to person for AP. Some LAs top-slice the AP budget before it goes out to schools, like we do. If it's sold to schools like that, they're more appreciative."

An alternative provision market analysis commissioned by the Department for Education last year came to a similar conclusion, finding that LAs that played a "key-working" role were "an essential lynchpin of an effective local AP system". This role involved maintaining an oversight of all pupils not in full-time mainstream education or at risk of becoming marginalised, providing advice and brokering solutions, and supporting planning of pupils' reintegration into mainstream education.

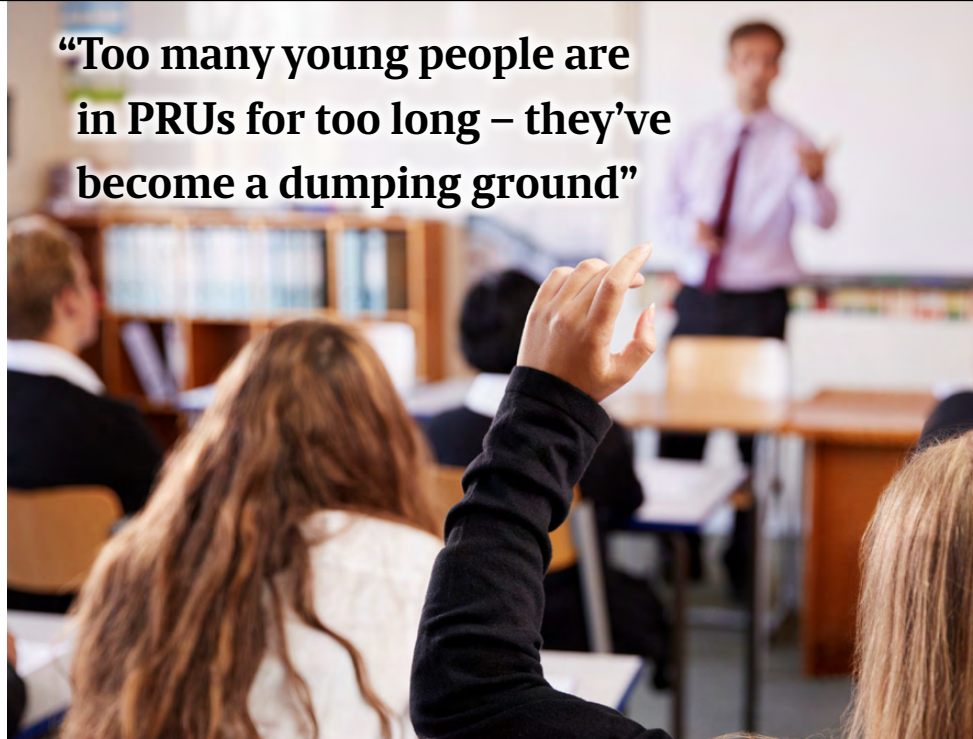


Edward Timpson



# How could schools be held accountable for excluded pupils?

**“Too many young people are in PRUs for too long – they’ve become a dumping ground”**



“We did not come across a mature, well-functioning local AP system in which the LA was not playing this role,” the researchers from the Isos Partnership think tank concluded.

Only one pupil has been excluded this academic year in Cambridgeshire. Schools are encouraged to proactively commission AP for pupils at risk of exclusion, as a way of keeping them engaged with education.

Lynne Rogers, an academic at UCL, has seen this all before and says she is somewhat tired of governments “reinventing wheels”. Preventative AP was common under the Increasing Flexibility Programme introduced in 2002, which Michael Gove scrapped following Alison Wolf’s report into vocational education for 14 to 19-year-olds.

Ironically, Gove also advocated the devolved funding model Cambridgeshire is now following – and which makes such heavy use of the very practices he ditched. It was one of the proposals in his 2010 white paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, that never made it into the Education Act of the following year.

A pilot programme was set up to test the proposal in 2011, but was aborted part-way and – short of highlighting the importance of joined-up working – the resulting school exclusion trial (SET) report is somewhat inconclusive.

Rogers, who worked on the SET evaluation, thinks the key is to shift the perception of alternative provision from a “long-stay” environment to a local hub that works collaboratively with schools to provide early interventions to prevent permanent exclusion.

“We’ve got too many young people in PRUs for too long – frequently it’s become a dumping ground,” she says.

Wahlandt agrees. In fact, she wants the law changed so that every child in the country has to remain on the roll of a mainstream school.

“I would want to see every child on AP with a dual registration where the host school is still ultimately responsible for outcomes, safeguarding, review of

provision, parental contact,” she says.

Stoke-on-Trent recently got into hot water for doing the opposite. Ofsted found that at least one school was off-rolling pupils “using procedures agreed with local schools and the local authority”.

Discovery Academy transferred ten year 11 pupils to the roll of the AP they were attending, in a move that “provided no benefit for the pupils and was carried out in the best interests of the school rather than the pupils”.

