

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

The trust running its own headteacher job swap



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'It must have felt like their cantakerous uncle had come to stay'



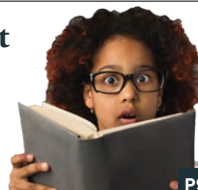
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Dock CEO pay at your peril, academies warned



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Phonics claims get reality check after SATs scores drop



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- Move should boost teacher numbers as thousands fail 'unnecessary' checks
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EXCLUSIVE PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

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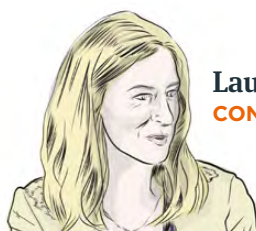
# SCHOOLS WEEK

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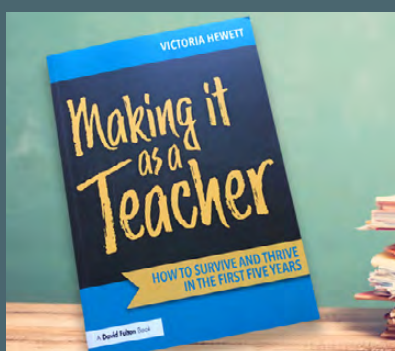
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## Editor's top picks



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# Skills tests for new teachers set to disappear

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

The numeracy and literacy skills entry tests that prospective teachers must pass to start training are set to be ditched, *Schools Week* understands.

The move could boost the government's efforts to reach its teacher recruitment targets – at least 3,500 would-be teachers have failed the compulsory tests every year since 2012.

The move, expected to be announced in the coming days, follows consultation about whether the tests are fit for purpose.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister and a long-time supporter of the tests, wrote just last year they "reassure parents and school leaders" that new teachers can "demonstrate a high standard of numeracy and literacy when they enter the classroom".

But it is understood the government will instead allow initial teacher training providers to use their own judgment to assess candidates' numeracy and literacy skills.

Emma Hollis, the executive director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Training, said: "There will be fears that this may be seen as dumbing down the profession, but I think those fears would be misplaced.

"The majority of providers are already working with trainees to ensure that if there are any gaps, they are filled."

Initial teacher training providers have long called for the tests to be scrapped. Hollis said they were not "fit for purpose" and had been "beset with issues", such as high costs and candidates struggling to get appointments to take the tests.

"We certainly believe that you want prospective teachers to be able to evidence



functional literacy and numeracy, but we think there are far more nuanced, sophisticated ways to do that."

Around 10 per cent of candidates fail at least one of the tests each year, according to government data.

Originally, any would-be teacher who failed three times was locked out of training for two years before he or she could retake the tests, but that limit was removed last February.

In April the government also admitted that a marking error meant hundreds of trainees over the past few years were wrongly told they had failed.

Schools Week revealed last month the DfE could face legal action after offering those affected an "insulting" £100 compensation.

The Department for Education has been speaking to candidates, training providers, internal customers and external service organisations about the effectiveness of the current tests, what the barriers are and how the system might be reformed. It declined to comment.

Last year the DfE awarded a £15 million contract to PSI services to deliver the tests. The contract, which began on July 1, runs for three years. It is not yet known how quickly the DfE will scrap the tests.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said trainees having a degree and a pass in GCSE English and maths should be "sufficient evidence of their competence".

"There are very significant teacher shortages across the country and we need to do more to encourage recruitment. We should remove any unnecessary hurdles."

Requirements were toughened up in 2012 under Michael Gove's tenure at the DfE. He said at the time it would "help ensure we raise standards in our schools and close the attainment gap between the rich and poor".

But David Owen, the head of teacher education at the Sheffield Institute of Education, said the skills tests were "unnecessary" with too much overlap between them, the activities candidates were expected to do at interview, and the training itself.

"When they were initially brought in we were in a different situation . . . there was concern people were being recruited who didn't have basic professional skills.

"Now we're in a position of persuading people that teaching is a great job to do, so putting several similar hurdles in their way prior to entry to the course is not helpful."

## SKILLS TEST FAIL RATE

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
No of trainees failed	3,560	3,639	4,087	4,202	4,243	3,748
Percentage failed	8%	9%	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%	9.5%

## News

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# 'Reform Progress 8 to boost creative subjects'

**KATHRYN SNOWDON**  
@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

Ministers should ditch the EBacc and reform the Progress 8 performance measure to arrest the slump in the number of pupils taking creative arts subjects, says a new report.

The education think tank EDSK found that since the introduction of the EBacc in 2010, design and technology GCSE entries have fallen 65 per cent. Entries for dance have dipped 46 per cent and media studies 35 per cent.

GCSE music entries also fell by 24 per cent, with a 6 per cent drop in art and design.

Tom Richmond, a director of EDSK and a former adviser to the Department of Education, said the worrying trend could "no longer be ignored".

"As teachers and school leaders are already facing significant workload issues, the EBacc should be scrapped to allow them to concentrate on improving the quality of teaching and learning instead of chasing meaningless and unattainable targets."

He said Progress 8, introduced in 2016 to capture



the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school, had rendered the EBacc "worthless".

Progress 8 would still encourage schools to prioritise "core" subjects, such as science, history, geography, languages, English and maths, the report said. It suggested policymakers could bring further change through the measure in three ways.

Combining the second and third progress buckets, so pupils could choose any six subjects alongside English and maths, would remove the distinction between "core" (EBacc) and "additional" (non-EBacc) subjects.

Combining buckets two and three, but then offering increased weighting for the subjects in bucket two would "incentivise schools to keep

entering pupils for 'core' subjects".

Option three would be to cut bucket two to two subjects to give schools more space in the curriculum for "additional" subjects, which should reduce the incentive to put more resources into the EBacc.

The report said it was "time for a new approach to school performance measures that goes beyond fighting the battles of 2010 and instead focuses on what needs to happen in 2019 and beyond".

However, Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of Ofsted, said this week it would be a "mistake" to attribute the "long-term" decline in creative subjects solely on the EBacc.

Speaking at a V&A conference on Wednesday, she said that the slump in design and technology GCSEs started in 2003 after a "perfect storm" of changes that included the subject being dropped as compulsory at key stage 4 and BTECs and other vocational qualifications being given equivalence to GCSEs in performance tables four years later.

The Department of Education defended the EBacc, saying that since its introduction there had been a rise in the proportion of young people achieving grade 4/ C or above in the core subjects.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## LAs may have to publish annual school accounts

The government will consider new legislation to force councils into publishing annual school accounts similar to those required of academy trusts.

The Department for Education announced yesterday that it would shortly publish a consultation "to address the disparity between transparency of financial reporting in local authority schools and academies".

*Schools Week* understands the consultation will look at whether the requirement for academy trusts to publish annual accounts with details of the financial status of all of their schools could be extended to councils. It is believed such a change would require primary legislation.

Ministers have for some time been working on a plan to increase transparency in the local authority-maintained sector. As previously revealed by *Schools Week*, Lord Agnew, the academies minister, is working on an

"accountability matrix" between council and academies to show the difference in approach.

In a statement, the DfE said: "To further build on the government's ambition to improve how all types of schools across the country are run and ensure transparency is consistent across the education system, the department will also shortly be publishing a new consultation to address the disparity between transparency of financial reporting in local authority schools and academies."

It comes after *Schools Week* revealed last December how thousands of council schools have not had their finances independently scrutinised for more than five years. Three were last audited by their local authority nearly 20 years ago.

The announcement was made off the back of the publication of a set of "ad-hoc statistics", which ministers said showed the success of their programme to convert failing LA-

maintained schools into academies.

The release said that 80,000 more pupils now studied in "good" or "outstanding" sponsored academies than in 2017.

However, there has been a substantial increase in the number of sponsored academies in that time, which accounts for a chunk of the rise.

The DfE says the rise showed that standards "typically rise faster in many sponsored academies than in similar council-run schools".

However, this conflicts with the findings of a Local Government Association study in May that found schools with poor Ofsted grades were more likely to improve if they stayed under local authority control than if they converted to academies.

The DfE's release also revealed how 54,000 fewer pupils were now learning in "good" or "outstanding"-rated schools than two years ago.

## News



# State school pupils missing out on university outreach

**KATHRYN SNOWDON**  
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Schools serving deprived communities are more than two-and-a-half times more likely to encounter barriers in getting university access help for their pupils than schools in the private sector.

The *Barrier to Access* report, published today by the education charity The Brilliant Club, calls for providers of university access opportunities to "go out of their way" to help to close the gap.

More than half (51 per cent) of the private school teachers surveyed by Teacher Tapp as part of the study said they had not encountered any barriers to getting opportunities for their pupils to learn about university.

That went down to 20 per cent in state schools.

Teachers in schools with the most free school meal pupils, who did get help, were also more than three times as likely to say that opportunities were not designed to meet their needs (19 per cent) compared with teachers at private schools (6 per cent).

