

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

SAFEGUARDING: INADEQUATE

Not one school rated 'excellent' by ICO

Enquiry launched into use of restraint



Page 23

Page 25

Revealing the secret lives of teachers



P27

Hangover days? Turning around scandal-hit schools



P20-22

Ofsted extends its curriculum grace period



P4

SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK | @SCHOOLSWEEK

FRIDAY, FEB 14 2020 | EDITION 204

## Adieu Agnew



Reshuffle scoop: *Schools Week* understands academies minister set for chop

## Large trusts eyeing own AP as minister says 'own the problem'

- Government says in-house alternative provision 'useful solution' for exclusions
- Academies minister flags concerns over holding heads to account for excluded
- Trusts considering their AP options, but expert says set-up is ripe for gaming

INVESTIGATES

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Page 7

FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Wellington college

THURS 18 - FRI 19 JUNE, 2020

BE PART OF THE PREMIER EDUCATION EVENT OF THE YEAR  
TICKETS NOW ON SALE!

[educationfest.co.uk](http://educationfest.co.uk)



# 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



**JL Dutaut**  
COMMISSIONING EDITOR

@DUTAUT  
JEAN-LOUISDUTAUT@LSECT.COM



**Freddie Whittaker**  
CHIEF REPORTER

@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**James Carr**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@JAMESCARR\_93  
JAMES.CARR@LSECT.COM

### SUBSCRIBE

For an annual subscription to *Schools Week* for just £50 visit [www.schoolsweek.co.uk](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk) and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page.

[schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk)  
or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe



**Nicky Phillips**  
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA  
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



**Shane Mann**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

### THE TEAM

- Designer: Simon Kay
- Sales team leader: Bridget Stockdale
- Sales executive: Clare Halliday
- PA to managing director: Victoria Boyle



BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**SCHOOLS WEEK**  
AND FE WEEK

THIS WEEK'S TOP AVAILABLE JOBS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR. TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCY WITH EDUCATION WEEK JOBS AND SCHOOLS WEEK PLEASE CALL 020 81234 778 OR EMAIL [ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)



**ST EDWARD'S ROYAL FREE ECUMENICAL MIDDLE SCHOOL - HEADTEACHER - L20 £66,698**

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/07LB](https://httpslink.com/07LB)



**MATRIX ACADEMY TRUST - ASSOCIATE HEADTEACHER - L18-L24 £62,733 - £72,662**

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/158T](https://httpslink.com/158T)

TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCY WITH EDUCATION WEEK JOBS AND PLEASE CALL 020 81234 778 OR EMAIL [ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)

### Unions split on support for #PauseOfsted



PAGE 16

### Meet the new education select committee members

PAGE 11

### Calls for nominations in 'Oscars for teachers'



PAGE 8



### Trust offering massages to boost wellbeing

PAGE 14



### Government launches 'Frugality feedback' service

PAGE 10



### RSC policy areas finally revealed

PAGE 15

**Disclaimer:**  
Schools Week is owned and published by Lsect Ltd. The views expressed within the publication are those of the authors named, and are not necessarily those of Schools Week, Lsect Ltd or any of its employees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. The design of the digital newspaper and of the website is copyright of Lsect Ltd and material from the newspaper should not be reproduced without prior permission.

If you wish to reproduce an article from either the digital paper or the website, both the article's author and Schools Week must be referenced (to not do so, would be an infringement on copyright).  
Lsect Ltd is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites linked to.  
Please address any complaints to the editor. Email [john.dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:john.dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk) with Error/Concern in the subject line. Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

#### ADVERTISE WITH US

If you are interested in placing a product or job advert in a future edition please click on the 'advertise' link at the top of the page on [schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk) or contact:  
**E: [advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk)**  
**T: 020 81234 778 or click here**

SCHOOLS WEEK IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF



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

#### SUBSCRIBE

For an annual subscription to Schools Week for just £50 visit [www.schoolsweek.co.uk](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk) and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page. [schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk) or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe or [click here](#).

News

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

# Ofsted gives schools another year's grace

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

Schools will get an extra year to bring their curriculum into line with Ofsted's new inspection framework, after the watchdog announced an extension to its transition period.

The new framework, which places greater weight on curriculum content and less on outcomes, came into effect last September. However, Ofsted worked in a year-long transition so that, rather than expect them to be 'fully ready', a judgment is made based on where schools currently are in implementing curriculum changes.

Under the transition, schools which have a 'plan' to review their curriculum and can demonstrate 'genuine action' to do so are not penalised.

And Ofsted's national director of education Sean Harford has now said the grace period will be extended for another year, meaning schools will have this protection until July 2021.

"We know that a great curriculum does not just appear perfectly formed overnight. It takes a great deal of thought, preparation and work to plan it," Harford wrote in a blog post yesterday.

"I'm also aware, through conversations with the Association of School and College Leaders and the National Association of Head Teachers, that some heads and senior leaders are concerned about getting their curriculum to where they want it to be by this coming September. Some schools are further along their curriculum journey than others.

The decision follows a fierce backlash against the new framework, which heads say penalises schools with difficult intakes.

The Headteachers' Roundtable think tank launched #PauseOfsted, a call for school staff to stop working as Ofsted inspectors in a bid to force the organisation to change tack.

Ros McMullen, a founding member of the group, said "given that the loss of credibility and confidence during this first year of grace has been so severe, not sure extending it quite gets the point!"

However Ofsted has stood

firm in the face of criticism of its framework, refusing to stop downgrading schools that it claims are narrowing the curriculum by running a three-year key stage 4.

But Harford said Ofsted did want to give credit to "schools that are working hard to improve their curriculum".

"The transition arrangements will only apply when it's clear that a school is well on the way with its curriculum journey – but isn't quite 'there' yet.

"This is not an amnesty for schools where teaching is weak or pupils' outcomes (including, but not exclusively, national tests and examination results) aren't good enough."

But Harford said the transition arrangements would only apply to the descriptors of "what good looks like", not to 'outstanding' and 'inadequate' judgements.

"Essentially, these are schools that would otherwise be rated as requires improvement for the quality of education, because they aren't as far along with their curriculum planning."



Sean Harford

## Reshuffle: Agnew out, Gav and Gibb back in at DfE

Academies minister Lord Agnew is to leave the Department for Education, Schools Week understands.

It is not yet known whether Agnew was pushed or resigned. Confirmation of his departure is expected today (Friday), according to a source.

Agnew has proved a divisive in the sector, leading the way on making sure schools operate more efficiently.

One of his most memorable moments included betting school leaders a bottle of champagne that he could identify more savings in their schools. He also famously claimed schools should stop staff making colour photocopies to save money.

The move could also signify a shift in policy focus at the department. Some have claimed the academies programme has stalled in recent years.

Sam Freedman, a former adviser to Michael Gove while he was education secretary, said Agnew's departure "opens up the possibility of serious academies reforms, depending on who replaces him".



Elsewhere in the department, education secretary Gavin Williamson (pictured) and schools minister Nick Gibb have both been reappointed.

Williamson said he was "delighted", adding: "From early years to further education, I will ensure we deliver the skills the country needs."

Meanwhile, the long-serving Gibb said: "Levelling up education standards across the country is essential to ensuring that every child, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential."

Appointed as schools minister by David

Cameron in May 2010, Gibb served in the role until September 2012, when he was replaced by Liberal Democrat David Laws and returned to the backbenches.

But he became a junior minister for school reform in July 2014, and returned to the minister of state role the following May.

Just this week Agnew announced a new service to provide "rapid feedback" on school spending.

In the letter, he said: "I hope by now that the whole system knows my priority: financial resources made available to schools should be used as effectively as possible. To be clear, this is not because I am taking a narrow financial view."

His scheme to send cost-cutting advisers into struggling schools also provoked controversy after Schools Week revealed they urged one school to cut its lunch portion sizes for pupils and replace experienced teachers with support staff on term-time contracts.

But an evaluation report of the scheme published last month found for every £1 spent on the scheme schools had saved £13.

# Trusts target in-house AP for excluded kids

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Some of England's largest academy trusts are considering establishing their own alternative provision for excluded pupils.

It comes as Lord Agnew said this was a potential solution to problems with off-rolling and high levels of exclusion among SEND pupils – urging larger trusts to 'own the problem'

The academies minister has even said that trust-run AP is "probably a more useful solution" than proposals to hold schools accountable for the results of excluded pupils.

But policy experts have warned that without proper governance, in-house AP could just become another mechanism used to off-roll pupils.

Last year, the government accepted in principle the recommendations of the Timpson review of exclusions, including a call for schools to tie the results of excluded pupils to their excluding school.