The watchdog has announced that it will get tougher on schools that are found to be off-rolling pupils, with the leadership and management of the school likely to be judged inadequate under the new inspection framework.

So will Timpson recommend implementing the Cambridgeshire system nationwide? “I hope so!” Wahlandt says. “How else do we ensure quality, consistency and fairness?”

It would end, for instance, the current financial incentive to exclude pupils. The AP market analysis report found strong consensus among school leaders that current funding arrangements for AP made it cheaper to permanently exclude a pupil (since the LA would bear the cost) than to keep a pupil in mainstream or to place them in AP for preventative purposes (since the school would bear the cost).

The report’s authors were reluctant to recommend system change, however, concluding that they hadn’t uncovered one “right model” after focus groups with 29 LAs and surveying a further 118. Instead, their research suggested that for a well-functioning AP system, mainstream schools must be “individually connected to and responsible for the outcomes of pupils placed in AP, and collectively responsible for the AP system, its use, and the wider local education system in which it operates”.

Devolving decision-making and funding was “one means of fostering these two levels of responsibility,” they said, but not necessarily the only one.

Rogers is also wary of mandating a one-size fits all solution. “You don’t want to set something prescriptive up,” she warns. “You have got different LAs doing different things – there have to be different solutions. If it’s all working nicely in one area, why would you want to disrupt that?”



Debra Rutley

## Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**The new programme to support new teachers is a once in a generation opportunity – and ITE providers can make it a success, says James Noble-Rogers**

The much anticipated early career framework (ECF) to support new teachers during their first two years in the profession was published to generally warm applause by the Department for Education in late January.

Its introduction is long overdue. For many years the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) and others have been calling for new teachers to have an entitlement to structured early professional development that builds on and complements their initial teacher education (ITE). However good ITE programmes are, only so much ground can be covered in sufficient depth in what, in most cases, are nine-month programmes.

Teachers who qualify through undergraduate programmes are in a slightly different position as they have more time to spend on key areas such as special needs, behaviour management and school curriculum-related subject knowledge. It is hoped that the ECF will be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of teachers qualifying through the different routes, as well as those working in a variety of school contexts.

The government has yet to make any announcements about how the framework will be delivered, although it will be available in pilot areas from September next year. It need not, however, be difficult.

The ECF is, helpfully, grouped under the teacher standards around which all ITE programmes are based.



**JAMES NOBLE-ROGERS**

Executive director, Universities Council for the Education of Teachers

## Why ITE providers should deliver the early career framework

A readymade, tried and tested regulatory framework already exists and the structures in place will allow choice, for NQTs and the schools that employ them. They will facilitate the scope to link the ECF to master's level CPD, the benefits of which are well documented and have been acknowledged by the DfE, most

change in the status of teaching since it became an all-graduate profession in the 1970s.

What I, and others, are proposing is that accredited ITE providers (and by that I mean all accredited providers) be given the licence to deliver the ECF. This will ensure national coverage, and will:

**“ A workable model is already in place and ready to be used**

recently in the 2018 *Strengthening QTS and improving career progression for teachers* consultation proposals. Progress towards teaching becoming an all-master's qualified profession would, as we have said on many occasions, represent the biggest step

- Allow NQTs and their employing schools to continue to work in partnership with the providers they already have strong relationships with, with the ECF being delivered in school with the support of mentors trained



through the partnership and, where appropriate, outside the immediate employment setting at the university or the lead school of a SCITT.

- Allow the ECF to focus on the development needs of the individual new teacher, which the ITE provider will be already aware of, and the specific needs of the school they are working in.
- Avoid the need for a costly and possibly ineffective procurement exercise that might result in untested providers delivering the ECF in accordance with one-size-fits-all and inflexible contracts that could undermine existing partnerships and might not secure either full national coverage or a tailored approach.
- Avoid the need for the DfE to commission and pay for supporting curriculum materials as ITE providers already have the expertise to develop programmes that can be mapped against the ECF.
- Allow Ofsted to easily check quality and compliance through an expanded ITE inspection framework, something which is fortuitously already under review.

Things will not, of course, be quite as straightforward as I have suggested. NQTs won't, for example, always work in the same schools in which they trained and therefore with the same providers. But a workable model is already largely in place and ready to be used. This once in a generation opportunity must not be squandered.



# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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KATE  
BOWEN-VINER

Senior associate, LKMco

## Oracy does more than enhance learning, it also builds bridges

**If we want a cohesive society, we must make sure that oracy's power for bringing people together is not sidelined, says Kate Bowen-Viner**

When I was 18, I helped to facilitate debating sessions in a juvenile detention centre for boys. By listening, I learned about injustices and heartbreaks that they had suffered, as well as the complex array of events that had led them to the centre.

I remember one boy who silenced his jeering peers when he embarked on a moving argument about how he deserved to be a political leader because he would change the world for other young people who had experienced violence at home. What struck me was a sense that, as they spoke, the boys' understanding of one another was enhanced as were their powers of empathy. My belief that teaching oracy in schools can help bring society closer together has only grown since then.