Dr Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: "Access to the most selective universities is another example of the deep inequality in Britain today.

"This research demonstrates one key reason why that inequality persists – schools serving the most privileged young people still find it easier to take advantage of opportunities to prepare them for university."

One in 50 of the "most disadvantaged" fifth of young people attend a highly selective university, compared with a quarter of the "most advantaged".

The survey of 3,000 teachers found the main barriers to university access help for state schools were time and logistics, as well as cost

and the availability of opportunities.

Richard Eyre, the co-author of the report and the chief programme officer at The Brilliant Club, which aims to increase the number of poor pupils in selective universities, said "young people who most need this support are losing out.

"Everybody working in university access needs to make sure that the funding is there and what we're offering is relevant and accessible for the schools that are underserved."

The report recommends that providers of university access opportunities go out of their way to reach these schools and to engage with pupils in primary school.

State schools should also be helped to boost their capacity to engage with universities, the report said.

Sarah Stevens, the head of policy at the Russell Group, said the group of elite universities wanted students from disadvantaged backgrounds to receive the sort of advice and support that pupils at private schools "take for granted".

The group's Advancing Access initiative uses digital open days to provide teachers from schools in less affluent areas with support to help their pupils make successful university applications.

A Universities UK spokesperson said that it was "committed" to widening access to higher education, citing partnerships such as the National Collaborative Outreach Programme that brings together universities, colleges and other local partners to deliver outreach programmes to young people in years 9 to 13.

In May the University of Oxford pledged a new access programme to ensure that by 2023 one in four of its intake would be from the poorest backgrounds.

The Department for Education has announced grant funding of more than £200,000 to directly support school partnerships. It said that proposals that specifically targeted support to children from disadvantaged backgrounds would be "welcomed".

## Healthy schools scheme fails the taste test

**JOHN DICKENS**  
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EXCLUSIVE

The government's "healthy schools" rating scheme is "pointless", says a health expert after it was published this week – nearly two years late.

Schools are being encouraged to take part in the voluntary scheme by completing a survey that covers four areas: food education, school food standards, time spent on physical education and active travel.

They will then receive a report based on their answers, with the highest-scorers getting a gold, silver or bronze award. The ratings will not be shared publicly.

The "healthy schools" plan was proposed as part of the government's child obesity action plan in 2016, and was supposed to be up and running by September 2017.

The new scheme says schools can pass on their rating to Ofsted inspectors, who could consider it as evidence when reaching a judgment on "personal development".

The previous plans stated the new rating scheme would be referred to in the school inspection handbook.

Paul Evans, the vice-chair of the British Obesity Society and the managing director of education consultancy School Health UK, said: "Not least has it taken 24 months to finally confirm what – at the time – was branded a groundbreaking development in childhood obesity, but it now means that instead of Ofsted exploring it amongst personal development behaviour and welfare considerations, schools can notify Ofsted – if they like.

"It is the children's equivalent of a child telling a teacher that he's done some extra homework he wasn't asked to do in the hope of getting an extra sticker. Waste of everyone's time. Pointless."

The scheme has also been opened up to secondary schools, but appears not to "actively involve parents in the ratings process" – as originally pledged.

It comes as Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector, told *The Observer* newspaper on Sunday that pupils' wellbeing was at risk as sports were squeezed out of the curriculum. She called on the government to do more to increase sport in schools.

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# Cut CEO pay at your peril, confederation boss warns

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Academy trusts could face costly employment tribunals if they dock leaders' pay for poor financial performance. The warning comes after the government recommended the sanction in new guidance for trustees.

The Department for Education advises chains to add provisions to leaders' employment contracts "to revise salaries where the financial position of the trust deteriorates due to poor management".

Trusts should "ensure there is flexibility in the employment contract of the accounting officer to make downward adjustments if appropriate".

But Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, warned that docking pay was "very risky in HR terms for any organisation, but particularly for public sector organisations". Legal action could follow.

Her comments echo those of Shân Evans, an employment specialist at JCP Solicitors, who wrote in *People Management* magazine in February that "legally an employer cannot impose a pay cut upon its employees if they have an employment contract that sets out details of their salary entitlement".

"This decision is therefore one the employees in questions will have to consent to. They are not obliged to give their consent, and they could take legal action to prevent such a change."

Ministers have come under increasing

pressure to tackle the high salaries of some academy executives and have written to more than 200 chains ordering them to justify the salaries paid to bosses.

The DfE says 51 trusts have cut salaries, but won't reveal their names.

However, the department is powerless to intervene if its letters are ignored. *Schools Week* revealed in March that nearly half of the trusts warned by the government paid their chief executives more last year.

The new guidance, which is non-statutory, also urges trusts to "consider the total remuneration package, not just the cost of the basic salary", and even suggests that chief executives and other non-teaching staff should not have the same annual holiday entitlement as teachers (14 weeks).

*Schools Week* contacted 16 of the largest trusts to ask if their executive leaders were entitled to 14 weeks holiday. No CEO in the eight that responded had that entitlement, although The Kennal Academies Trust said some senior leaders remained on teachers' pay and conditions "because as part of their role most are headteachers or executive headteachers."

"As senior leaders, the needs of the trust override holiday entitlements," a spokesperson said.

Cruddas said that "in reality, there are

very few senior executives in MATs that would simply go on holiday for 14 weeks of the year.

"Most CEOs I know will take perhaps a week in early August and then possibly another week after GCSE and A-level results are out. That's it. I'm just not sure what problem they're trying to solve here."

Cruddas also criticised the "incredibly unhelpful" use of the phrase "non-teaching staff" because it suggested leaders had no involvement in teaching.

"Senior executive leaders may well not be timetabled to be in the classroom, but they are certainly responsible for teaching and for the quality of education."

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said the new guidance would help trusts to set salaries that were "publicly justifiable".

"Over the past 18 months I have committed to curbing excessive executive pay in a tiny minority of trusts to ensure it is fair and proportionate to the task in hand, and this approach is already yielding positive results."

But Andrew Morris, the assistant general secretary at the National Education Union, called for statutory pay frameworks for all school employees, instead of "feeble 'guidelines' that the record shows many academy trust bosses will simply ignore and continue to fill their pockets".



Leora Cruddas

EXCLUSIVE

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

## Holland Park 'did not break funding rules'

The government has ruled that a single-academy trust that spent thousands on luxury paint and pays its head £260,000 has not broken funding rules.

In the past three years Holland Park School in Kensington, west London, spent almost £15,000 on luxury Farrow & Ball paint and £6,000 on top-of-the-range Jo Malone scented candles, which were paid for through donations and school-generated income.

The school – once dubbed the "socialist Eton" – insisted its spending choices were "justified in the interests of students and staff".

However, a *Schools Week* investigation prompted Lord Agnew, the academies minister, to warn that the government would be "looking into this matter further to ensure that all spending is within the framework of the Academies Financial Handbook".

The Department for Education has twice

asked Holland Park to justify the salary of its head Colin Hall. Another three employees are paid more than £100,000.

A spokesperson for the DfE said this week it had "looked into the finances of Holland Park and no breaches of the Academies Financial Handbook were found."

"We continue to challenge trusts that are not complying to justify high salaries."

Holland Park was contacted for comment.

# SATs show dip in reading at key stage 2

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Ministers' claims of improvements in child literacy have been questioned following a drop in the proportion of pupils meeting the "expected standard" in reading at key stage 2.

Interim SATs results published this week show that although the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard across reading, writing and maths rose to 65 per cent from 64 per cent in 2018, the proportion reaching the level in reading fell from 75 per cent to 73 per cent.

Last year the government announced that more young people were "on track to become fluent readers" as a result of the government's focus on phonics since 2012.

But Jon Andrews, the director of school system and performance at the Education Policy Institute, pointed to data showing this cohort actually had a higher success rate when they sat the phonics screening check.

In 2014, when this year's SATs entrants were in year 1, 74 per cent achieved the expected standard in phonics, but just 73 per cent went on to reach the expected standard in reading this year.

"The Department for Education has previously used the improving results from the phonics check to claim that thousands more pupils are on track to become fluent readers," Andrews told *Schools Week*.

But he said it was "clear that such improvements are not yet being seen at the end of primary school.

"Far more caution needs be exercised when linking results in phonics to later reading results."

The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in maths rose from 75 to 79 per cent this year, but only after the government lowered the subject's pass mark.

The pass mark was also lowered for the grammar, spelling and punctuation test, with 78 per cent of pupils meeting the expected standard, the same level as in 2018. The proportion meeting the standard in writing was 78 per cent, also unchanged from last year.