But the Department for Education is yet to say exactly how it intends to make the system work, and Lord Agnew sounded unconvinced about the proposal when he addressed fellow members of the House of Lords last week.

"In theory it is a very good idea, but we need to be careful because it will obviously depend on the quality of the provision where he or she was sent, and it would not be right for the referring school to be penalised," he said.

"More active thinking is going on with our larger academy trusts about creating their own APs so that they own the problem. In the longer term, this is probably a more useful solution, as it means that the system is better joined up."

Some of England's largest academy trusts told *Schools Week* they were already contemplating such an approach.

Martyn Oliver, chief executive of Outwood Grange, a trust with 32 schools in Yorkshire and the north east, said his trust was "looking at different ways where we can best provide for all our students, and managing and maintaining our own alternative provision is a way that we could potentially do this".



However, he said the test of such an approach would be how any system could operate "with or without impacting on the budgets of local authorities and the schools' own budgets".

The Academies Enterprise Trust, a 54-school chain with schools across England, said it was "open to considering" running its own provision.

"Any moves to establish AP within AET would focus on providing a mainstream model of education with social, emotional and mental health needs specialisms," a spokesperson said.

"Small, nurturing and therapeutic environments would offer individual curriculum pathways for each student, designed to help them not just get back on track but to thrive."

The Inspiration Trust, which was founded by Lord Agnew, is already piloting the use of an internal alternative provision unit, and is looking at the issue more broadly as part of an inclusion review.

Iain Mackintosh, the trust's director of inclusion, said the pilot had "successfully helped children at risk of exclusion in mainstream schools and ensured they still have access to high-quality curriculum and teaching".

Some trusts already run alternative provision alongside their mainstream provision.

In Bristol, the Cabot Learning Federation operates a "suite of provision" called Snowdon Village, with different levels of support depending on the age and needs of pupils.

Pupils are either supported

in the short or medium-term through its Nest, Engage and City School projects, or permanently at Bristol Futures, an AP academy.

"Alternative provision that works in isolation can only offer a very limited curriculum," said executive principal Sally Apps. "Because if you've only got ten staff, or 15 staff, then you can only offer those subjects that those staff can offer."

That's not the case at CLF, Apps said, because excluded pupils are still allowed to study any subject offered by the trust's mainstream schools, meaning their curriculum access isn't restricted.

"The reason we do it is we consider all of those children in our patch are our responsibility," she added

"We are accountable for all of the children in our alternative provision, whether they came from our trust or outside."

Despite the commitment of some trusts to running AP ethically, there is technically nothing to stop academy trusts using it to off-roll their pupils.

The results of pupils in AP schools in academy trusts do not count towards the trust's overall league table position, which gives an incentive to push poor-performing pupils out of mainstream schools.

Cath Murray, alternative provision lead at the Centre for Social Justice think tank, said it's "all in the implementation".

"At one end you'll have pupils dual-rolled, with access to expert teachers and support for reintegration into mainstream. At the other, you'll have MATs gaming the league tables by off-rolling or over-excluding," she told *Schools Week*.

However, she said Ofsted's crackdown on off-rolling should also stop this, but a trust with its own AP schools would "also need robust governance to make sure it doesn't over-exclude".

Leora Cruddas, from the Confederation of School Trusts, said strong trusts were "well-placed to set up alternative provision as part of overall education provision".



Leora Cruddas

PEARSON  
NATIONAL  
TEACHING  
AWARDS

# Celebrate your brilliant colleagues — entries close 28th February

“The awards ceremony was an incredible experience, and having national recognition for a role we are all so passionate about is a huge accolade, but one of the best things has been the messages we've received from current and alumni students and parents. Hearing their stories, how we helped them to get there and their messages of support and thanks has been for us the most rewarding aspect out of the whole process.”

— Previous Gold Winner

**Teachers do an incredible job,  
help us celebrate the fantastic  
work being done in schools  
and FE colleges every day.**

The Pearson National Teaching Awards are the ‘Oscars’ of the teaching world, highlighting skill and dedication and shining a light on the whole profession.

Entry is simple through our website, and the impact of winning can last a lifetime.

**Entries close  
28th February 2020**

**TeachingAwards.com**

#classroomheroes @teachingawards

Give YOUR school or college and your amazing colleagues the chance to win a prestigious national award!

With 14 categories to choose from, with two dedicated to FE, don't miss the chance to be part of this celebration of teaching, which culminates in a glittering awards ceremony televised by the BBC as 'Britain's Classroom Heroes'. The awards are open to all state and independent schools and FE colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and are free to enter.

Headline Sponsor



Media Partners

SCHOOLS WEEK FE WEEK



News

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

# Ofsted: mass entry in BTECs not always gaming

**JAMES CARR**

@JAMESCARR\_93

INVESTIGATES

Ofsted has moved to quash fears among schools that enrolling a high percentage of pupils in certain BTEC qualifications will automatically be viewed as 'gaming'.

Last week Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, in Cheshire, was placed in special measures and rated 'inadequate' by the inspectorate after it entered all pupils into two vocational courses against "pupils' educational best interest".

The practice "artificially inflated" the school's overall progress score and "partially concealed" poor performance in English, maths and science, Ofsted said.

Schools Week can reveal the qualifications in question were BTECs in business studies and sports studies, at a level equivalent to a GCSE, with the school enrolling 98 per cent and 99 per cent of pupils respectively.

Ormiston Academies Trust said the inspection was "conducted when the school was sponsored by a previous academy trust".

But the ruling has prompted concerns that schools with a high percentage of pupils enrolled in these courses now face being classed as 'gaming' by Ofsted.

Research conducted by Education Datalab previously found both the BTECs are "higher scoring qualifications" in which "pupils tend to score more points... than they do in GCSE English and maths".

Following analysis of Key Stage 4 qualification entry data from 2018-19, Schools Week found nine schools which had enrolled more than 75 per cent of pupils in BTEC business studies and 30 which enrolled more than 95 per cent of pupils into BTEC sports studies.

Some of the schools recorded entry rates greater than 100 per cent – though this is due to resits counting as another entry.

One of those was actually another Ormiston school – Ormiston Chadwick Academy – which featured on both lists. The trust said it was "crucial students take the qualifications that are right for them and in their best interests – that is one of our guiding principles". They added that future cohorts may have different ratios between qualifications.

Dover Christ Church Academy topped the sports studies list at 169 per cent – with all pupils required to take the qualification.

Gary May, vice principal at Dover Christ Church Academy, revealed that the school had been challenged over the high percentage by Ofsted during its last inspection – and anticipated being challenged again.

However, he said it was a "conviction decision" which reflects the schools' desire to have a curriculum which "works for our students".

May explained the school is located in a "coastal area of high disadvantage" and is dealing with "epidemic proportions of obesity and mental health issues".

May said the sport BTEC is appealing to the school for its units on coaching and personal fitness which he believes provide "something which is useful for life and that it's hard to deliver somewhere else in quite the same way".

Goffs-Churchgate Academy in Hertfordshire is the second highest on both lists – with 100 per cent business studies enrolment and 157 per cent sports studies. It did not respond to a request for comment.

Elsewhere, United Learning Trust had two schools which featured prominently on both lists, Sheffield Park Academy and Sheffield Springs Academy.

A spokesperson explained both subjects were mandatory at the schools until 2017. However, both schools have since

changed their approach and there is no whole cohort BTEC entry.

Meanwhile, Delta Academies Trust explained its De Lacy Academy had a high proportion – 99 per cent – due to its strong sporting tradition.

A spokesperson said: "We are locally recognised for our sporting expertise, with our head of department also acting as regional sport grants officer."

Elsewhere the analysis found that three schools from the Harris Federation have more than 95 per cent of pupils enrolled in the sport BTEC.