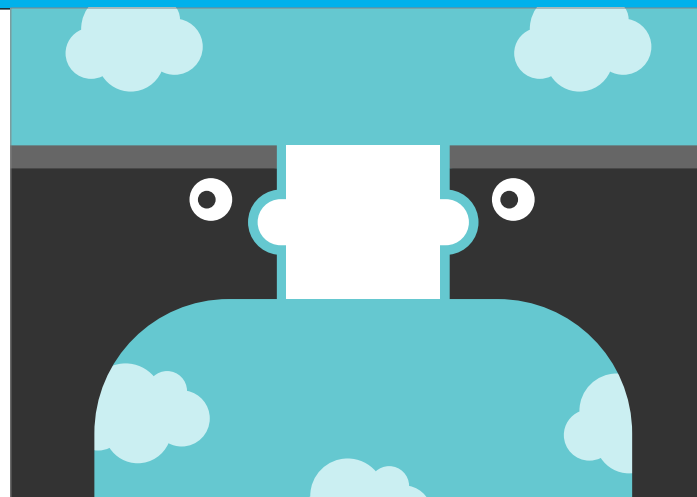
I was therefore encouraged to hear that oracy had caught the attention of Nick Gibb, the schools minister. In early February, Gibb argued that schools with knowledge-rich

curricula should make use of oracy to "enhance understanding" through "purposeful, constructive discussion" and "crafted questions" from teachers.

Gibb was right to recognise the link between oracy and knowledge, and it is something we flagged in our *State of Speaking in our Schools*

report for Voice 21. How can a young person speak convincingly on a topic if they don't know the detail of what they are discussing? Furthermore, building knowledge of rhetorical devices plays an important role in helping young people to craft a speech that really hits home. However, Gibb's instrumental focus – emphasising oracy as a means of enhancing learning, failed to recognise oracy's wider social benefits.

Its potential to promote social cohesion and informed debate is too important to ignore. As Voice 21 and the University of Cambridge's oracy toolkit suggests, oracy builds pupils' physical,



linguistic, cognitive, and social and emotional skills. At a time when Britain is grappling with significant social rifts, helping young people to examine and critique a range of people's experiences and viewpoints through speaking and listening is absolutely vital.

not everything.

To build a cohesive society, Britain needs to take an inclusive approach to civic engagement. Teaching oracy in schools can pave the way towards this. With strong and confident voices, more young people can make a stand for what they believe in. The recent strike in support of climate action is an excellent example of oracy in action. The powerful speeches young people such as Greta Thunberg, 16, and Anna Taylor, 17, made as part of their protest have helped to shape a global movement and have caught world leaders' attentions.

By emphasising oracy's social benefits – rather than simply seeing it as a strategy for teaching knowledge, we can help to ensure that more young people express their views and shape the future.

The potential benefits stretch far beyond the school gates. Effective communication is the foundation of a cohesive and inclusive society. If that is the world we want to see, we must make sure that the education system is helping to build it.

“The recent pupils' strike on climate is an excellent example of oracy in action

If we do not prioritise the wider benefits of strong oracy, we are doing young people and society a disservice. We live in a divided world (as the continuing Brexit saga shows). The education system therefore needs to prioritise oracy as a means of building bridges between people.

I am not the only one who believes this. Data from *State of Speaking in Our Schools* revealed that a whopping 87 per cent of teachers felt that oracy supports pupils to explore and understand their feelings and empathise with others. Using oracy as a strategy to teach pupils curriculum knowledge is important, but it is

## Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



## 10% Braver: Inspiring Women to Lead Education

Edited by Vivienne Porritt and Keziah Featherstone

Published by Sage Publishing

Reviewed by Hannah Stoten (aka Quirky Teacher)

Written for all women in education, *10% Braver* brings together a collective call to arms developed within the grassroots organisation, womenED. Its main message? Female leaders in education are underrepresented, something that needs to change. As each chapter unpicks a different aspect of the status quo, we hear from a range of influential voices within education, all united in their mission to see more women promoted into leadership.

I must admit to assuming that as most educators are women, there isn't really a case to be made for more female leaders. After all, most primary headteachers are female, so what's the problem? However, as Hannah Wilson makes clear in the first chapter, the ratio of women to men becomes increasingly and disproportionately skewed in favour of men the higher up you go in the hierarchy.

I really identified with the next chapter, Sue Cowley's "10% braver", quickly realising that I had been affected by two inhibiting factors: that women worry way more than men about what other people think of them and that society treats confident women harshly, hastily accusing them of boasting when they should instead be meek and humble. Cowley's advice is to take those risks because if you don't put yourself out there, how will people know your potential? Huzzah!

Jules Daulby also reminds us of the divergent paths a little boy and girl will take on their journey to adulthood, thanks to gender stereotyping that

begins with different approaches to parenting. I also identified with the "double bind" that holds women back: women who are kind and caring are regarded as incompetent leaders, whereas women who are seen as more competent are viewed as cold and uncaring.