Nick Brook, the deputy general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, warned against "celebrating too loudly or berating too strongly schools that rise or fall



Percentage reaching the expected standard: England, 2016-19 (all schools)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
READING TEST	66	72	75	73
MATHS TEST	70	75	75	79
GPS TEST	73	77	78	78

Source: Final KS2 data (2016-18), Interim KS2 data (2019)

in their league table position.

"SATs results and league tables provide nothing more than a snapshot of how children performed on a particular day, in a few short tests, in a limited number of subjects," he said

The announcement also comes after a National Education Union poll found 97 per cent of primary teachers backed its campaign to get key stage 2 SATs scrapped.

The union will now consider its next steps, including a full ballot of members for a boycott of SATs next year.

More Than a Score, a campaign group that opposes primary testing because of the impact on schools and pupils, warned the

slightly improved results came "at a heavy price.

"Over a third of year 6 pupils have been told that they have 'not reached the expected standard' based on a very narrow set of tests, taken under pressurised exam conditions," said Sara Tomlinson, a spokeswoman for the group.

"Branding children as failures just before they start secondary school risks turning them off learning altogether."

Despite these warnings, Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the results "show the majority of pupils are leaving primary school ready to deal with the challenges of secondary school".

## News

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## Ofsted recognises why we exclude, OGAT says

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

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EXCLUSIVE

The head of Outwood Grange Academies Trust says Ofsted "accepted" its "high" fixed-term exclusions as a valid approach to turning around schools.

Ofsted heaped praise on the trust, including its "principled" leadership and "unwavering determination to provide the best quality of education for pupils" in a summary evaluation published this week.

OGAT has faced criticism in the past year for its frequent use of fixed-term exclusions, isolation rooms and allegations over its "flattening the grass" policy.

Ofsted, which spoke to trust leaders in May, noted the use of fixed-term exclusions had "reduced notably", but warned they were still "high" across secondary schools and behaviour was "not consistently good".

However, the evaluation praised the trust for taking on a number of "weak" schools and the "striking" impact of its school

improvement work. It also commended the leadership team for a "firmly held belief that 'every child deserves the best'".

Martyn Oliver (pictured), OGAT's chief executive, told *Schools Week* that inspectors had "noted what I've been trying to achieve and they've said 'continue to improve on that work you've already done'".

When asked about exclusions, Oliver said OGAT sponsored some of the most "vulnerable" schools in the country, and when going into a school where neither staff nor pupils felt safe "you expect exclusions are going to start from a position of being higher than average."

"I think here Ofsted has accepted the fact that some of these schools have been broken for generations. Decades. Not weeks and months.



"It takes a lot to turn them around and it doesn't happen overnight. I could reduce exclusions instantly and tell people to stop excluding, but if behaviour then gets worse you've achieved nothing. There's a balance between the two."

OGAT runs 31 schools, including six that joined from the failed Wakefield City Academies Trust. In December, *Schools Week* reported it had the most fixed-term exclusions in four of the 10 authorities warned by Ofsted about high rates.

An Ofsted spokesperson said this week it had recommended the trust "continues to improve pupils' behaviour so that the proportion of fixed-term exclusions further reduces across its secondary schools".

The evaluation found pupil outcomes were "strongly improving" and leadership was classed as "good" or "outstanding" in every school that had been inspected.

Ofsted found work to support vulnerable pupils, particularly those with special needs, was "paying dividends" and that staff felt "supported and valued".

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**Mark,**  
Uniformed Services learner  
and now Prison Officer.

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## Teach First's bumper year prompted by offers spree

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@FCDWHITTAKER

INVESTIGATES

Teach First has recruited its largest cohort of trainee teachers by allowing a much larger proportion of candidates through assessment, and taking on more graduates with 2:2 degrees.

The charity, which aims to place high-flying graduates who might not ordinarily consider teaching in schools serving disadvantaged communities, has recruited 1,735 trainees this year.

While that's still just shy of the 1,750-target set in its £39 million government funding contract, it's a huge increase on recent years.

Figures obtained by Schools Week show that 82 per cent of the applicants who made it through to the assessment stage were offered a place, compared with 59 per cent last year.

The proportion of recruits with a 2:2 degree, while still small, has more than doubled in the past five years.

This year's boom reverses a three-year slump in which cohort numbers dropped as low as 1,259 last year. Teach First insist its success is down to changes to the way the programme is advertised and a higher-quality pool of applicants – not by lowering standards.

However, the fact that the number of recruits increased by 68 per cent in a single year has raised some eyebrows.

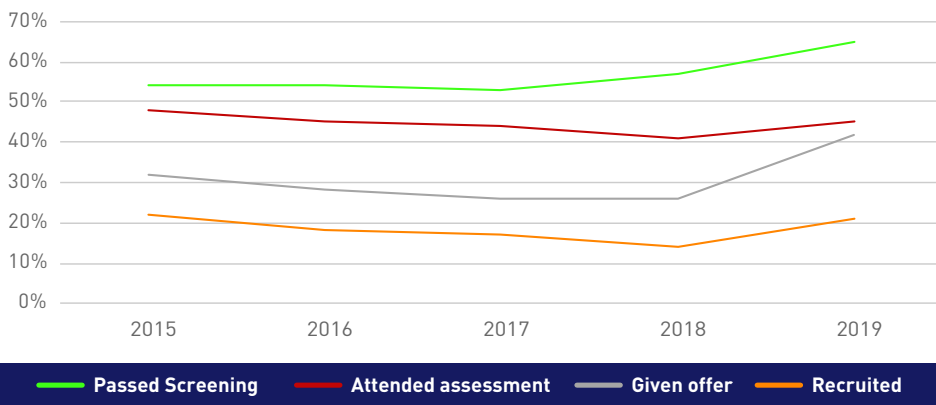
In a tweet Katharine Birbalsingh, the founder and headteacher at Michaela Community School in north London, accused the charity of having “dropped its standards”. It was “now letting anyone in”.

“Easy to boost numbers. Harder to retain quality. Those on the frontline will notice it in a couple of years, doing untold damage to Teach First's reputation,” she tweeted.

Applicants are initially screened to find out if they have the qualifications and competencies required for the scheme. They must have certain GCSE and A-levels and a 2:1 degree or above, although 2:2s are “considered”.

This year, 65 per cent of the 8,240 applicants passed the screening stage. Of the 1,735 accepted, 5 per cent have a 2:2 degree, up from 3 per cent last year and 2 per cent in 2015.

## Teach First recruitment in numbers



## Degrees held by participants

Year	Cohort	Firsts	2:1s	2:2s
2015	1,685	24%	73%	2%
2016	1,441	21%	75%	3%
2017	1,396	23%	73%	3%
2018	1,259	24%	72%	3%
2019	1,735	23%	70%	5%

## Proportion of candidates offered a place following assessment

82%  
201959%  
2018

After passing the screening applicants attend a selection day at a Teach First development centre where they are assessed face-to-face. The charity insists the screening stage has not changed.

This year, 45 per cent of applicants attended an assessment centre, with 82 per cent of those offered a place.

Teach First said this part of the process did alter this year. “One way we did this was by changing the way we identify the

potential of candidates during our face-to-face assessments.

“All teachers, whatever their route into teaching, need to be trained. What's important is seeing the potential in them at the start and supporting them through their training to become excellent teachers.

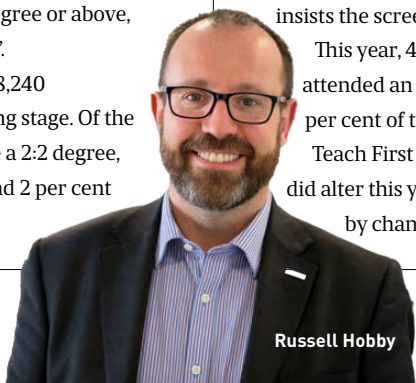
“We therefore reassessed what high-calibre teachers needed to have as pre-existing skills and what they could be taught with our training.”

Russell Hobby, the charity's chief executive, said he was “delighted” it had “bucked trends” with its record-breaking cohort, “but with pupil numbers rapidly rising this isn't ‘job done’.

“We know there are more people out there from all walks of life who could build a rewarding career in teaching and we're determined to find them.”

Dave Cobb, the chief executive of the rival training firm Oceanova, has often criticised Teach First for “elitism”, attrition rates, cost and efficiency.

He told **Schools Week** the latest figures were “to be applauded”, although there were still “big questions” to be answered around the government's funding of the charity, including the cost of the programme and the fees charged to schools.



Russell Hobby

## Panel

## The expert touches, according to Hinds



Damian Hinds, the education secretary, has set up many expert panels during his tenure. We've put together a handy round-up – just so we can keep an eye on them

### EARLY YEARS LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION APPS

**Chair:** Professor Jackie Marsh, professor of education, University of Sheffield



The eight-member panel of academics, consultants, tech company officials and charity workers was established in January to quality-mark apps that support children's learning using mobile phones and tablets. The panel will produce "tips and guidance" for parents on how to use the apps. But ed tech experts say that the omission of teachers is "a big mistake".