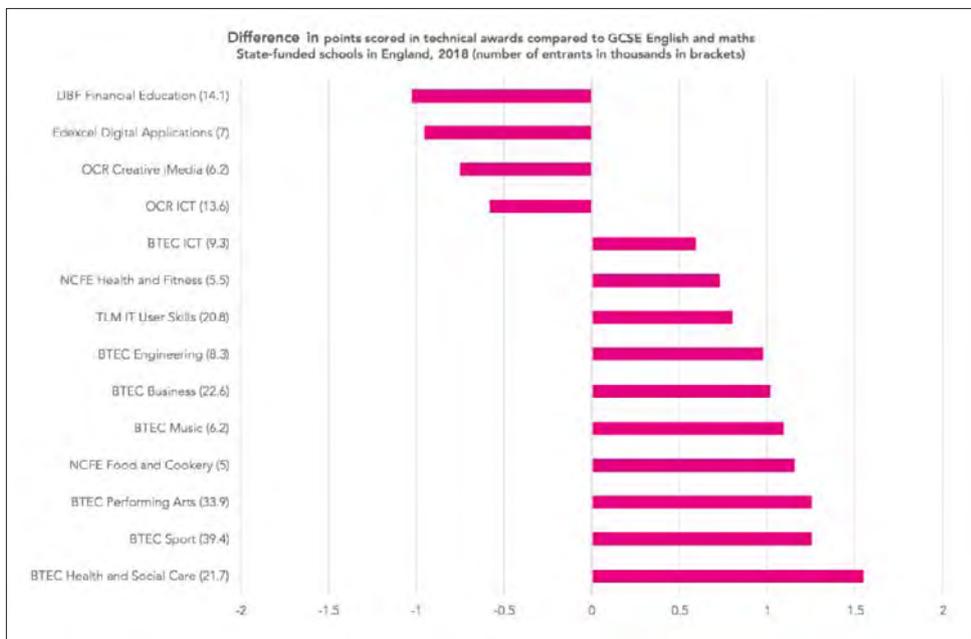
Harris said pupils take the course in addition to their options and complete their full entitlement of practical PE. The schools also have sports specialisms.

May said that 'gaming' was now being used by Ofsted as a "blanket term" which applies pressure on schools to stop initiatives that positively impact pupils, adding: "We believe acting to support long term health has to be the right thing to do."

An Ofsted spokesperson said it monitors "unusual patterns of entry" at schools and deals with it on a case-by-case basis.

But they added: "Data showing an unusual pattern of qualification entry does not necessarily mean that gaming is taking place; instead, it leads to questions that inspectors will explore with schools."

"Gaming can sometimes mean using a perfectly legitimate qualification in a way that is not in the interests of pupils."



News

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

DfE in 'serious data breach' after naming whistleblowers

HÉLÈNE MULHOLLAND

@LNMULHOLLAND

EXCLUSIVE

The government chose not to redact the names of three whistleblowers who gave evidence relating to cheating allegations against a multi-academy trust.

The disclosure casts doubt on the government's commitment to protecting teachers who raise concerns that they believe to be in the public interest under the cover of anonymity.

Schools Week revealed last week that one of the three whistleblowers was left too frightened to give evidence to a SATs cheating probe.

The whistleblower had received a 'threatening' legal letter from NET Academies Trust (NETAT), the accused academy trust, a few days after the government investigation opened – although NETAT said the legal letter was unrelated to the whistleblowing.

In what was initially believed to be a blunder, the names of the trio were stated no less than five times across 164 pages of a Department for Education response to a freedom of information request.

It was published on What Do They Know, a website run by the charity mySociety to make it easier for people to make requests and share the replies publicly.

Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, which represents two of the individuals, reported the "serious data breach" to the Department for Education on Monday.

At the time she believed it to be an error. But it has emerged that the DfE actively opted not to redact.

The FOI request was submitted in November by Shaunagh Roberts, a parent at Waltham Holy Cross primary school in Essex.

Roberts sought all information held by the department relating to investigations at NETAT, which had recently been given the go ahead to take over Waltham Holy Cross.

NETAT, while supporting the primary school, was accused of encouraging staff to "over scaffold" support in key stage 1 and 2 writing by using Post-it notes to guide pupils.

The conversion was delayed while the government investigated the cheating allegations, but the probe found they were "unsubstantiated".

The DfE said the "names of the three individuals were not redacted from the Freedom of Information response because the requester was already aware of their identity and had shared their names via her solicitors with a number of other organisations, including NET Academies

Trust, as part of her legal claim."

They then claimed the FOI response was "only shared with the requester and the department did not publish this information online".

But a spokesperson for mySociety challenged the latter statement, adding that the department has had "4,525 requests since the site was launched eleven years ago, so they should be well aware that when a request is made through 'What Do They Know', the response is published online automatically".

Following calls from Schools Week, the site has temporarily hidden the FOI response from public view while it makes further inquiries.

Liz Gardiner, acting chief executive of the whistleblowing charity Protect, called for reforms to better safeguard whistleblowers. She said if an employer "divulges their name and they suffer as a result, they may bring a detriment claim at tribunal. But if someone other than their employer, such as the DfE, reveals their name there is little recourse."

She said people are less likely to speak out if it "puts them in the line of fire... Confidentiality should be a shield for whistleblowers. Removing that shield endangers them, and sends a poor message to others who might consider coming forward."

HÉLÈNE MULHOLLAND | @LNMULHOLLAND

Teaching's 'Oscars Night': get your nominations in

Schools from across the country are being urged to enter their star staff for a prestigious set of awards dubbed "the Oscars for teachers".

The Pearson National Teaching Awards celebrate excellence in education across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

As the deadline for submissions looms, previous winners are calling on schools to put forward their most inspirational teachers for the awards, which will be broadcast on national television.

Keith Berry, headteacher at Park Community Academy in Blackpool, who won the gold award for "lifetime achievement", found that his win had a positive effect on pupils, as well as himself.

"The children lived every moment as

they watched the BBC TV highlights in our assembly, clapping and cheering along as though they were present at the ceremony themselves," he said.

"It was a truly magical moment to gain their unreserved and unprompted recognition. It was an especially proud moment for me personally."

Founded in 1998 by Lord Puttnam, the awards are designed to highlight the life-changing impact an inspirational teacher can have on the lives of the young people they teach.

Liz Ormerod, headteacher at Delph Side Primary School in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, gold award-winners for primary school of the year, added: "Teaching is a whole school effort, and so you're not just thanking one person,

you're giving a whole team the chance to celebrate each other's success."

Entry is free, and the awards are open to all state and independent schools and FE colleges. Entries close at midnight on Friday, February 28.

Schools that want to enter a colleague should visit [www.teachingawards.com/entry-forms/](http://www.teachingawards.com/entry-forms/)



THE TEACHING AWARDS

# Win a visit from Max Whitlock MBE

## Enter our competition in collaboration with Sport Relief

Our very own BTEC Sport ambassador Max Whitlock, has teamed up with Sport Relief to get schools and colleges active and help raise life-changing money for people living challenging lives here in the UK and around the world.

### How can you get involved?

Simply head to [www.sportrelief.com/max](http://www.sportrelief.com/max) to submit your Sport Relief plans and a winner will be chosen based on imagination, creativity, inclusivity and enthusiasm.

### When's the deadline?

You'll need to submit your entry to the competition by **28 February 2020**. The winner will be contacted by Sport Relief shortly after entries have closed.

Good luck - and happy fundraising!



Max Whitlock,  
double Olympic gold  
medallist and former  
BTEC Sport student.

## News



## £120k 'cost cutter' savings already being enacted at case study school

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

Cost-cutting measures that saved £120,000 at an academy singled out as a success story of Lord Agnew's controversial resource management adviser scheme were actually already being implemented.

Academies minister Lord Agnew highlighted recently how Chapeltown Academy, in Sheffield, had reviewed its senior leadership structure (SLT), saving £120,000 per year, a change it said was "made after" working with a school resource management adviser.

An evaluation of the scheme published last month, which highlighted Chapeltown as a case study, added that "following the [SRMA] visit" the restructure was one of the "agreed recommendations".

But the actual SRMA report for Chapeltown, seen by *Schools Week*, reveals the academy was already "looking to rationalise" the senior leadership team, with a "redundancy programme in the process of being finalised" at the time of the adviser visit.

The SLT savings also weren't among the 12 opportunities/recommendations in the report.

Furthermore, in the response to a Freedom of Information request releasing the report, the academy stated they were told by the adviser "we had not only cut to the bone, we had cut into it".

They added, as the recommendations were not costed in the report, it showed "there were no savings to be made".

The government said that – despite appearing as a case study in the evaluation report – Chapeltown's savings were not included in its figures on the overall savings identified by advisers.

Launching a new money-saving scheme this week (see right), Agnew said the SRMA visits had identified potential re-investments of around £350,000 on average per trust visited.

He now says they have identified a total of £172 million of savings under the scheme, a finding used to back up his argument that not all schools are operating efficiently.

But last year *Schools Week* revealed how trusts claimed their reports included savings that had already been made, or had been identified and actioned.

Chapeltown did not respond to a request for comment when approached by *Schools Week*.

But headteacher Dayle Coe, in a comment used in the government's case study, said the visit was a chance to discuss savings in an "open and productive manner" with all actions "agreed in a collegiate and collaborative way".

Agnew highlighted the changes as having a positive impact on pupils, with Chapeltown able to "free up funds to add extra classes in popular subjects to its timetable, recruiting two new psychology teachers to meet pupil demand".

The academy also made savings by moving administration staff on to term-time only contracts – a reduction to 0.87 of the previous salary spend. However, this opportunity wasn't listed in the original SRMA report.