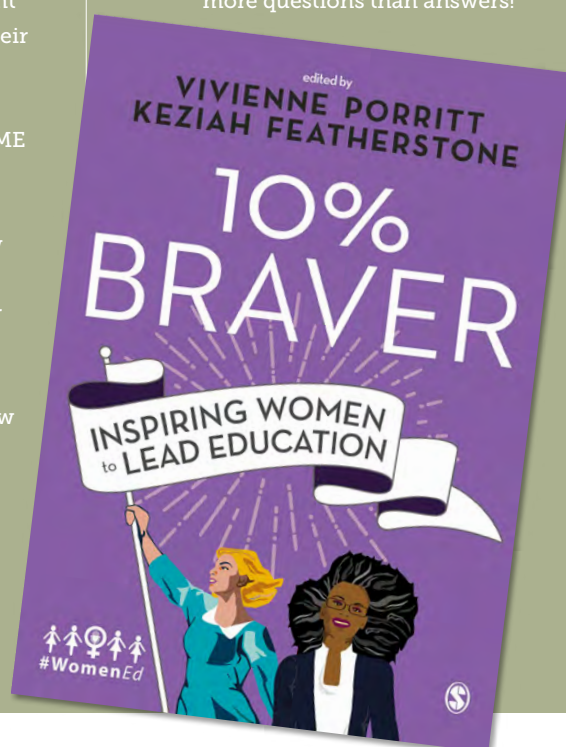
Men are simply allowed to be leaders without being expected to be Florence Nightingale – and if this weren't annoying enough for would-be female leaders, Daulby then provides further evidence that men tend to be promoted based on perceived potential, whereas women must prove that they can already do the job. In this well-referenced chapter, we are also invited to consider solutions such as men needing to make more of an effort to promote women, governors reconsidering recruitment and parents thinking twice about their approach to parenting!

In the next few chapters, various authors give us the international, BME and male perspectives. There is also good advice on closing the gender pay gap, how to apply and interview for leadership positions, as well as a few missives on flexible working for female staff. I didn't agree with all the messages in these chapters – particularly Sameena Choudry's view on women leaders' allegedly more effective focus on relationships and coaching over a more authoritative style – but they did make me think. Claire Nichols also challenges us to consider increased movement between education sectors as a

way to improve the promotion prospects of potential female leaders, but I was left questioning whether this would lead to a reduction in female leaders as men from other sectors muscle-in on leadership positions outside their expertise.

Keziah Featherstone closes with her rousing vision of how we can make future positive changes, but she didn't tackle what I would consider a key contributor in downgrading women's chances of promotion, particularly if they work with younger children – the fact that teaching is increasingly viewed as a caring/surrogate parenting role, not exactly synonymous with leadership.

Overall, I would recommend this book for anyone working in education who is curious about the prospects of women leaders, although it may leave you with more questions than answers!





# Research

Every month Harry Fletcher-Wood reviews the evidence on a school-related theme. Contact him on Twitter @HFletcherWood if you have a topic you would like him to cover.

## Does setting a good example work?

Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean at the Institute for Teaching

How can we use worked examples to help students see what success looks like – and participate themselves?

D Royce Sadler's classic article encouraged teachers to help students to self-monitor: to understand what they need to do and work towards achieving it, monitoring the quality of their work as they complete it. Sadler noted how hard it is to convey teachers "guild knowledge" of what a good piece of work looks like to students. He argued that: "The indispensable conditions for improvement are that the student comes to hold a concept of quality roughly similar to that held by the teacher, is able to monitor continuously the quality of what is being produced during the act of production itself, and has a repertoire of alternative moves or strategies from which to draw at any given point. In other words, students have to be able to judge the quality of what they are producing and be able to regulate what they are doing during the doing of it." Sadler noted two ways to show students what a good piece of work looks like: "descriptive statements and exemplars. While neither of these is sufficient in itself, a combination of verbal descriptions and associated exemplars provides a practical and efficient means of externalising a reference level." He also argued that students could better understand how to improve their work if they had the chance to evaluate work themselves.

[Sadler, D. \(1989\). \*Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. Instructional Science\*, 18\(2\), pp.119-144.](#)

About the same time, Herbert Simon was testing how powerful worked examples can be. His curiosity was piqued by incidents like this: "A student who was late for class missed the lecture . . . but at the end of the class looked at the problems worked by another student. When the tardy



student was tested, we were surprised to see that he worked the test problems correctly. Apparently he had learned by studying the worked-out examples. How generalisable is the result? How efficient is the process?" Simon and Xinming Zhu found that students who received worked examples learned more accurately and quickly than through "conventional learning" – probably, they argued, because students are attending to learning more closely when concentrating on examples and trying to identify what makes them effective.