### MUSIC CURRICULUM

**Chair:** Veronica Wadley, the former chair of Arts Council, London and the co-founder of London Music Fund



Also launched in January, the music panel will develop a curriculum for key stages 1, 2 and 3 to make it easier for teachers to plan lessons. The document, expected to be published this summer, will be for guidance only. The government came under fire for choosing just three serving school leaders for its 14-strong panel, which includes the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber.

### CHARACTER EDUCATION

**Chair:** Ian Bauckham, the chief executive of Tenax School Trust



Established in May to help schools to develop pupils' "character and resilience", the 18-strong panel will help to draw up recommendations for Gatsby-style benchmarks for character education to measure performance of schools. Hinds has said that boosting character and resilience among children is "key to social mobility". The panel includes current and former teachers, charity heads, former government advisers, academics and union leaders.

### TEACHER WELLBEING

**Chair:** No external chair appointed



Tasked with improving the mental health and wellbeing of teachers, the 26-member panel met for the first time earlier this month to discuss how to ease classroom pressures. Union representatives, education experts and school leaders will gather evidence from teachers and school leaders. Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the group would help to provide "expert advice to help prioritise teachers' mental health and wellbeing – setting a positive example for pupils".

### INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

**Chair:** Sam Twiselton, director of the Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University



Created to review the content of initial teacher training, the seven-strong panel of academics, sector representatives and policy experts will recommend ways that training can align with the government's plans for a new early career framework. The group will draft new guidance that will underpin the training programme for new teachers, starting with the "core content" for ITT and leading into the early career framework.

### EDTECH LEADERSHIP

**Chair:** Lord Chris Holmes, former Paralympic swimmer and co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on assistive technology



This panel was set up to improve the accessibility and inclusion of technology in schools. It came under fire last month when it was revealed that just seven of the 28 members were women, which campaigners called "jarring" and a "real oversight". Holmes admitted "work needs to be done". Sixteen members are from the education sector and 11 are "industry" members, including representatives of Apple and Google.

### ● DOUBLING UP

Four people serve on two panels. Tom Bennett, the founder of ResearchED (character education and teacher wellbeing); Cat Scutt, the director of education and research at the Chartered College of Teaching (character education and edtech); James Bowen, the director of policy at the National Association of Head Teachers (teacher wellbeing and edtech); Professor Becky Francis, the director of the Institute of Education at University College London (initial teacher training and edtech).

## News

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# Academy consultations 'need tightening up'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

INVESTIGATES

Ministers are under pressure to draw up stronger rules on how thoroughly schools must consult before becoming academies after a flurry of legal objections from parents.

Under the Academies Act 2010, the governors of a maintained school that wants to become an academy must consult formally with "such persons as they think appropriate".

Government guidance suggests this should include staff and parents, as well as pupils and the wider community, but this is not included in the act.

There is no specification of how long the consultation should last, and it can be carried out before or after an academy order has been made.

One parent group in east London is seeking a judicial review to challenge the decision of the Roman Catholic diocese of Brentwood to academise a local primary, with as many as 70 other Catholic schools in the diocese.

Parents say the diocese and governors at Our Lady of Lourdes in Wanstead failed to properly consult on the plans and are calling for a fresh vote on academisation after a new, full consultation. The school did not respond to a request for comment.

Parent campaigner Vicky Taylor, who has two sons at the school, told Schools Week the group was not "all anti-academy" but felt it had been "frozen out".

"If we'd had a proper consultation it would have made all the difference. If this is to the benefit of everybody and such a good thing, then why are you not sharing that with us?"

"Everybody loves the school. No one wants to take legal action. But when you're not being engaged with, there's only so much you can do."

Legal action is also being mounted in Hertfordshire after a group of parents dismissed a consultation into Woodside primary joining Ivy Learning Trust as "flawed", and demanded a "fair and meaningful consultation period", the Hertfordshire Mercury reported.

The challenges leave schools facing hefty legal bills. It's estimated a one-day judicial review incurs legal costs of between £25,000 and £40,000 for each party.

Julie McCulloch, the head of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said guidance should be "tightened up".



Consultation posters outside Our Lady of Lourdes



Vicky Taylor's son joins the protests

"It's right the consultation is advisory, it's right it's the governing body's final decision, but we would advise it makes that decision knowing the views of its key stakeholders, particularly parents.

"The earlier it consults and the more meaningfully it consults, the more likely it is it will make a decision that takes the views of those stakeholders on board."

Last year parents in east London mounted a legal challenge against plans for Avenue Primary to join the EKO trust, complaining of a lack of consultation and concerns over the impact on staff. Backed by striking teachers, the group succeeded in getting permission for a judicial review into the legality of the process. The governing body scrapped the plans in May.

Failing schools that receive a directive academy order do not have to consult.

But Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said this should happen as parents were "entitled to know which trust is coming in and taking over their school and what they intend to do.

"If you've got an entire school community saying it doesn't want this to happen then it should be listened to. It shouldn't have to go to the length of the judicial reviews."

Caroline Johnson, the head of education at the law firm Bates Wells, said: "Given how much discretion the governing body has, it would be quite difficult to challenge a consultation. And even if successful the likely outcome would be that the governing body had to redo it – a challenge



Kevin Courtney

would not be likely to stop the conversion, which tends to be what unhappy parents really want."

She advised schools to consult parents, staff, other local schools and pupils, and for a consultation to last at least six weeks and preferably not over a school holiday.

Meanwhile, Dorset council has told the government it will be "testing the legality" of what it believes was a flawed consultation over the choice of the Aspirations trust to take over Budmouth College in Weymouth.

The council said that as a foundation school, the government must consult with school trustees and the person who appointed them.

Members of an interim executive board, appointed by the council, are currently acting as trustees. The council said neither had been consulted.

A spokesperson for the DfE said: "Schools carry out consultations regularly, on a variety of issues and we believe they are the experts on how best to consult and communicate with parents and the wider community."

# Schools need more support to make RSE work

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Twenty-eight per cent of teachers believe their school is not ready to teach the new relationships and sex education lessons that become compulsory next year.

A poll of more than 2,000 teachers by the NSPCC and the National Education Union also found that 47 per cent lack confidence in their ability to deliver the lessons. The findings have prompted calls for the government to invest more in training and support.

From September next year all schools will have to teach relationships and health education, and all secondaries will have to teach sex education.

Guidance on the content has also been updated for the first time in almost 20 years to include subjects such as consent, pornography and female genital mutilation (FGM).

However, the survey casts doubts on the



ability of schools to handle more complex issues. For example, 61 per cent of teachers said they did not feel confident teaching about the impact of pornography, while 54 per cent lacked the confidence to address FGM with their pupils.

Just 10 per cent said they felt "very confident" in confronting those issues.

The government has allocated £6 million to support schools and train teachers to deliver the new RSE lessons, but the Sex Education Forum believes it will cost ten times that to properly prepare schools.

Seventy-eight per cent of respondents said face-to-face training would boost their confidence in teaching the subjects, while 74 per cent said more funding for staff training would ensure schools were ready.

"It is clear teachers need better support, which is where the government must do more or risk undermining the new curriculum," said Almudena Lara, the NSPCC's head of policy.

Government support for schools has also been called into question following a bitter dispute between schools in Birmingham and parents over teaching about LGBT+ relationships.

Protesters, most of whom are members of the local Muslim community, have returned to Parkfield School after it relaunched its "no outsiders" programme of equality education.

It teaches pupils that same-sex relationships are healthy and normal.

Birmingham council was forced to obtain an injunction against protests at another school, Anderton Park primary, which has also taught about equality for many years.

Heads and policy experts believe a lack of clear guidance on the new RSE proposals and poor support from the government are among the primary reasons for the protests.

## Looking for resources to mark special days in the educational calendar?

**BBC**  
**Teach**


### Black History Month

October 2019

Read the stories of three people who changed history and engage with our School Radio assembly framework.



### Mental Health

Anti-Bullying Week

November 2019

Children's Mental Health Week

February 2020

To support your class and promote the importance of mental wellbeing.

The themes explored include puberty, body image, depression, learning differences, OCD and bullying.



### Shakespeare Week

16–22 March 2020

An amazing collection of resources for primary and secondary pupils including 'Shakespeare in Shorts', retellings of Shakespeare plays set to modern music.

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## EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Bravo to Teach First, but can it maintain the same quality?

In the midst of a teacher recruitment and retention crisis, Teach First deserves praise for its efforts to boost its cohort numbers.

The organisation should also be commended for being open and transparent with its facts and figures when pressed by Schools Week.

The numbers strongly suggest a decision has been made to pass more applicants at the assessment stage and admit more candidates with 2:2 degrees.