An evaluation of the SRMA trial, finally published last month, found just 16 per cent of the savings identified by advisers had actually been enacted by schools.

Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the report's findings exposed "how this shameful government was attempting to pour scorn and ridicule on school leaders by saying they didn't know how schools could run efficiently and weren't being frugal enough. But it has been proved that these suggested savings were false ones."

A *Schools Week* exposé last year revealed some savings included replacing experienced teachers with support staff on term-time contracts, keeping money raised for charity and limiting lunch portions for pupils – the latter of which occurred at Chapeltown.

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

## 'Frugality feedback' tool set to launch

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The government is launching a "rapid feedback" service to compare similar schools based on how frugal they are.

And academies minister Lord Agnew has warned academy leaders for those not in the top 25 per cent for efficiency to "provide robust challenge" on why.

However, the government has reiterated the new tool, to launch later this month, is there to support trusts, rather than judge them, with "no immediate plans to change that".

In a letter to academy trust chairs, Agnew said the service will provide information on the "level and direction of spend compared to the nearest comparable schools in the country".

He said: "Every pound under-utilised is a pound that could be improving your pupils' education. There may be reasons why your school(s) are outliers, but ensure you fully understand the reasoning you are given and challenge your leadership teams to tackle inefficiencies."

He also confirmed proposals for Ofsted to focus more on finances during inspections will be trialled from September, adding it will "bring further focus to the issue of financial effectiveness".

"As ever, I am always open to ideas as to what more we can do from the centre to support you. We do not get enough feedback from the sector," Agnew added. "You are in the cockpit. Tell me what you need and if it makes sense, I'll do my best to support you."

He said he "hopes" the whole system now "knows my priority: financial resources made available to schools should be used as effectively as possible. To be clear, this is not because I am taking a narrow financial view."

Agnew highlighted the government's additional £7.1 billion school-funding pledge, telling chairs the "power at your disposal to improve the education of your pupils with this money is enormous. Good financial management secures your ability to invest to transform lives."

He added that he believes there's an "extremely tight correlation between trusts that have strong and effective controls over their budgets and those delivering well above average educational outcomes".

# Education committee

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

THE FULL LINE-UP OF THE NEW EDUCATION COMMITTEE HAS BEEN CONFIRMED\*.  
SCHOOLS WEEK INTRODUCES THE MPS WHO WILL HOLD THE DFE TO ACCOUNT.



**Robert Halfon**  
Conservative, Harlow

A former deputy chair of the Conservative Party and cabinet minister in David Cameron's government, Halfon served as skills minister between July 2016 and June 2017, becoming well-known for his catchphrase – "The ladder of opportunity".  
He was first elected as education committee chair in July 2017, and re-elected unopposed last month.  
The Harlow MP is a passionate supporter of apprenticeships, and was the first MP to appoint one to his office in 2013.  
He has spoken of his desire to focus on the plight of children left behind by the education system.



**Jonathan Gullis**  
Conservative, Stoke-on-Trent North

A former teacher at Birmingham's Fairfax Academy, Gullis took the Stoke North seat from Labour in December's election. The ex-NASUWT rep has spoken of his desire to take a closer look at academy trusts.



**Fleur Anderson**  
Labour, Putney

Anderson replaced former education secretary Justine Greening as the MP for Putney in December's election. Anderson's background is in the charity and international development sectors.



**Tom Hunt**  
Conservative, Ipswich

Hunt was previously a councillor in East Cambridgeshire, and worked for the elected mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority. He has spoken to local media about his battle with learning difficulties, dyslexia and dyspraxia.



**Apsana Begum**  
Labour, Poplar and Limehouse

A former local government worker in Tower Hamlets, Begum has spoken of the need to fight for SEND children and against child poverty.



**David Johnston**  
Conservative, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner

Johnston stood down as the chief executive of the Social Mobility Foundation think tank in November. He has criticised parliament for failing to put social mobility high enough on its agenda.



**Ian Mearns**  
Labour, Gateshead

A veteran of the education committee, Mearns has in recent years served as de facto deputy to its Tory chairs. This will be Mearns's fourth term.



**Christian Wakeford**  
Conservative, Bury South

A local councillor with a background in the communication and insurance sectors, Wakeford pledged to focus on education and social mobility in his maiden speech to parliament.



**Lucy Powell**  
Labour, Manchester Central

Powell served as shadow education secretary from September 2015 to June 2016. She also served on the committee in the last parliament.



**David Simmonds**  
Conservative, Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner

Simmonds will be a familiar face for some in education, having served as cabinet member for education on Hillingdon Council and chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people's board.



**\*TBC**  
SNP

The Scottish National Party is yet to confirm which MP they will nominate to the committee..

# MP: 'Schools need guidance on cults'

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

Schools are “not equipped” to deal with cult groups targeting their pupils, an MP has claimed.

Catherine West wants the Department for Education to release specific guidance on the matter, following allegations that the SPAC Nation evangelical church exploited young people for financial gain.

The government’s existing “keeping children safe in education” guidance tells schools to watch for changes in children’s behaviour in case there is a safeguarding risk, but it does not specifically address the potential of radicalisation through cults.

West, the Labour MP for Hornsey and Wood Green in London, told *Schools Week* this needed to change.

“Cult groups, like SPAC Nation, have a reputation for targeting vulnerable and



Catherine West

impressionable young people across London,” she said.

“It is clear that schools and youth services are not equipped to deal with cult-like groups targeting their students, and the Department for Education needs to have specific guidance to equip schools in tackling cultish groups.”

West raised the matter in a written

parliamentary question earlier this month.

In her response, the education minister Michelle Donelan said the new relationships and sex education curriculum, which becomes compulsory this September, had been designed “to equip young people for adult life and focus, for example, on building positive relationships, developing physical and mental health, identifying risks and knowing how to seek help when needed”.

SPAC Nation made headlines last year after an investigation by HuffPost UK revealed allegations that pastors pressured young people from the congregation to sell their own blood in exchange for money to donate to the church. The church denied the allegations.

Police announced last week that they would not launch a criminal investigation into SPAC Nation. The church told the BBC it was “vindicated”. A Charity Commission probe is ongoing.

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR\_93

## Ofsted slams 'untenable tension' of school strikes

A school in which disgruntled staff staged a series of strikes has been put in special measures after Ofsted claimed that “untenable tension” within the school community was adversely impacting pupils’ education.

Last year staff at Hasland Hall Community School, in Chesterfield, held three strikes to protest against unruly pupils and excessive workloads.

And while the NASUWT-organised strike action was suspended in November, an Ofsted inspection the previous month found “untenable tension across the school which is having an adverse effect on the quality of education, behaviour and school improvement”.

The inspector advised the school is ‘inadequate’ because it is “failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education”.

The report also states the quality of education provided is “not good enough” and senior leaders have “not ensured that

curriculum plans are aspirational”.

Almost one-third of parents said their children were not safe in school and pupils are not confident staff can deal with bullying concerns – while some staff said “they did not feel safe themselves”.

This poor behaviour is said to be “affecting pupils learning and achievement” and the inspector said leaders must work to establish “an ethos of respect and understanding”.

It’s not the first time Ofsted has taken aim at unions. An Ofsted study published earlier this year claimed the “antagonistic voice” of unions stalled improvements in “stuck schools”, with some headteachers bemoaning “strong union representation resisting action to improve the culture of the school”.

In a letter to parents, acting headteacher Steve Edmonds said the school was “deeply disappointed” with the judgment but recognised “the schools must change and improve”.

He said since the inspection an action plan has been developed to address changes in behaviour management and an audit of safeguarding procedures has been launched.

On top of this, “anti-bullying policy and procedures have been amended in order to make the reporting process more robust”.

He asked that parents give “full support to the school during a time of uncertainty and public challenge” and that they don’t take to social media to air grievances with the school.

He added: “On a daily basis the staff, senior leaders and governor continue to do their very best for your children.”

The NASUWT did not respond to a request for comment.



**ncfe.**



**results in  
6 days\***

# the fast and the functional.

**Online assessment results in 6 working days\***

Choose NCFE for the fastest Functional Skills  
online results in the sector!



We also offer on-demand online assessment, a free feedback  
report for all online assessments and a free resit option for  
those who don't achieve first time!

**visit** [ncfe.org.uk/functional-skills](https://ncfe.org.uk/functional-skills)

**email** [functionalskills@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:functionalskills@ncfe.org.uk)

\*when learners are allocated a paper that's been through the awarding process.



News

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

# Figures show rise in teacher mental health sick days

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR\_93

EXCLUSIVE

Massage treatments, 24/7 helplines and walking groups are among the services schools are providing to help teachers' mental wellbeing.