[Zhu, X., and Simon, H. \(1987\). \*Learning mathematics from examples and by doing. Cognitive Instruction\* 4: 137-166.](#)

A more recent review captures the findings of a range of studies since then that have tested how much of a difference worked examples and explanations of them make. The reviewers noted: "Although asking learners to study worked examples

has been shown to be an effective means of instruction, successful learning from worked examples does not always occur naturally.

For example, learners often

simply acknowledge the information presented in worked examples without striving towards a deeper understanding. Therefore, learners usually need help to process the worked examples effectively." The researchers saw three components of using worked examples with students:

- Formulating a problem
- Examining steps to complete the problem – possibly missing some out and asking students to complete these steps themselves
- Sharing a final, correct answer with students

The researchers found that the additional explanation teachers offer didn't make a huge difference to how much students got from the examples they saw: the key thing was getting students thinking hard about the examples, not the words that teachers added, perhaps simply by asking students to formulate their own explanations for why a worked example worked.

[Wittwer, J. and Renkl, A. \(2010\). \*How Effective are Instructional Explanations in Example-Based Learning? A Meta-Analytic Review. Educational Psychology Review\* 22\(4\), pp.393-409.](#)



# Reviews



**Julia Skinner is a retired headteacher, who is now a trustee and founder of the 100 Word Challenge**

**@THEHEADSOFFICE**

**Strategic leadership  
(vision, ethos and strategy)**

**@HoyleRosemary**

As the chair of a multi-academy trust and a federation, I found this post really useful. It is often overwhelming to know what you should be doing, but not have a clear plan to achieve it. The author describes the journey of her governing body – and what sings out at all times is how the values of the school are at the heart of what the governors do. For new chairs, this is really a great example of “here is one I made earlier”.

**How do we encourage more people to volunteer?**

**@SchoolGovNet**

This post has some amazing statistics that explain why governors are hard to find! The fact that people think you have to be a parent and that your role is to arrange fundraising events highlights the huge job that needs to be done to get more skilled people on governing boards. What the post does not do, however, is to suggest ways to appeal to that large group of eligible people. Organisations such as the National Governance Association (NGA) have set up

## TOP BLOGS of the week

campaigns, but perhaps what we need are high-profile adverts at key viewing times emphasising what governance can give the individual. I’m sure any ideas would be gratefully received, so send them over.

**Governance at scale**

**@CSTVoice**

For many outside multi-academy trust governance, the desire to join other schools can be viewed in terms of the advantages of economies of scale. This post really sets out how different it actually is. Yes, the economies are there, but for the author that is a minor benefit. Some of the reasons MATs have become popular are listed, including career progression for staff – some of whom do not want to become headteachers. It also highlights the problems governance in general has, even when it is working well. In this MAT example there isn’t the problem of not enough bodies around the table, but other practical considerations such as the capacity for trustees to fulfil an ever increasing workload. Time is often the enemy in education. With the increasing responsibility they now have, a question posed is should chairs be paid? That, however, is another discussion.

**Relationships between charity boards and executive teams matter**

**@5Naureen**

Although this post is a review of an event attended by the author, the content is key to the effective running of a governance board. The relationship between the executive team and governors, which can be full of tension and distrust, is unpicked here with some good suggestions of how to bring about transparency. It goes into useful detail about agendas, papers and relationships, and stresses that all parties need to remember the beneficiaries they are working to support. The pupils can sometimes be forgotten.

**Send governance myths**

**@\_chrisrossiter**

Social media is full of good advice, often from people professing to know the facts. With this post, you know right from the title what you are getting, and it clarifies several areas for those of us involved in governance and SEND. Having references to the accepted *SEND Governance Review Guide*, funded with DfE support, gives reassurance to its contents and certainly helped get things clear in my thinking.

**The sofaology of governance**

**@dogpaws23**

Occasionally a post gets everyone irate. People who do not usually show any emotion or reveal their views just have to say something. This was the case with the post “Surely it is time to reimagine school governors?” It certainly created a massive response on Twitter and Facebook. Even Emma Knights, the chief executive of the NGA, replied. Out of the various expressions, I have chosen this one as it is written with the author’s usual humour and take on life. Do read the original first then enjoy the responses of this “agony aunt”!

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +





## Critics question winning bid for new model music curriculum

**We Music Teachers, open letter signed by nearly 100 teachers**

We [have] grave concern in relation to the process which has been adopted by the Department for Education in connection with the creation of the new model music curriculum. Our concerns are:

1. A lack of transparency in relation to the appointment of the expert panel that has been charged with creating the new model music curriculum.
2. A lack of transparency in the awarding of the contract by the DfE to ABRSM for the drafting of the new model music curriculum.
3. The awarding of the contract to ABRSM, an exam board with no experience in the delivery of curriculum music in the classroom, can only increase the concern in the music education sector as to the credibility and quality of the new model music curriculum.
4. A lack of time for any meaningful consultation, particularly early in the drafting of the new model music curriculum. Again, this reinforces the view that the process is deeply flawed.