There will no doubt be some snobbery about the latter. But the potential of a would-be teacher has never been defined in the numbers that appear on a degree certificate.

What remains to be seen, however, is whether the changes to Teach First's assessment stage keeps the bar as high as in previous cohorts.

This is important: Teach First trainees cost the taxpayer a lot more than those who train in other routes.

Either way, we wish all 1,735 trainees well as they begin their journey into the best profession in the world.

There could also be more good news on the way for teacher numbers as the government is set to ditch its skills tests for would-be teachers.

Initial teacher training providers say they are an unnecessary barrier into the profession and, despite him defending the tests previously, the providers seem to have won over Nick Gibb, the schools minister.

It seems to be a pretty sound move. ITT providers already do their own assessment of candidates' numeracy and literacy skills, so what's the point in another hurdle at a time when more new teachers are needed?

However Gibb is sticking to his guns on the EBacc. Despite another round of criticism this week (page 5), there are no signs of a government climbdown.

And Gibb looks to have found a fellow teammate to bat for his beloved EBacc.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's chief inspector, this week injected a dose of rational logic against the argument that the EBacc is solely to blame for the dive in creative GCSE numbers.

However, there are still some big and unaddressed concerns. For instance, where are the language teachers coming from?

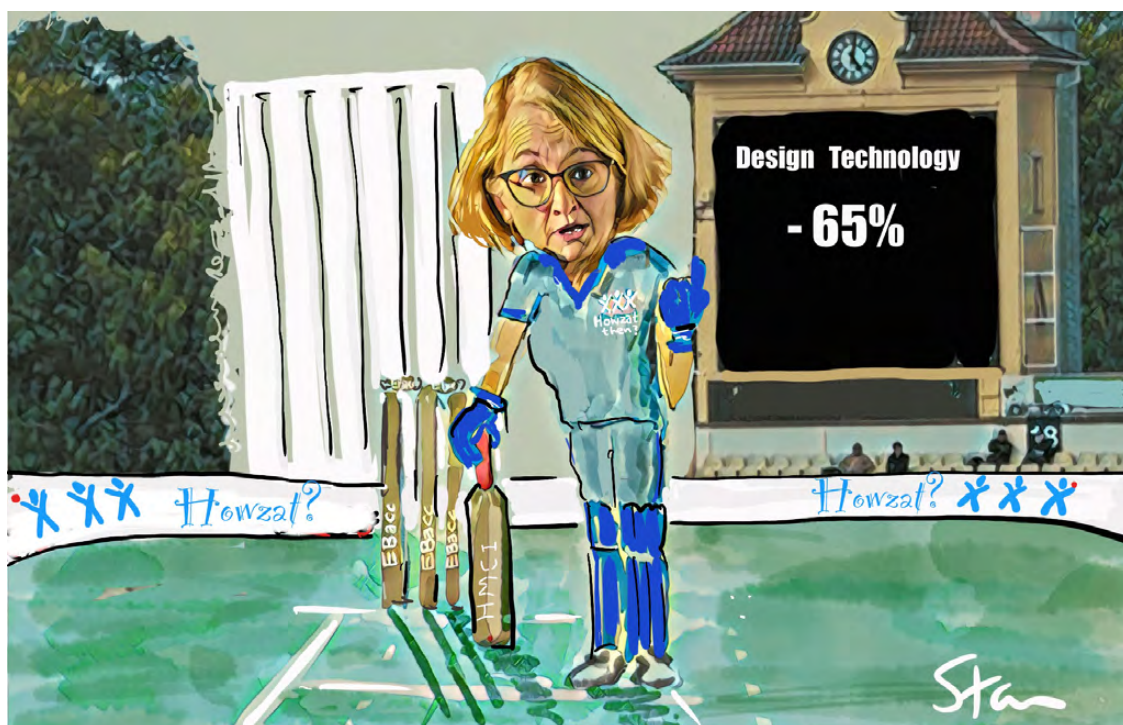
With a new prime minister due, a ministerial reshuffle might see the DfE lose its biggest EBacc fan. Will a new team have the appetite to solve the pressing problems?

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## Feature: The trust doing job swaps



Claire Cuthbert, chief executive of the Evolve Trust

# Trading places: how a trust broke down barriers

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

**Two headteachers and a director of school improvement in Nottinghamshire have swapped roles for two years. It's a move that has nudged them out of their comfort zones...**

Forget the US reality TV show *Wife Swap*. An academy trust in Nottinghamshire has gone one better by encouraging three senior leaders to switch schools.

Claire Cuthbert, the chief executive of the Evolve Trust, set up the two-year role swap as the centrepiece of its school improvement plan with a view to develop the leaders' potential as future chief executives.

It comes at a time when expansion of the academy trust model seems to have changed the traditional role of senior leaders in the chain of command: are they in charge or do they simply deliver the vision of trustees through the techniques favoured by those above them?

Two heads at Evolve – which runs three academies in the ex-mining town of Mansfield – and its director of school

improvement switched roles: Carl Atkin, the head at Brunts secondary academy, became director of school improvement; Michael Lucas, the director of school improvement, went to head the special school, Beech Academy, whose head, Adrian O'Malley,

**“We realised we could call on each other's help and expertise”**

took on the Brunts. Meanwhile a new head, Charlotte Elliott, was appointed at the trust's third school, the Bramble primary academy.

The three are half-way through their swaps before they return to their original schools.

Atkin describes the moment in February last year when Cuthbert suggested to her all-male headship team that they swap schools. The longest had been in post for ten years.

“It was a bit of a tumbleweed moment,” he says. “What is the risk? But then we realised

we could call on each other's help and expertise. That afternoon, we said yes.”

So what has he learnt?

“I've never worked across a different age phase. The biggest change is looking at the strategy across all the schools. I was becoming quite operational as a head, and quite comfortable.”

Cuthbert puts it another way: she says that Atkin saw his leadership, like his school, as being “good with outstanding features” (Ofsted's judgment after an inspection in 2017).

“I knew the place like the back of my hand,” Atkin says. “I knew the staff, the buildings, I even knew where the drains were. But I was starting to lose that level of challenge. This swap has prevented that.”

Atkin says that when he returns to his secondary he wants to knit the curriculum more closely with the primary curriculum. Similarly, observing his colleague make the move to the special needs Beech Academy has led him to feel more strongly that SEND pupils should access the same level of challenge as pupils without additional needs.

“I see my secondary with fresh eyes. There are things I would do differently, like the ways we developed the culture of the school.”

## Feature: The trust doing job swaps

**“The rules aren’t as black and white as they can be in mainstream”**

Michael Lucas, headteacher of the Beech Academy helps a student in year 7

Lucas, now head of the Beech, says “from a leadership perspective” it’s not been too different. “It’s still about having a vision and building a team around you and driving the school forward. But from a teacher perspective, I’ve learned a hell of a lot. My ability to differentiate my lessons for pupils is much better. I’d never taught students with the complexity of needs at the Beech. That was a huge learning curve.

“I’d also underestimated how important

it was to build very strong relationships with the students. A lot have had failed mainstream placements, so potentially there’s an absence of trust there and you need to build trust and rapport – the rules aren’t as black and white as they can be in mainstream. You have to go the extra mile.

“It’s been the most rewarding part of my senior leadership career. I would absolutely recommend to anyone to hone their skills by teaching in a special school, you’ve got to

be willing to try new things. This has been a masterstroke.”

Cuthbert’s main focus has been the schools’ “culture”. When she joined Evolve in September 2016, Brunts had been “good” for several years, but it was supporting the Ofsted “inadequate” primary, while the special needs school was in special measures.

Cuthbert noticed that her three heads seemed to be working in silos without collaboration, and that there was no overall trust strategy for school improvement.

A firm believer in “culture eats strategy for breakfast”, she enlisted Professor Ben Laker, the academic who put forward the five “types” of school leadership: the surgeon, philosopher, soldier, architect and accountant.

His research controversially linked the style of leadership to subject specialisms, claiming that PE and RE teachers were the most likely to be ruthless “surgeon” heads.

But the research also won plaudits for making a strong case for long-term school improvement. And it was Laker who helped Cuthbert to come up with the idea for the headship swap. The pair developed the trust’s new values – ambition, integrity, inclusivity, reward and endeavour – but Cuthbert wasn’t convinced they were embedded.

“I sometimes felt it was quite tokenistic



Left to right: Carl Atkin, the director of school improvement, Adrian O'Malley the head at Brunts, Claire-Marie Cuthbert, the chief executive of the trust and Michael Lucas, the head of Beech

# Feature: The trust doing job swaps



Year 10 students from Beech

and they were just paying lip service. I said, 'if you really believe in the trust values and culture, it won't matter which school you're in'. That's why I moved them."

Atkin says the values provided the much-needed stability to make the swaps a success. "The common ground across the schools is those values – we recognise and reward pupils and staff using similar systems."