New figures collated by Schools Week suggest the number of sick days taken by teachers for mental health reasons, including stress and depression, are on the up.

Since the 2015-16 academic year, 27 per cent of all sick days were attributed to mental health-related causes – based on freedom of information responses from 63 councils and academy trusts.

However, the figure last year was 29 per cent, four percentage points higher than the previous year, and the highest among the past four years.

The data is collected by councils and trusts, but may not show the true number of sick days taken for mental health reasons as some employees may feel uncomfortable revealing the nature of their absence.

The Enquire Learning Trust, which runs 29 academies across the north of England, recorded the highest percentage of mental health absentee days among the 11 trusts that responded, at 35.2 per cent.

But Lauren Pilgrim, the trust's director of human resources, said this was due to a "transparent and supportive culture" where "employees feel free to discuss their mental health".

She acknowledged that "pressure on finances" in recent years had led to staff reductions and a "more challenging workload".

The trust runs "a significant healthcare package" for employees – including a 24/7 helpline staffed by qualified counsellors, counselling support and cognitive behavioural therapy.

There is also support in place for physiotherapy, reflexology and a range of massage treatments, because, as Pilgrim explains, "mental health can be affected by other, more physical, conditions".

The trust pays around £70,000 a year, the equivalent to around £4 per employee a month, for the Westfield Health service. Pilgrim said other trusts in the sector were beginning to move towards such schemes, claiming it had produced a reduction in absence rates, boosted morale and encourages retention by demonstrating how highly the trust values its staff.

The scheme, which the trust has used since 2014,



YEAR	% OF SICK DAYS TAKEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH REASONS
2015/16	26%
2016/17	27%
2017/18	25%
2018/19	29%

can be accessed directly and anonymously by employees who then claim back for the services used. These can be accessed whether staff are on sick leave or not.

The trusts usually request that treatment is accessed outside school hours but, where, this is not possible, a plan is agreed for them to attend that causes the least disruption for pupils.

Schools Week contacted all 152 local education authorities in England and the largest and most prominent academy trusts.

In total, 52 education authorities responded and 11 trusts – those remaining either did not reply or did not hold the information.

Our findings are considerably lower than the national workplace average statistics. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures show 54 per cent of sick days in Britain during 2018-19 resulted from anxiety or depression, based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

The HSE also estimates there were 129,000 work-related ill-health cases in the education sector between 2016-17 and 2018-19 – 52 per cent

of which were a result of stress, depression or anxiety.

According to research from the UCL Institute of Education published last month, one in 20 teachers in England are reporting long-lasting mental health problems.

Professor John Jerrim of the IOE said teachers aren't "dissimilar to other professional groups" and added the disparity between Schools Week's findings and that of the LFS was likely down to the ways in which the information is measured and recorded.

Jerrim said a more reliable measure could be retention and recruitment as "those getting massively stressed are likely to leave the profession". The IOE will itself be publishing more research into teachers' mental health later this year.

Of the councils that responded, Sefton Council recorded the highest percentage of mental health absentee days, at 44.8%.

A spokesperson said teachers were supported through pastoral support on site and counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy through its occupational health service.

The Elliot Foundation had the lowest percentage among the trusts that responded, with just 2.7 per cent. It is in the process of rolling out a wellbeing strategy across its 28 schools, a spokesperson explained. Current initiatives include walking groups and flexible working schedules.

# Headteachers' Roundtable 2020

## NSC HAPPY TO GIVE 'INDICATIVE VIEW' ON TAKEOVERS

**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The national schools commissioner has revealed academy trust bosses can get “a steer” on whether their plans to take over schools would get the go-ahead before official meetings.

Important decisions on academies – such as choosing which trusts to take over a school – are made by regional schools commissioners during headteacher board meetings.

During the Headteachers' Roundtable on Friday, Vic Goddard, chief executive of the four-school Passmores Co-operative Learning Community, said a nearby single-academy trust was “desperate” to join his trust.

But he said “nobody has any faith we're going to put hours and hours of work in” for it to be thrown out by the “shadowy headteacher board... without us knowing why. Before we put effort in to grow, what sort of reassurances [are there] it's worth the effort?”

In response, national schools commissioner Dominic Herrington urged Goddard to “send me or the RSC a kind of one- or two-page summary about what your overarching plan is, to get a kind of indication or steer”. He added he was “happy to get an indicative view” on the proposal.

Schools Week understands this is something that has always been encouraged by commissioners, so that academy leaders know they aren't just submitting “fruitless” applications.



The headteacher board system – where elected and co-opted school leaders advise RSCs on academy decisions – has previously been criticised for a lack of transparency.

The meetings are not open to the public, and until towards the end of 2018 no more than one-word explanations were given in minutes of meetings to explain decisions.

However, under Herrington, minutes now include more detail about decisions.

Speaking at the event, Herrington said the headteacher boards are a “really important part of our system. They are providing professional advice to RSCs that they wouldn't otherwise get.

“It's a fantastic type of professional development for headteachers or trust leaders, but also an advisory board that gives the RSC real insight.”

He added he wants leaders to “have as much of a say as possible... My way of doing that is having a system of HTBs... It's a really good bit of our system.”

## Herrington: RSCs 'bombarded' by parents

Regional schools commissioners often get “bombarded” by correspondence from parents during campaigns against academy decisions but don't have “resources to hold groups of meetings with parents”.

Commissioners have been criticised for being inaccessible and not listening to the view of parents during important decisions on academisation.

National schools commissioner Dominic Herrington said, where situations get “quite acute”, that RSCs will meet with parents or local authority scrutiny committees.

However, he said RSCs now expect the voice of parents and pupils to come through the school,

trust, local authority or member for parliament. He also added the Education Skills and Funding Agency has a complaints process.

“My experience is parents find a way to talk to everyone, often through social media, and RSCs are bombarded at times if there's a parental campaign.”

He warned the commissioner role was an “all-encompassing 24/7 job”, adding: “We will always listen to what parents are saying, everyone will have to just, I suppose, trust our professionalism as civil servants in doing that – rather than going out and holding groups of meeting with parents and pupils, because we just don't have the resource for that.”

## AT LAST, RSC POLICY CAST-LIST REVEALED

Herrington also spoke more about how each regional school commissioner is now “linked” into a policy where they provide “insight” based on “expertise and frontline experience”.

Schools Week revealed the changes in October, but the government refused to give us a list of the policy areas. When approached again this week, the Department for Education sent us the full list:

**DOMINIC HERRINGTON**, national schools commissioner, school strategy and academies policy.



**KATHERINE COWELL**, RSC for the north, social mobility and disadvantage.

**ANDREW WARREN**, RSC for the West Midlands, teaching workforce.



**CLARE BURTON**, RSC for South-East England and south London, school places.

**HANNAH WOODHOUSE**, RSC for the South West, school improvement and capacity.



**DAME KATE DETHRIDGE**, RSC for north-west London and south-central London, early years, governance and leadership.



**VICKY BEER**, RSC for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, inspection, accountability and faith.



**JOHN EDWARDS**, RSC for the East Midlands and the Humber, risk, intervention and resource management.



**SUE BALDWIN**, RSC for east of England, safeguarding and inclusive schools.



# Headteachers' Roundtable 2020



## Be more like Ofcom, schools regulator is told

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted should operate more like communications regulator Ofcom and abandon its ratings for schools, a former adviser to the government on school leadership has said.

Steve Munby, who advised four education secretaries, including Michael Gove, as chief executive of the National College for School Leadership, warned that England has the “highest-stakes accountability system in the world” and has failed to balance accountability with capacity-building.

Munby, now an author and public speaker, told the annual conference of the Headteachers' Roundtable conference last week that Ofsted was “not acting like a regulator”.

“I don't think there's anywhere else in the world where a headteacher is more likely to be dismissed based on examination results or inspection. This is the most extreme. And other systems look on in bewilderment,” he said.

“And then we wonder why we have a retention problem, when we have a regulator not acting like a regulator. Ofcom is a regulator. Ofcom has set down the standards of what television programmes should do. It doesn't say, ‘That programme's outstanding, that one's inadequate’.

“We should have a regulator that says, ‘These are the standards, and if you meet those standards, the public can have confidence in you.’”

The school inspection system was a key talking point for many speakers at the event at County Hall, London, last Friday.

Caroline Barlow, head of Heathfield Community College in East Sussex, told the conference that the prospect of an Ofsted inspection, especially under the new framework that has seen inspectors clamp down on schools with a shortened key stage 3, was making her lose sleep.

“I lie awake at night, in potentially the Ofsted

window. I have a three-year key stage 4, and they sit exams early. God knows what's going to happen,” she said.