This leads us to conclude that the schools minister [Nick Gibb] has already decided what should be in the new model music curriculum.

This is deeply concerning since it is the classroom teachers who are charged with delivery of the national curriculum for music and it is our voices that should be at the heart of this process.

## Crack down on staff who do too much colour printing, says new DfE guidance

**Hannah Fuller**

I totally agree. We taught without colour printing ten years ago, we could do it again. Colour printing is unnecessary and costs an exorbitant amount.

## Labour won't 'return to the past' on school accountability

**Richard Riddell**

Regrettable though the decision might be to many of us not to return academies and free schools to local authority "control" (I was a local government officer for more than 20 years before

## REPLY OF THE WEEK David Glasson

### Critics question winning bid for new model music curriculum

It beggars belief that the music curriculum is being fiddled with yet again. ABRSM is well respected in the instrumental grade exams, but is inappropriate for classroom-based learning which, by its very nature,

must embrace all styles and genres of music output, including that which is current as well as all that has gone before.

As a retired director of music in a successful specialist performing arts comprehensive I find it more than disappointing the direction the curriculum is taking under the present government. It is all too rushed and lacks sufficient in-depth consultation, underlined by the steady reduction in numbers taking up the subject at GCSE and above.



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

becoming an academic), it does make some practical sense. The experienced and credible staff available to and employed by local authorities to work with schools have been depleted by savage budget cuts and changes in some LA responsibilities.

However, local authorities have been developing various forms of partnership with all the schools in their area which, from recent research, include representatives of multi-academy trusts and regional schools commissioners. These are variably concerned with school improvement, standards or accountability, but also have varying democratic input. This would be a fruitful place to start for developing any new governance arrangements.

## MAT CEO pay should be judged on value for money

 **@Darren\_Rigden**

I agree with @stevereach2 and the sentiment in this article. Pay should take into account risk, the level of work involved, coupled with achievement and value. Value is important, not just the level of pay.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## MONDAY

Is Damian Hinds in the wrong career? DfE's announcement today on expanding careers learning in primary schools saw Hinds state dolefully: "Careers advice has thankfully moved on from my school days, where I once did a multiple choice test and was told I should work in catering."

Talking of careers, a debate on school funding forced a few Conservative MPs to reflect on theirs this week as they were reminded of the old adage that "you made the bed you lie in".

In this instance, the bed is the gloomy funding situation faced by schools, which Tory MPs voted for.

But what was the response of Conservative MPs who braved the debate prompted by a petition signed by over 100,000 people? 'Painful self-reflection', we hear you cry?

Errr, no.

Tim Loughton, who has definitely been in

parliament

long

enough

to have

voted

for every

budget

that

squeezed school

funding, moaned that

campaigns on school

funding "have been

highly politicised".

"Simply because I put a DfE press release on my website,

one head of a secondary school in my constituency wrote to all the parents of the children in his school castigating me, despite my having been in every single debate on this subject and having stood side by side with parents, teachers and others to get fairer funding."

That's right Tim, because people don't like it when turkeys vote for Christmas and then start to campaign against it when people notice what they did.

As Labour MP Mike Amesbury put it: "When members go through the division lobby and vote for such policies, people—teachers, parents and the community—will remember."

He's got a point.

## TUESDAY

The Department for Education's smart Westminster offices are home to many things. Ministers, civil servants and even spiders (introduced to keep the bugs off the department's

forced her son's school to close early on Fridays, Phillips has suggested that all parents affected should leave their children in the foyer at Sanctuary Buildings.

Michael Gove would no doubt be delighted at the prospect of hundreds of children at the DfE's offices. After all, the former education secretary wanted to open a free school in the space (if you believe the rumours).

## WEDNESDAY

If ever the perfect metaphor was needed for the state of the apprenticeship programme, it revealed itself this week.

On the day a damning National Audit Office report into the programme was published, skills minister Anne Milton attended a National Apprenticeship Week event at the docklands campus of UEL to meet apprentices.

And while the apprenticeship policy comes crashing down around her, so did the ceiling.

The panel that fell from the ceiling managed to narrowly miss Milton, but did hit two apprentices who were checked over by medical professionals. Remarkably, they were surrounded by nursing apprentices.

We are glad nobody was seriously hurt, but we're certain the irony was not lost on Milton.

## THURSDAY

Busy counting the number of times schools have been blamed for knife crime.



Jess Phillips  
@jessphillips

Follow

Every parent whose children's school shuts early on a Friday how about I get some coaches and we can leave our kids one Friday afternoon in the foyer of the @educationgovuk Up for it?

5:13 PM - 5 Mar 2019

enormous collection of house plants – we're not even joking).

But if Labour MP Jess Phillips has anything to do with it, things are going to get a whole lot more crowded in there one Friday afternoon.

Incensed by the funding cuts that have







Are you dedicated to transforming life chances of young people?

Will you help to create the next generation of leaders?