Cuthbert also introduced a concept-led curriculum in the three schools to provide more consistency across subjects, and an enrichment programme.

What is most remarkable is her dedication to professionally developing the heads. The schools were improving before the swap: in December 2017, Bramble became "requires improvement" and in May 2017 Beech became "good". But for Cuthbert, better Ofsted ratings are not enough: the point is to develop some of the best leaders in the academy system.

"The idea is they are becoming better heads and they can take the practice they have learned back to their home school – which has also moved on in the time they have been away. But I'd also like them to go on and become CEOs and provide other heads with the same learning opportunities. It's about wider system change."

Cuthbert also introduced the Headship

## "I'd like them to go on and become chief executives"

Institute, a development programme involving fortnightly meet-ups for heads to discuss the latest research on best practice, share what is working at their schools, and reinforce the trust's culture and values.

This term's core text is *The Barcelona Way*, a book by Damian Hughes about the famous football club and "unlocking the DNA of a winning culture".

Cuthbert restructured a central leadership board "the size of a football team". Her success has been to refocus the top of the trust's structure (and salaries) on educational leadership.

She also scrapped individual school governing bodies and moved the best people from each on to five "scrutiny boards" for standards, personal development, audit and finance, health, safety and estates and HR. In September there will be a "community" board too.

"Rather than keeping the expertise at one school, each scrutiny board looks at one thing across all three schools. The governors love it."

Last year the trust won an award for outstanding governance from the National Governance Association, which lauded Evolve's "unique approach to governing and leading, in that the trust seeks to actively contribute to a much bigger system, while not losing sight of the needs of existing stakeholders".

Last week the Department for Education appointed a panel to review the official guidance on how heads should do their job. The first review since 2015, it comes amid concerns the headteacher standards are not being used enough – perhaps a sign their role has been neglected.

Given that Cuthbert seems to have a rare ability to implement a trust-wide vision for her schools, while simultaneously developing rather than overshadowing the expertise of those involved, Evolve's model is one the new panel might consider.

Meanwhile, the trust plans to extend its school leadership swap programme to include assistant and deputy heads, who will swap roles for one year from September.

Should there be a chief executive swap too? "Yes, I'd love that," Cuthbert says. "That would be great!" Her next project, perhaps?

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## CHRIS FORSYTH

Now Teach cohort 2017

### I was a grizzled, senior lawyer. Now I teach history in south London

Chris Forsyth reflects on his move to the classroom with Now Teach

My metamorphosis from a grizzled, senior business lawyer to teaching history at a South London academy was something I reflected upon recently when I attended the first conference held by Now Teach – the charity set up to recruit and support experienced career-changers. I led a session looking at how we could best be of use to the system in the context of the retention crisis.

As an ex-lawyer, I will start with a disclaimer: I am totally convinced of the validity and value of the Now Teach initiative. Importing an older generation of “seasoned” careerists to bolster our teaching resources and redress the age imbalance highlighted by the recent OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report can benefit our schools hugely.

For me, re-engaging with my degree subject (history), learning a new skill set, theory and practice, from scratch, and testing myself every day in front of classes of sharp, sceptical, often resistant students, was energising and rewarding. Every day brought little victories ... and little challenges.

One challenge at the front of my

‘reflection queue’ was the feeling that I hadn’t utilised my wider skills and experience as much as I’d hoped; a missed opportunity for me, the students and the school. At the time, it felt like there was a resistance to my participation and contribution but looking back, I wondered if I’d assimilated into my teacher group as well as I’d hoped.

“ You will seem alien to the other teachers and trainees

We teachers from Now Teach lie outside the UK’s general teaching staff profile. At 57, I was at least a quarter of a century older than almost every other teacher in my school. Many of us are parents, with children mostly at university and beyond.

We were culturally different too. I can still feel the prickly silence in the staffroom when I suggested that Love Island, with its glorification of ignorance, lewdness, and self-obsession, was exactly the kind of freak show that devalued education and undermined young people’s self-esteem.

For the younger teachers, it must have felt like their most cantankerous

and out-of-touch uncle had come to stay.

So, what did I say to my Now Teach conference audience, many of whom are just about to start their initial teacher training year?

Be aware that as an older new teacher you will seem alien to the other teachers and trainees you work with. I was so full of “wisdom” when I started – ideas, opinions, and challenges based on my previous career. To my new colleagues, I must have seemed like THE Alien – not a great first impression if your aim is to assimilate. I could (and should) have been gentler, more compliant, less outspoken.

There can be flex from the school side too. The decision career changers make to move to teaching is no less valid, nor should they be

considered less committed, than career starters.

Observations and suggestions made from the perspectives of their past careers need not be arrogant or threatening. On the contrary, the absorption of applicable best practice ideas from other people-driven service professions, can and will benefit schools.

Examples of areas where I felt practices could be improved at my school were team-working and professional training. In my legal roles, these functions were considered essential in optimising service quality and staff motivation/retention.

I hadn’t appreciated how isolating

a teacher’s job is. You spend most of your time alone in a class either teaching, preparing to teach, or dealing with the output of teaching. Co-operation and knowledge/practice sharing within and between departments is squeezed out and professional training can sometimes feel perfunctory and superficial.

Some training sessions were delivered like student lessons, more about compliance than substantial professional development. As a result, teachers, new or not, saw them as unwelcome distractions from lesson prep or marking.

In my previous career, sophisticated, high-quality team management and professional development are key in maintaining performance and motivation. The TALIS study identifies them as major factors in generating self-efficacy and satisfaction in staff, driving better staff retention.

When considering a knotty problem, one of the cleverest (and nicest) lawyers I ever worked with would muse, “I don’t know where we are ... but there we are.”

It’s OK to acknowledge when we don’t know something. My experience convinces me that there are big advances to be made if our schools and school chains can import ideas and practice from other professions.

Older career change teachers can make significant contributions, provided that they can assimilate into their school environments, and that their host schools can appreciate the benefits and value that non-education sector approaches and experience could bring.

Opinion


DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**All schools need to be aware of children affected by trauma and have practical measures in place to help them, says Lynn Miles. But, she warns, there is no low-cost, quick-fix solution**

It is a sad fact that half the children in the UK will have suffered an adverse childhood experience (ACE) – including emotional, social and physical abuse, often perpetrated by the primary caregiver – and 10 per cent will have endured four or more of these experiences by the age of 18.

I was one of those children. At primary school I was violent and unpredictable and at secondary school withdrawn and disengaged. Fortunately, thanks to a few perceptive teachers, flexibility in the school system and my welfare being more of a priority than exam results, I turned out all right. These teachers understood what my throwing meant and took the time to build relationships with me, taught me new strategies to deal with my emotions, filled my skills gaps and channelled my strength and anger into throwing javelins instead of furniture. My life would have been very different if it had not been for them. I would not have trained to be a teacher and chosen to work with children like me.

School leaders need to take steps to ensure that children affected by trauma can thrive rather than just survive. They need to recognise that there is no low-cost, quick-fix solution, because the damage has often been done over many years. A handful of strategies implemented over a term by a few staff will not work; nothing short of a whole-school approach will create an environment that enables children to feel safe, supported, valued



LYNN MILES

Lecturer in education,  
Teesside University

## These children must be allowed to thrive rather than just survive

and ready to learn.

Heads must take stock of the number of trauma-affected children. To do this they need to attend comprehensive ACEs and trauma training to understand the huge impact that these have on children's

procedures that support and accommodate children suffering the repercussions of ACEs/trauma and discuss with their senior leadership team (SLT) which approaches are suitable for their school and, most importantly, the children.

“ Zero tolerance behaviour policies are ineffective

social, emotional, neurological, sensorial, physiological, moral and cognitive development.

They should then explore interventions, policies and

Once the key issues have been identified, all staff should get relevant training. This should include specialist ACEs and trauma training from an external provider that ideally



should be topped up regularly.

The whole-school approach should ensure that frontline staff are equipped to support pupils whilst the SLT can embed the knowledge they have acquired into school policies and procedures.

Strategies to aid vulnerable pupils, backed by resources, are essential. For example this might involve the SLT buying in a social and emotional learning (SEL) programme or introducing “calm corners” into all classrooms, backed with training and resources on how to do this effectively.

Wider school policies should be reviewed too. Research suggests that zero tolerance and punitive behaviour policies, for example, are ineffective for children who have had difficult childhoods (see [Zero-Tolerance Policies in U.S. Schools are Ineffective and Unaffordable](#) and [Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools](#)).

Schools should consider instead restorative practices to improve and repair relationships between people and communities. For example, creating a space where conflicts can be discussed and resolved; providing appropriate resources (scripts) to support discussions; and introducing whole-class negotiations as to appropriate next steps for adverse behaviours.