“It cannot just be that one size works for all. We have to be able to adapt to who we have in front of us.”

Concerns about bruising accountability measures have grown in recent years, and are often cited as one of the main reasons why teachers and leaders leave the profession.

The government has sought to address the problem through a number of initiatives, such as the removal of floor and coasting school standards, but many heads remain convinced ministers, and Ofsted, are on the wrong path.

Munby warned the current system is harming the most vulnerable and exacerbating teacher recruitment and retention issues.

“The children with the greatest needs are the least welcome in our system, and too many fall between the cracks of our piecemeal system,” he said.

“This is the case in most systems in the world, but it's more the case here, partly because of our high-stakes accountability, partly because of how our admission system works and how parental preference works.

“England has the highest-stakes accountability system in the world, and has got the balance between accountability and capacity-building wrong.”

Tom Middlehurst, head of policy at the school membership organisation SSAT, also questioned the government's focus on raising salaries for starting teachers.

“We know that teacher recruiting and retention is not about the money,” he told the conference.

“A vast majority of teachers in their first five years of teaching leave for a lower-paid job. And yet, at a policy level, the solution to the teacher recruitment retention crisis is all about salary, and that is so misguided because we know that is not the reason why teachers are leaving.”

## ASCL wants 'solutions' over PauseOfsted

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The Association of School and College Leaders will not back calls for school staff to stop working as Ofsted inspectors because its leaders are “not convinced” it's the best way forward.

The #PauseOfsted campaign, launched by Headteachers' Roundtable chair Stephen Tierney at the think tank's annual conference last week, calls for those working part-time as Ofsted inspectors to withdraw their labour.

The campaign is aimed at persuading the watchdog, which relies heavily on the work of serving school staff, to reconsider its approach to inspection, which leaders claim is failing to take into account the difficult circumstances faced by some schools.

Last week, the National Education Union backed the campaign, calling on its members who work as Ofsted inspectors to stop doing so.

But ASCL's general secretary Geoff Barton said it's “not our role to give unsolicited advice over professional decisions” and added his organisation is “not convinced that this action is the best way forward to create a better system”.

“We share concerns about the bluntness of Ofsted inspection judgments and the impact this can have on schools and school leaders, but our focus is on proposing solutions to these issues.”

The National Association of Headteachers, England's largest school leaders' union, refused to say whether it will support the campaign. However, it said inspection will be “one of the main items on the agenda” at its next national executive committee meeting in March.

The NASUWT union, which, like the NEU, represents mostly classroom teachers, is also not supporting the campaign, and will not ask its members to withdraw from inspection duties.

*Schools Week* understands that no Ofsted inspectors have officially resigned as a result of the campaign. However, it is anticipated that some will or already have declined to accept more work via their existing contracts.

Tierney informed Friday's conference that he had been contacted by one academy trust leader who said all five inspectors working within their organisation had withdrawn in response to the campaign.

11<sup>TH</sup>

EST. 2010

# FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Wellington college

HEADLINE  
PARTNER



18-19 JUNE 2020  
WELLINGTON COLLEGE,  
CROWTHORNE



DON'T MISS THE EDUCATION EVENT OF THE YEAR!

This year we will celebrate the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Festival of Education, which has grown from a thought-forum to the most important, interesting and inspirational event in the education calendar.



## FESTIVAL TICKETS | EARLY BIRD OFFER

**SAVE 20%** on tickets to the 11th Festival of Education.  
Until the end of March we're offering a discount of  
at least 20% on all single and group tickets.

VISIT [EDUCATIONFEST.CO.UK](http://EDUCATIONFEST.CO.UK) TO BOOK NOW  
#EDUCATIONFEST

# EDITORIAL

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

## DfE's empty promises on whistleblowing

Our report on the naming of three whistleblowers by government (page 8) makes for sober reading.

Publication of the three individuals' names – in a Freedom of Information response viewable online – wasn't even a blunder.

The Department for Education admitted it proactively chose not to redact the names of people who gave evidence, according to their union and a lawyer, under the assumption they were whistleblowers.

As whistleblowing charity Protect states, confidentiality should be the shield for whistleblowers and, removing that, sends a "poor message to others who might consider coming forward".

Our story also reveals a lack of protections for teachers who do raise concerns.

Last July, Lord Agnew said that he would "look into whistleblowing procedures" after being pressed on the risk of retaliation from employers.

If the academies minister is serious about making it safer for people to speak out, backing an overhaul of legislation would be the obvious place to look.

## Large trusts running their own AP has pitfalls

The Timpson review into exclusions was quite clear on alternative provision: "Despite the dedication of many settings that offer education after exclusion, there is much variation in the quality of the offer".

While the government committed to implementing the review's proposals (caveat: in principle), we haven't heard much since.

Lord Agnew's comments in our story (page 5) offer an interesting insight into the government's current thinking – they are relying on large academy trusts to solve the issues, particularly around exclusions.

This makes sense. For instance, as one trust points out in our article, it means excluded pupils can still study any subject offered by their mainstream schools.

But there are also potential problems. Trusts could, theoretically, use their own AP as a dumping ground for pupils that may drag down their league table scores, creating a new off-rolling issue.

It's something the government will need to put some serious thinking into, before any plans are rolled out.

SCHOOLS WEEK



Get in touch.



CONTACT:  
NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK  
OR CALL 0203 4321 392



Body-cams in schools

Jane, comment

Wearing body-worn cameras in prisons or in the NHS is completely different from wearing them in schools. Is this an admission by the head teachers in these schools that they are not in control and that the teachers are not coping? I would also worry about any roll-out of this lunacy – would it be used to control teachers as well as pupils?

This seems to me to be a result of the intense focus on league tables and the drive to improve exam results at the expense of children's education, leading to the rejection of so many. It is also, perhaps, another result of the disillusion of so many experienced teachers who are leaving.

Whatever the reasons behind the decision, it is an admission of failure by the head and the senior staff.

Time to pause Ofsted – here's how

Dame Nicola Stephenson

I applaud this idea – bravo. As a national leader of education, I was asked to train as an Ofsted inspector. I worked as an additional inspector for many years. In December I decided I could no longer look myself in the mirror and continue to be part of such a damaging process. I wanted to change things from within Ofsted – it was impossible. I ask all additional inspectors who work in schools, and know that the system doesn't work and that it still depends on the team a school are allocated, to make themselves unavailable. We can't be the silent minority covering up the issues. Speak up, walk out.

Mark Watson

Every single profession in the world hates and despises the external organisation that holds it to account. No exceptions. So why does it happen? Because it's been proved time and time again that professions holding themselves to account simply doesn't work. It's a lovely idea, it just doesn't protect the clients/customers/pupils.

Julie Gilligan

Great idea! I've always wondered how people who've seen first-hand the damage Ofsted does to staff confidence and morale, as well as the public's perception of teachers and schools, can be part of this heavy-handed and threat-laden process. It's driven so many good teachers out of education. How can they do it to their colleagues? There are so many better ways of getting the best out of teachers.

REPLY OF THE WEEK

James Kerr

Schools to make teacher body-cams permanent to blitz bad behaviour

This is not the answer, children will only react more if they know they are being filmed. This is going to open a can of worms regarding GDPR. It is a sad day but a very slippery slope. Where do you start and end? A lot more needs to be done within schools but also needs to be done by parents. Parents do need to take responsibility for their child's behaviour.



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

NEU advises members not to work as Ofsted inspectors



Adam Boxer, @AdamBoxer1

I get that the NEU hates Ofsted, but why would they deny their members the opportunity to train, develop their portfolio and bring about system improvement? Also, having serving teachers as part of the inspectorate is pretty important.

DfE consults on new music education blueprint



Kevin Brennan MP, @KevinBrennanMP

Nick Gibb has spent a decade making policy that has undermined music education

Just 1 in 6 breakfast clubs in £26m scheme are actually new



Abi Burton

Our school has this. Yes, we had a fee-paying breakfast club for a small number of children (less than 20) every morning, but now we have over 200 accessing free breakfasts every morning. It's fantastic!



Agnew to fire off another round of Baker clause warning letters

Adam Carter

So, the Govian changes forced schools to push all students down the academic route, to the detriment of the creative subjects, and it's schools' fault that apprenticeship uptake is down. Right.

# Feature

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK



# After the storm

The collapse of scandal-hit academy trusts has been well chronicled. Some have been closed down, others are awaiting the results of police investigations before winding up.

But, away from the spotlight of the fall-out, new academy trusts are working to turn around the fortunes of pupils who have been failed for years.

Faced with derelict buildings, six-figure deficits and anger from communities – each told *Schools Week* of their moral imperative to right the wrongs.