Do you want to join AIM Academies Trust as part of the 'Founding Transformation Team' of a new North London secondary academy?

*AIM Academies Trust (AIMAT) are delighted to have been appointed by the DfE as the new sponsor of an academy in North London to take it on a journey of transformation. AIMAT will open this new academy in September 2019.*

**The vision is simple at AIMAT: all young people will become 'Leaders for Tomorrow'. Leaders who determine their own destiny, leaders of their communities and leaders of their chosen career.**

- Determining their own destiny means AIMAT young people are in control of their futures. They have a strong moral compass and clear direction in pursuing their life goals.
- Leading in their communities means AIMAT young people selflessly serve their families, their local, national and global communities.
- Leading in their chosen career means AIMAT young people are prepared to enter a profession with prospects and to flourish and thrive within it.

AIMAT has a simple and robust transformation strategy planned for this new academy. Firstly, to rapidly improve behaviour and attendance. Secondly, to rapidly improve the quality of the curriculum and finally to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently exemplary in every classroom. AIMAT will open with an experienced and skilful 'Founding Transformation Team' who will be part of supporting the academy in becoming the world class institution that we know it can be.

AIMAT hopes to demonstrate a sharp rise in the outcomes for all young people in this new academy over the coming months and years. We are looking forward to working closely with parents and the local community in order to achieve this. AIMAT are excited by the challenge ahead.

"There is a rare opportunity to be part of the Founding 'AIMAT Transformation Team'. AIMAT will open this new academy with a centrally recruited 'Transformation Team' to lead the significant changes needed within this new academy. We are assembling a truly exceptional team of teachers and leaders who are driven by a shared moral purpose.."

We do not underestimate the magnitude, nor the importance, of the job at hand. It will require huge amounts of perseverance and a constant drive for innovative excellence. However, these roles will also be incredibly rewarding and will offer exciting progression for the future.

If you share our core belief in a growth mindset, have a relentless focus on high standards and operate with the utmost professional integrity and humility, then we would love to hear from you. Equally, if you know other colleagues for whom this challenge would resonate, and who have a proven track record of excellence, then feel free to put them in touch with us (and let us know that you have referred them).

We have vacancies available at all levels from Deputy Principal to Trainee teachers and are recruiting now. If you are interested in any of these opportunities then please apply via the application form on our website [www.aimacademies.org](http://www.aimacademies.org). We would be delighted to have an informal conversation prior to application and/or arrange a visit of our flagship school, London Academy, where many of the team currently work. To arrange this please get in touch via email at [info@aimacademies.org](mailto:info@aimacademies.org) or call to speak to **Paddy McGrath, CEO AIMAT** on **07920189106**.

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

**ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL X 2**

**LEAD PRACTITIONER: ENGLISH**

**LEAD PRACTITIONER: MATHS**

**LEAD PRACTITIONER: SCIENCE**

[www.aimacademies.org](http://www.aimacademies.org)



# Headteacher

Scientia Academy - Mona Road Burton Upon Trent | Staffordshire DE13 0UF

Salary: £60,755 - £70,370 (L18 – L24) dependent on experience

**Do you want to have an enduring impact on children's education?**  
**Are you ready to be part of something challenging and exciting?**  
**Do you want to provide exceptional opportunities for learning?**

Scientia Academy is looking for a dynamic, passionate and inspiring headteacher with an excellent track record in school development and leadership to lead the success of Scientia Academy into the future and take us on the next stage of its journey to Outstanding!

Scientia Academy is a two form entry school for children aged 3 -11 years old, rated Good by Ofsted with Outstanding features. This is a truly amazing school, with modern purpose built classrooms, a state of the art ICT suite, 4D cinema, extensive library, art and craft rooms in an expertly designed learning environment.

**We want our new Headteacher to share our passion for:**

- Academic excellence, continuous improvement and innovation
- Making a positive difference to the lives of children
- Consistent high-quality teaching and learning
- Developing our future leadership team
- Working with parents, the community and other schools
- Strategic and commercial vision.

**You will need to be a strategic leader who:**

- Is a dynamic, and motivational with a proven success record of improving teaching and learning
- Leads by example and has a track record of raising standards and levels of achievement
- Is able to inspire and motivate staff
- Is an excellent, engaging communicator who will develop strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community.

**We can offer:**

- An exciting challenge where you can truly make your mark
- The benefits of being part of the forward thinking REAch2 Academy Trust - one of the most successful primary Trusts in the country
- A wide range of professional development opportunities and the opportunity to work with some of the best educational professionals in the country.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our open days being held on the 4th & 9th March 2019 between 9.30am & 3.00pm at Scientia Academy, Mona Road Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire DE13 0UF.

REAch2 is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is essential for this role.