These children benefit from the most qualified and experienced staff who truly understand what has happened to them and the impact it has had on their bodies and minds; staff who will be there consistently and compassionately, no matter what is thrown at them. These staff need to be effectively supported too.

# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### Making it as a Teacher

By Victoria Hewett

Published by Routledge

Reviewed by Loic Menzies, chief executive of LKMco

This September more than 20,000 teachers will begin their NQT year. If my own experience is anything to go by, their heads will be full of big questions for the next two months: "how should I arrange my classroom?"; "what resources will I need?"; "how am I going to cope with the workload?"; and of course, "should I smile before Christmas?" These new recruits would do well to read Victoria Hewett's new book.

Hewett tells it as it is, setting out in frank, and at times bleak, terms how she initially struggled in teaching. But her story is a hopeful and often uplifting one. She recounts how close she came to quitting and shares the practical and transferrable lessons she gained when she turned the corner and fell in love with teaching again. For example, she explains to new teachers that if they find life untenable working in one school, they might find it more fulfilling and manageable elsewhere. She goes on to list a whole range of options for shifting phase, sector and role, including options that never occurred to me when I was leaving teaching.

*Making it as a Teacher* provides detailed ideas to make the job manageable, satisfying and productive. Hewett reminds teachers to consider their values and purpose. She then moves on to the core basics of setting up a classroom, planning, managing behaviour and

marking and feedback. In each section she sets out the benefits of different techniques. While some suggestions might jar in certain settings, the range on offer means there is something for everyone.

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**"You feel that Hewett is the mentor you always wish you had"**

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Helpfully, Hewett offers real-life examples of how she has applied the strategies she describes. She is particularly good at going beyond generic, feel-good suggestions. For example, rather than simply imploring teachers to "be organised", she breaks down what this means in practice and provides suggestions that could easily pass by the average NQT, right down to how to organise files and folders.

Encouragingly she goes beyond what could have been a rather depressing guide to "surviving" in teaching by following up chapters on coping with ones on how to "thrive". She recounts, for example, the joy of building up an engaging professional network and how this can

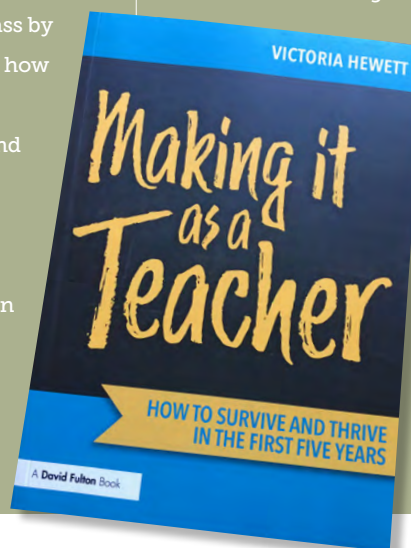
bring personal, as well as occupational benefits. Although some of her practical and well-researched advice will date quickly – for example guides to Twitter chats – it is relevant for now.

One of the strengths of the book is how personal it is. You quickly feel that Hewett is the mentor you always wish you had. She writes in a friendly and accessible style. Unfortunately, this comes at a cost in terms of engagement with evidence and means that it should probably be read alongside more research-based texts, particularly on pedagogy.

Buy this book for a friend who has just qualified and the chances are you will improve their lives. However, if you are already a teacher, most chapters are likely to feel a bit basic or irrelevant.

So back to that all-important question: should you smile before Christmas? Hewett's answer is a resounding yes and, with her advice and guidance, it could help

many more NQTs who currently risk spending the summer somewhat terrified, to smile also.



# Research

Eve Debbage shares some insights from polls of people working in schools. conducted via the Teacher Tapp app

## Mobile phones in the classroom: to ban or not to ban?

**Eve Debbage, project assistant,  
Teacher Tapp**

**L**ove them or loathe them, mobile phones are high in any popularity poll. Children often seem to have them glued to their hands. But do they have a place in the classroom?

In June last year, Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of Ofsted, said that she supported a ban in schools because they interrupted learning and made teachers' jobs more difficult. "There's no doubt that technology has made the challenge of low-level disruption even worse."

But other education leaders say that allowing pupils to use their phone as a resource to record and look up information is a good thing. Forget the pros and cons, however. What are schools actually practising?

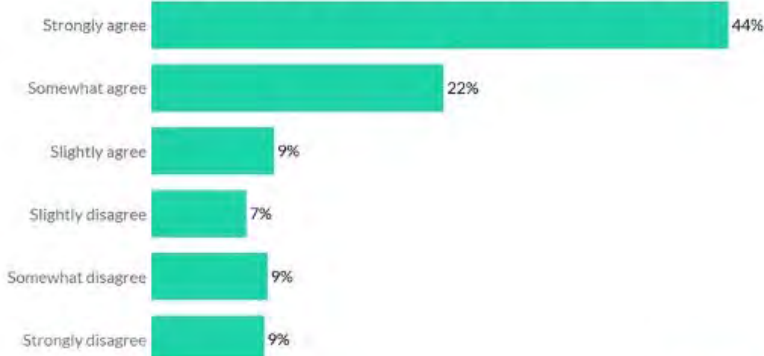
Schools have the freedom to regulate the use of phones amongst pupils and, according to the Department for Education, 95 per cent of them exercise this right in some way. It is the norm for a school to have a mobile phone policy.

Where they differ is in what that policy says. Some teachers collect phones at the beginning of the day, others only allow them to be used during break times. According to our recent Teacher Tapp survey, most primary schools either ban phones or collect them, whereas secondary schools are more varied: just 4 per cent impose an outright ban. This makes sense, given that older pupils will typically travel to school on their own and may attend after-school activities.

What a policy says and how people behave in a school may differ, however. We found from our panel of nearly 4,000 teachers that 25 per cent of them disagreed that rules around student mobile phone usage were consistently applied in their school. On the bright side, this means that three-quarters of teachers agree to some extent, which suggests that most policies are effective.

Headteachers were the most likely to

### Rules around student mobile phone usage are consistently applied by staff in our school



3,788 responders on 02/07/2019

TEACHER TAPP  
ASK · ANSWER · LEARN

### Rules around student mobile phone usage are consistently applied by staff in our school



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strongly agree that rules are consistently applied – 84 per cent in primary and 39 per cent in secondary, compared with 70 per cent of primary classroom teachers and 19 per cent in secondaries. Could this suggest that heads are overly optimistic and out-of-touch with some of the goings-on in their school?

A potentially counter-intuitive finding for those who think all millennials are addicted to their phones, is that newer, and therefore usually younger, teachers are less permissive towards phone use. Maybe this generation's constant immersion makes them hyper-aware of just how distracting phones can be. Considering that newer teachers are the ones

that tend to struggle more with behaviour problems, they are also likely to feel it is important to reduce low-level disruption. No Snapchatting in class then – sorry kids!

So what is the best policy for schools? For some, a complete boycott may seem a great idea, but implementing a ban is easier said than done. Can you really ensure none is smuggled past the gate? And is it worth the effort?

In February of this year Damian Hinds, the education secretary, announced that the government would not support a mobile phone ban in schools. But, as stated, schools are free to set their own rules. Enjoy the freedoms while they last!



# Reviews



**Amir Arezoo, vice-principal of Horizon Community College, Barnsley**

@WORKEDGECHAOS

## ResearchED and 300,000 words later – some reflections

**Gary Jones @DrGaryJones**

Education is undoubtedly susceptible to dogma: batons are taken up, bandwagons are jumped on, causes are evangelised. When it comes to evidence-based practice, the concept that it should be used to inform pedagogy may seem inherently obvious. But what use is all the research if teachers can't (or won't) access it? Jones, who has written much on "all things evidence-based", reviews the situation. "The 'evidence-based movement' is not going away anytime soon," he says. But more needs to be done to ensure the evidence base contributes to improved outcomes for pupils, something that involves "an honest conversation about teacher research literacy and their subsequent abilities to make research-informed changes in their practice..." He also highlights the "major debate" amongst educational researchers about randomised controlled trials, effect sizes, meta-analysis. At first glance, one might assume that a crisis is forming; I would say it's perfectly rational to constantly challenge one's assumptions.

## TOP BLOGS of the week



## Is dual coding proof that learning styles exist?

**Paul G Moss @EDmerger**

The strategy of learning through dual coding and its apparent similarities with learning styles is the source of much debate. Paul G Moss attempts to differentiate between the two, revolving his point on studies that have consistently shown that "even if a student indicates a preferred learning style, and the assessment incorporates this style, it has little impact on the results of their performance in assessment". He says that for him, "watching someone show me how to kick a football a certain way is better than having someone tell me how to do it". Yet this doesn't make him a "visual" learner. Instead, it's the method of using multiple modalities of information that combine to make that information more accessible, or as Moss puts it, "the takeaway for teachers is that if you are delivering content, the more variety you use in the delivery the greater the chance of effective encoding". This concise post is fertile with points of evidence, debate and reasoning.