I went through a calendar with someone in the first week and said: 'I can see there is a training day at a strange point in the year, what's that for?'" Jo Saxton, chief executive of Turner Schools, recalls.

Her trust had just taken over two schools from the Lilac Sky academy trust, which shut in 2017 amid a probe into allegations of financial

malpractice.

"Everyone looked shiftily at each other and eventually somebody said, 'That's what we call "hangover day";'" Saxton added. "So, while parents were being told that this was a training day for staff, actually it was a day after the trust's celebration evening, a big champagne-filled dinner, and staff had 'hangover day' the next day."

It was one of a host of problems at the schools – Martello Primary and Morehall Primary, both in Folkestone, Kent.

Her "biggest shock", though, was arriving at one to find that it "hadn't had functioning heating for several years – and that had become normal. Staff and children would wear coats in certain rooms at certain times of year because that is just what

# Scandal-hit schools: after the storm

they did.”

The government’s investigation into Lilac Sky has yet to be published. But annual accounts have shed some light on the shocking goings-on – from leaders spending public money on “luxury” alcohol to handing staff severance pay-offs before re-hiring them the next day.

Meanwhile, Core Education Trust took on four of five Birmingham schools belonging to the Perry Beeches academy trust in March 2018.

That was nearly two years after revelations the trust had funnelled £1.3 million to a private firm, which then paid a “second salary” of £160,000 over two years to “superhead” Liam Nolan (on top of his £120,000



Jo Saxton

no systems for what exams they did or what the curriculum model looked like,” she added. “At absolutely every level, it was dysfunctional.”

**You’re starting with one hand tied behind your back’**

The trust, which had previously taken on two



Benedick Ashmore-Short

Trust took on liabilities of £2.6 million when it took over Goodwin Academy in September 2018.

The Kent school had been run by the SchoolsCompany Trust, which was stripped of its four schools and is being wound up. Police are also investigating its finances.

The government wiped off £1.6 million of the deficit, agreeing it won’t seek to reclaim more than £1 million back from TSAT.

But the trust is still looking into selling off surplus land on the site to balance the books.

**‘We had bare electrics, fire doors with holes in them’**

Balby Carr Community Academy, in Doncaster, was one of two schools taken on by the Astrea Academy Trust from the Wakefield City Academies Trust. The latter was stripped of its 21 schools amid concerns about the quality of education, its ability to drive improvement and financial malpractice.

Benedick Ashmore-Short, interim chief executive at Astrea, has worked in turnaround schools for 20 years.

But he was “incredibly shocked” when he first walked into Balby Carr, which was in “special measures” and had a £900,000-a-year deficit. “The buildings were falling to bits. There were holes in the roof where water was coming through. We had



## "Children would wear coats in certain rooms - it's just what they did

salary). Perry Beeches is now being wound up.

Joanne Tyler, deputy chief executive at Core, said: “When you take over schools you think you know what you’re taking over, but we didn’t until we walked into those schools.”

The takeover had dragged on for over 18 months, after what Tyler said was resistance from the acting leadership of the trust, making it hard for Core to do its due diligence.

“You’ve got children who have not had the education they should have been having”  
Meanwhile the schools were “haemorrhaging” staff because of the “uncertainty”.

“There were no processes, there were



Joanne Tyler

of the “Trojan Horse” schools, also had to deal with the financial fall-out. Core took on a £1.5 million deficit, racked up by the previous leaders, which it is paying the government back at £300,000-a-year.

“You’re starting something with one hand tied behind your back almost,” Tyler added.

Existing deficits can be written off under academy takeovers. But the government has come under fire for inconsistencies in how it dishes out the cash.

Jo Saxton said the government had been “incredible in terms of writing off significant historic debt, which would have made it very difficult to operate otherwise”, but with the expectation “it’s going to return improved outcomes for children and quickly”.

Meanwhile, the Thinking Schools Academy

# Scandal-hit schools: after the storm

bare electric wires, fire extinguishers that weren't on walls and fire doors with holes in them."

There were also "significant behaviour issues", including "gang violence in the playgrounds" and children out of lessons, while many teachers were unqualified.

"A school like that, when you walk in there, there is a 'gulp'."

He said Astrea focused on a "clear school-improvement plan", implemented "rapidly and decisively", with particular focus on improving teaching and "sustainable school improvement".

All pupils were cognitively tested to pinpoint where their attainment should be.

He claimed the trust was seen as "saviours" by staff, paying tribute to the "absolute superstars in those schools that stayed through the tough days and lack of support".

But that's not the case for others.

## 'The damage had been done – changing the mindset was a big thing'

Step Academy Trust took on four Lilac Sky trust schools in East Sussex, despite the majority of its ten other schools being located in south London.

Deputy chief executive Paul Glover and executive headteacher Tim Mills both temporarily relocated to the area to help lead the improvement work.

Glover said there was a "huge legacy of failure" from both the local authority and Lilac Sky. But one of the biggest problems was changing the "perception of the academies programme".

"Because the damage had been done by Lilac Sky, the difficulty is when you have another multi-academy trust coming in there's a worry they are going to be the same. So, changing the mindset was a big thing."

Saxton admitted Turner Schools was also treated "with suspicion" by parents. "It's difficult because you're arriving and setting a new standard," she said. "You're not arriving and saying 'let's be great friends'. You're saying 'we are here for your children, and that means you need to bring them into school no matter how difficult it might be'.

"Obviously we were aware that these were schools in need and it's a great privilege to be asked to take on these situations, but it's an enormous responsibility. The more the community has been let down, the bigger the responsibility."

After ensuring buildings were safe, Saxton prioritised improving the teaching and learning at Martello and Morehall, including hauling staff in on Saturdays to cram extra training and to make up for lost time. (Staff were given days off in lieu later in the year.)

## 'The adults messed up, not the children'

Over at Core, Tyler said changing the culture of the Perry Beeches schools was more difficult than expected as some staff "felt there was nothing wrong with what they were doing"

renamed Astrea Academy Woodfields – will be rated 'good' at its next inspection. It was last rated 'good' 46 years ago, he adds.

"[The school] will finally start serving that community in a way a school should do, in terms of being a catalyst to build social capital and drive that community forward."

Meanwhile, Mills said the schools that STEP took over had been known as "failing and failed" but, when two were rated 'good' by Ofsted in October, the "buzz around East Sussex was phenomenal".

Teachers in the area now visit White House Academy and Phoenix Academy to see how they have improved reading at the primary schools, he adds.

Martello School was rated 'requires improvement' in May 2018, 16 months after

## "You're starting with one hand tied behind your back"

and "failed to see they had been unwitting accomplices to a financial scandal".

"It's a challenge we have because we dare to go where other sponsors don't. We feel the system can be punishing for those trusts that step forward to do the right thing."

She makes the point that one of the schools was inspected just 26 weeks after it joined Core and was rated 'requires improvement'.

"We still have a long way to go. Our results are not where they should be, but you can't put it right in 18 months... For our trustees, the moral purpose was to take over those schools and get those children educated. The adults messed up, not the children."

At Astrea, Ashmore-Short is hoping Balby – now

joining Turner Schools. But, in October, Morehall received the first 'good' rating in the school's history.

"We've still got work to do, but the thing to recognise is that Lilac Sky was in these schools in the first place because they were schools with difficulties, and you don't fix these legacy issues with a magic bullet," Saxton added.

"You deal with fundamentals – the building, the premises, are there enough books and appropriately trained staff with a good curriculum? You put the fundamentals in place but you have to keep using them and it takes time to show results."



Paul Glover

Tim Mills

# Opinion

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



**LYNNE TAYLOR**  
Founder and co-CEO, GDPR in Schools (GDPRiS) and founder, ParentPay



## Schools and MATs need to take urgent action on GDPR

**Data safeguarding is as important as any other safeguarding and more work needs to be done to ensure schools act on that fact, writes Lynne Taylor**

If these were Ofsted gradings, a political reckoning would be under way.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has audited compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) across over 360 schools and not one has reached an overall 'excellent' rating.

The ICO audits assess schools in the key areas of governance and accountability, data sharing, training and awareness, and requests for personal data and portability. Across all of the reports, overall assurance ratings were 'reasonable' at best, with many schools receiving a 'limited' score.

When GDPR was introduced in 2018, schools were initially praised for working diligently to introduce new practices to safeguard their information and protect their staff and students. The latest audits suggest that many are still struggling to understand what is required of them.

It might not be an all-important

Ofsted visit, but the truth is that this should be no less concerning, given the everyday risk of data breaches. The reputational damage could be

**“ Schools are lagging in their data compliance**

just as bad as an 'inadequate' grading. The risk of further investigation and very substantial fines should hold Schools Week readers' attention. Some have already been hit with smaller fines for failing to pay the registration fee. It's not a lot of money, but there isn't a lot to go around to start with, and it shows a worrying lack of prioritisation.