For an informal chat, please contact Cassie Leigh, PA to HR Director :

[cassie.leigh@reach2.org](mailto:cassie.leigh@reach2.org)

## Applications

**Application deadline: 15th March 2019**

Open Days: **4th & 9th March 2019**

Interviews: **1st & 2nd April 2019**

Contract: **Permanent**

Salary: **L18-L24**

Job starts **September 2019**

You are invited to submit your application to:

Completed application forms and equal opportunities monitoring forms should be sent to HR,

[cassie.leigh@reach2.org](mailto:cassie.leigh@reach2.org)





## Chief Executive Officer Salary £160,000



Are you an innovator  
and a visionary who  
can change the lives  
of young people  
with SEND?

**Our pupils, students and staff are talented, unique and diverse, and we need a dynamic leader who can continue to develop and grow this outstanding organisation.**

**Orchard Hill College**, based across seven college centres, and **Orchard Hill College Academy Trust**, comprising 14 academy schools, together form **Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust** (OHC&AT), a family of specialist education providers for pupils and students from nursery to further education across London, Surrey and Sussex.

The uniqueness of OHC&AT is that it is fully representative of all designations of special education needs and disabilities. Pupils and students within the OHC&AT family have a wide range of learning abilities and additional needs including complex autism; speech, language and communication difficulties; social, emotional and mental health; and physical disabilities including multi-sensory

impairment and complex health needs.

The CEO needs to shape the future of the organisation and empower our staff teams so that our pupils and students continue to achieve their full potential.

Please visit [www.ohcat.org](http://www.ohcat.org) for details of the role and further information about our organisation.

If you would like to discuss this opportunity at Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust please call Beverley Davidson on **020 8397 7001** or email [bdavidson@orchardhill.ac.uk](mailto:bdavidson@orchardhill.ac.uk)

*Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

**Closing date for applications is Monday 11th March at 5pm**  
**Interviews to be held on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd March.**



## Executive Principal for Excelsior All Through (3 – 19) Academy Newcastle upon Tyne

### Required for September 2019

Competitive salary, potential performance bonuses and relocation allowance

This is an exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunity for an experienced and successful Head Teacher.

Experience of working in a culturally diverse school or academy is not essential, nor is experience of working in an all through setting. Trustees are looking for a successful and inspirational leader who has the vision, skills and commitment to lead Excelsior into the future. Trustees invite applications from experienced and successful principals of secondary or all through schools to build on Excelsior's success and lead it as part of LST, to greater achievements.

Excelsior Academy is state of the art, purpose built all through academy, which opened in September 2008 as Newcastle's first academy. Located near good transport routes including the A1, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle city centre and within easy reach of picturesque Northumberland and the north east coast.

Initially an 11-19 provision, Excelsior expanded in September 2013 to become all through admitting pupils in Reception and Year 1, and then further expanded to include Nursery provision from January 2015.

Further information about this exciting, challenging and rewarding post is available on Excelsior's website:  
[www.excelsioracademy.laidlawschoolstrust.com](http://www.excelsioracademy.laidlawschoolstrust.com)

Prospective applicants are welcome to contact either Jane Spence CEO of LST on [0191] 6622400 [jane.spence@laidlawschoolstrust.com](mailto:jane.spence@laidlawschoolstrust.com) or Philomena Marshall, the founder Executive Principal on 07595120784 [Phil.Marshall@excelsiornewcastle.org.uk](mailto:Phil.Marshall@excelsiornewcastle.org.uk) for an informal discussion prior to making an application.

#### To apply for this post:

Please review the job description and person specification when completing the application form and provide alongside your application, an accompanying statement to explain how you have transformed provision and raised standards in your current school.

**Closing date:** 12 noon Monday 25th March 2019

**Interviews:** w/c 1st April 2019

**Applications and an accompanying statement should be returned to:**  
[hadmin@laidlawschoolstrust.com](mailto:hadmin@laidlawschoolstrust.com)



## Headteacher

Competitive salary - Group size 3 | Portsmouth

*A new dawn, a new day, a bold beginning.*

**Leading the children of Stamshaw Junior School on a journey of discovery with infinite possibilities.**

The School is joining the University of Chichester Academy Trust. With your leadership, drive and commitment, and our support, the School will be re-launched delivering an exciting and dynamic education experience for its pupils and the community it serves.

Do you believe you are that leader with the passion, inspiration and vision to make a real difference to Stamshaw Junior School?

We hope your answer is yes, and you find the Headteacher information pack inspires you to learn more. We are keen to invite you to the School to meet with our interim headteacher and a Trust leader, to discuss how we could work together to make a lasting difference to the children in this school and to the community it serves.

To arrange a visit to Stamshaw Junior School, please contact in the first instance **Jacqui Farrell**, Administrator on (01243) 793421 or email [unicathr@chi.ac.uk](mailto:unicathr@chi.ac.uk)

Further information can be found at <http://www.unicat.org.uk/find-job>

[www.unicat.org.uk](http://www.unicat.org.uk)  
[@chiuniAcademies](https://twitter.com/chiuniAcademies)

Closing date: 25 March 2019 9.00am  
Interview date: 28 - 29 March 2019

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