## To nap or not to nap, is that a question?

**Karla A. Lassonde @AceThatTest**

Those of us in secondary education understand the perils of students' lack of sleep, whatever the reason may be. The prevailing view is that naps are bad – but as in all of these things, as Karla Lassonde points out, it's not as black and white as that. "Spending too much time or not enough in deep sleep stages can cause you to feel terrible after you wake," she says. The implications of napping on learning, however, suggest that naps provide "benefits in declarative memory" – in other words, a brief bit of shut-eye after a day at school helps with the consolidation of learning and helps to connect new learning to what is stored in our long-term memory. Should we offer students bunks to settle down in at the end of a long school day? Perhaps not, but it is striking that the thing that students tend to increasingly avoid is the one they need the most to be successful.

## Supporting working memory in the English classroom

**Zoe Enser @greeborunner**

Zoe Enser is refreshingly open about her thoughts in implementing pedagogical practice as she continues to guest post on Mark Enser's blog. Her focus this time is on working memory, which follows up on the research that shows working memory is different for the most disadvantaged. I enjoyed the illustrative and reflective nature of the piece, particularly the part about quality of explanation, and even more particularly: "I am also careful to shut up when the explanation needs to end." That is a point that I will take as advice in the future!

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



## Cost-cutting visits for capital cash doesn't undermine academy autonomy

... **Anon**

Isn't this just a mechanism for enforcing the Outward Grange model of giving teachers and teaching and learning responsibility holders less time. The quest for efficiency in an overworked profession continues. There may be schools who are missing a trick over finance, but I'm not convinced this is the mechanism for support.

## ICO receives hundreds of unnecessary school referrals as leaders struggle with GDPR

... **Brian Heath**

This just reaffirms everything we've seen so far – it all comes down to educating people in the reality of compliance and what recordable vs reportable looks like.

## Timpson: I expect DfE to fund my review recommendations

... **Allan Sherwood**

Having worked as a teacher for more than 20 years with children in public care I can appreciate why mainstream schools feel justified in excluding pupils: schools are unable to manage the often extreme levels of disruption presented by pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, having worked more recently with excluded pupils (all in year 11), it is clear that the alternative provision provided is not adequate and only helps to reinforce the already low self-esteem these pupils have. It also lowers further their chances of achieving the government's GCSE target grades.

## New Schools Network: Let parents take over 'untouchable' schools

... **Sally Smith**

How can parents have the time and energy to run schools? Parents have jobs! Also, you are making assumptions that parents have the skills to run a school. Schools that do not have sponsors tend to be in low socioeconomic areas – where attendance to school is low. It is naive to think including

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

... **Janet Downs**

## Cost-cutting visits for capital cash doesn't undermine academy autonomy

Need essential funds to remove rotting windows or a clapped-out boiler? No problem – as long as your academy agrees to a visit by a DfE-appointed expert telling you how to slice deeper into the bone. There'll be no obligation to follow the suggestions, of course, but failure to do so may harm your application if you do not mention when questioned any objections you have to the offered advice.



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

them in the running of the school will mean that all will be fine. What you need is more teachers – you need to stop demonising them and support them in working in these areas.

## Do academy trust CEOs really need a teaching background?

... **Sarah White, @clunieUK**

You need leadership, people skills and to have been a teacher to be a good CEO. Also, if you taught secondary you need to make sure you understand primary or vice versa.

... **Debbie Young, @debbieY31284790**

An academy trust CEO needs to be a former headteacher or an inspector who understands education. It should never be run as a business to make profit and pay big salaries. All funds should go back into the schools.

## DfE defends spending £500,000 first-class travel

... **Jamie Nairn, @covrules**

For once I'm going to defend the department. I booked train tickets from Northampton to London and it was £25 cheaper to go first class than standard. Go figure! I did print out a comparison for my school business manager and governors just to prove that I wasn't trying to live the high life.

... **Heather Arnold, @Bonniepurple**

I order train tickets for high-ups in another government department and first class is banned. The DfE does not deal with matters of national security. My team does. Enough said.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## SATURDAY

Sleeping off last week's edition.

## TUESDAY

It's good to see transparency in action at Birmingham City Council, where a citizen has been denied access to documents from a crunch meeting about struggling schools.

James Robinson requested a list of attendees, the agenda and copies of reports circulated at a meeting described in a blog by Dr Tim O'Neill, the city's education and skills director, as "an important meeting regarding schools who are in financial deficit".

Given the importance of the meeting, you can imagine our surprise when Robinson was told that the information he asked for was "not held" by the council. In its FOI response it described the meeting as "internal" at which "no reports or presentations were circulated".

And we thought the government's headteacher boards lacked transparency!

## WEDNESDAY

As the lame duck government of Theresa May stutters to a halt, chaos reigns at the Department for Education.

Not only is the department seemingly unable to make up its mind about who is chairing its expert group on teacher wellbeing, but it appears it can't even decide when to publish information online.

After breaking its own embargo on new

guidance for academies on executive pay earlier in the week, at 5.24pm today it sent out information to reporters on T-levels, embargoed to 9.30am tomorrow, before correcting the embargo to midnight later today.

There's an idiom about arses and elbows that might be appropriate here, but we couldn't possibly countenance publishing the word arse in a newspaper.

But the department did seem to get its timings right on an announcement that workshops are to be rolled out in schools to teach young people about living independently.

Damian Hinds plans to send the student accommodation giant Unite Students into schools to help year 12 and 13 pupils prepare for life after school.

We hope dealing with tens of thousands of pounds worth of debt – including

money paid to landlords for their often pricey, but dismal, digs – will be top of the list.

Our favourite thing we learned today? There exists a knitted doll of Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman (see below), a gift from her former colleagues when she left the exams regulator Ofqual.

## THURSDAY

Given the number of times it's had its wrists slapped by the UK Stats Authority, you'd think the DfE might want to keep its head down for a while in terms of its presentation of data.

But alas, seemingly having learned precisely zero from its regular tellings-off, it gifted to the world another of its "ad hoc" statistical releases, which it only puts out if ministers fancy noising off about something they think is good.

This week the emphasis was on Ofsted ratings, and ministers were at pains to point out data that shows that 80,000 more pupils are now learning in "good" or "outstanding" schools, a 27 per cent increase on late 2017.

This sounds impressive, until you realise the number of sponsored academies and the number of pupils in them has increased 11 per cent over a similar period.

It's a good job the DfE hasn't been chastised before for failing to factor organic pupil number growth into its boasts about school performance already... Oh no, wait...



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Applications must be completed on the CES application form provided and submitted electronically to the Diocese of Shrewsbury [sue.jenkinson@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:sue.jenkinson@dioceseofshrewsbury.org)

**Closing date: Thursday 12th September, 12:00 Noon**

**Interview date: Tuesday 24th September 2019**

*Shortlisted candidates will be expected to complete a Disqualification Declaration. The successful applicant's appointment will be subject to satisfactory employment and faith references and pre-clearance including an enhanced DBS check.*

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**Southern Academy Trust** are seeking to appoint an interim CEO with a proven track record in school improvement and inspirational leadership. The ideal candidate will have the ability to operate strategically, delivering on the Trust's vision and its Christian ethos. Ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning for all students will be core to this post. The successful candidate must be able to develop strong strategies and be able to lead highly capable teams to realise the Trust's core objectives. The interim CEO will serve as the Trust's Accounting Officer.

Southern Academy Trust currently comprises 3 primary schools, a secondary school and has the benefit of an international boarding house. The Trust is an innovative and forward-thinking organisation, which offers employees a nurturing environment and excellent CPD.

The successful candidate must embody the Southern Academy Trust spirit, bringing everyone together, working collaboratively and nurturing a high-performance culture with all key strategic stakeholders. A commitment to building partnerships, both internally and externally, combined with the vision and tenacity to make our plans a reality are the essence of what we

are looking for. If you would like to become part of our Trust and have the leadership skills to strengthen what we do, please do apply.

For further information, a confidential conversation with the Chair of Trustees or to arrange a visit please contact **Kirsty Williams** on **01747 857694**. Please apply via link:

<https://jobs.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/teaching-shaftesbury-school-and-sports-college-interim-chief-executive-officer-southern-academy-trust/29865.job>

*This trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to have an enhanced DBS check in line with the government's safer recruitment guidelines.*

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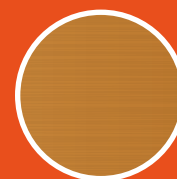
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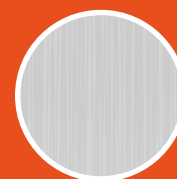


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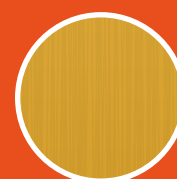


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