The evidence is already that schools are lagging in their data compliance, and inaction will only make that worse as time progresses. Part of the problem seems to be that once media attention died down, data compliance in many schools was palmed off to IT departments or selected individuals, when it should be understood as a school-wide responsibility.

Nobody is yet suggesting that schools don't try to keep their students and staff safe, but a lot more can be done. Basic requirements such

as paying the ICO data protection registration fee and appointing an independent data protection officer (DPO) are firm foundations of GDPR best practice, but they must result in

building a culture of transparency and accountability.

In order to excel in the ICO assurance ratings, schools must have the evidence to prove that they understand fully, and are continuing to better, their information governance. Simply telling the ICO is just not good enough. You must be able to show that each piece of information is correctly organised and stored according to the guidelines and keeping a detailed log of data protection processes is paramount.

And a culture of transparency and accountability doesn't begin and end at the top. Trust managers, senior leaders and key staff should be driving privacy and risk assessment at every level. Every process that uses personal data must be GDPR-compliant, which means every person engaging

with those processes must be GDPR-compliant too. Data protection impact assessments (DPIA) are essential, and so is staff development.

Around 380 schools in MATs have been inspected to date and have been asked how they carry out a DPIA on systems that contain personal data, including how they would dispose of data and how they would prove this. Each question opens up potential pitfalls, but the aim isn't to catch schools out doing bad – it is to protect the data of the children and families in our care. Which is to say, it is about protecting them.

Available technology can help, but the key message from the audits is evidence. It is no longer good enough to be doing – the ICO requires proof that it is being done. Maintaining proper processes and records will ultimately help schools to become and remain compliant, improve data safety and avoid risks of fines, even achieve 'excellent' ratings.

For now though, schools' data safeguarding 'requires improvement'. And if the word 'data' wasn't in the previous sentence, how would reading it make you feel?

# Opinion

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

**Beyond the rhetoric of greater mental health provision in schools for both pupils and staff, not enough has been done – and is being done – to support trainee teachers, writes Emma Hollis**

It appears that everyone now understands that for teachers to best support children in their care, looking out for their own wellbeing is of the utmost importance. Yet much of the support in place is reactive, when in fact it must begin within Initial Teacher Training (ITT).

There is absolutely no doubt that ITT providers work hard to support the needs of all their trainees, including their mental health needs. However, difficulties around non-disclosure, variability in occupational health processes and lack of funding and capacity in schools mean that their efforts often do not receive the support needed from other stakeholders within the sector. Tackling this important issue must be a team effort, and yet so many members of that “team” are hampered by matters outside their control.

I first gave voice to the problem at a NASBTT members' event 12 months ago (almost to the day). I was hearing first-hand about a new generation of troubled teachers who needed help. I investigated, and discovered that in some local authority areas, up to 78 per cent of child and adolescent mental health service referrals had been turned away during the period in which the previous year's trainees were pupils. A clear correlation and worrying pattern was emerging.

It should concern us all that we are increasingly seeing trainee teachers presenting with mental health issues. In practice, some of the adolescents



EMMA HOLLIS

Executive director, National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)

## Trainee teachers' mental health should be ringing alarm bells

who fell through the cracks at school are now coming back as adults into an environment where they were first exposed to these feelings

the lack of mental health support available to them is alarming.

In the intervening 12 months, there has been some action. Last July, the

**“ We are increasingly seeing trainees with mental health issues**

of anxiety, low self-esteem and pressure.

Teacher training is very intense, and we have a worrying number of trainees going into schools and presenting quite severe mental health issues. These are people being asked to look after the mental health of the children in their care, yet

Education Support Partnership was prompted to open up the line to “anyone in training”. The driver was their study which revealed that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and those working in education for less than five years are 29 per cent more likely to experience a mental health problem compared to their

colleagues.

Their work on building the resilience of those entering the profession, when so many are considering leaving it altogether, is vital to the education system as a whole and to schools in challenging circumstances particularly.

Supporting those efforts is why I have subsequently joined the organisation as a trustee.

We also have an opportunity with the Early Career Framework, which has positively acknowledged the emotional demands of the role and the importance of increased support for teachers within the first two years of their career. Mentors, and a focus on quality mentor training, will be crucial in delivering on that promise.

Every time we expect or allow a teacher to support a student with their mental health without the required knowledge and training to do so, we take a risk with the wellbeing of teacher and student alike. To prevent this, NASBTT are working with the Royal Foundation charity to provide advice and guidance for all trainee teachers on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. That work has captured the attention of HRH the Duchess of Cambridge and her charity's staff.

The stark reality, however, is that we are far from getting this right. Research published by University College London last month found that one in 20 teachers is suffering from long-lasting mental health problems.

It is right that every effort be made to support them to recover their quality of life, but until our support is proactive rather than reactive, we will continue to do the profession an injustice.



# Opinion

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



LAURA LUCKING

Director of compliance, Equality and Human Rights Commission



## Too little data on restraint puts children at risk

**Growing concern about the use of restraint in schools has led the Equality and Human Rights Commission to launch a formal inquiry. Laura Lucking explains why**

schools use restraint and in what circumstances. Worryingly, school and system leaders may not be able to gather a full picture of the use of

include physical and mechanical restraint and enforced seclusion.

why recording and monitoring restraint is important, how it can help them to understand how restraint is being used and the pupils who are affected, and how they can improve their practices in future to protect the rights of the children and young people in their care.

Despite being encouraged to do so, there is no legal duty on schools to record incidents of the use of restraint. As a result, there is a lack of transparency and almost no official data about how and when it is being used. This has led us at the Equality and Human Rights Commission this week to launch a formal inquiry into how primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales are monitoring and recording their use of any type of restraint.

Though some in the sector may respond defensively to this announcement, this inquiry isn't about accusing the education system of inappropriate conduct. In fact, quite the opposite. The simple truth is that we do not know what is happening on the ground, and an information vacuum like that is dangerous in itself.

In the absence of robust accountability, parents, carers and teachers may be struggling to understand the extent to which

these types of interventions, in turn limiting their ability to improve their practices and minimise its use.

But most importantly, schools should be a safe haven in which children can learn and flourish under motivating role models who educate and inspire them. The current situation, in which parents and carers of children with disabilities and/or additional support needs especially – backed by a United Nations report – are regularly and publicly calling into question the sector's use of restraint is simply inadequate. It is also unfair to the schools doing excellent work in this area.

Restraint is an act carried out with the purpose of restricting an individual's movement, liberty or freedom to act independently, especially with a view to preventing or ending a dangerous situation. So-called "restrictive interventions"

“ Restraint is traumatic for anyone, and particularly so for children

They are traumatic for anyone, and particularly so for children.

Of course, there may be circumstances in which such interventions are justified, but they must be a last resort for the safety of the child and those around them. But it is complex, and that's why we published a framework for restraint, setting out principles for how and when it can be used lawfully.

Nonetheless, there is far too little information being shared. So in the course of our inquiry, we will also look at those institutions that are required by law to collect data (such as child and adolescent mental health units and young offender institutions) to explore if there is any learning from their approaches that can be applied to the education system.

By doing so, we expect to provide schools with approaches showing

Our goal for this inquiry is to understand how big the evidence gap on this issue is within six months, and to deliver a series of recommendations for schools, the Department for Education and the Welsh government to fill that gap. Ultimately, we hope it leads to all children being protected, treated with dignity and able to reach their full potential.

Children have the same rights as anyone else under the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act. This includes the right to live free from inhumane and degrading treatment and the right to physical and mental integrity. No good educator believes otherwise, so it's time to ensure all have access to the knowledge they need to make that belief a reality for every child in our schools.

**ED** JOBS  
**Week**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**SCHOOLS WEEK**  
**AND FE WEEK**

**SCHOOLS**  
**WEEK**

# GET RECRUITMENT READY FOR 2020

Organise your school's recruitment advertising  
with packages available at Schools Week and  
Education Week Jobs.



Visit [www.educationweekjobs.co.uk](http://www.educationweekjobs.co.uk)

To place a recruitment advert please contact:

**Clare Halliday 020 3432 1397**

**[Clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:Clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk)**

# Research

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

## Up, up and away! Are teachers leading double lives to make ends meet?

Laura McInerney, co-founder, Teacher Tapp

Superman was a journalist. Batman a billionaire playboy. But did you know that Spider-Man was a teacher? In 2001, J Michael Straczynski took on the authorship of the Marvel comic book series and made Peter Parker a teacher, who fought crime alongside his otherwise stable career. In a later series, when Parker gives up superheroics for good, he goes back to teaching.

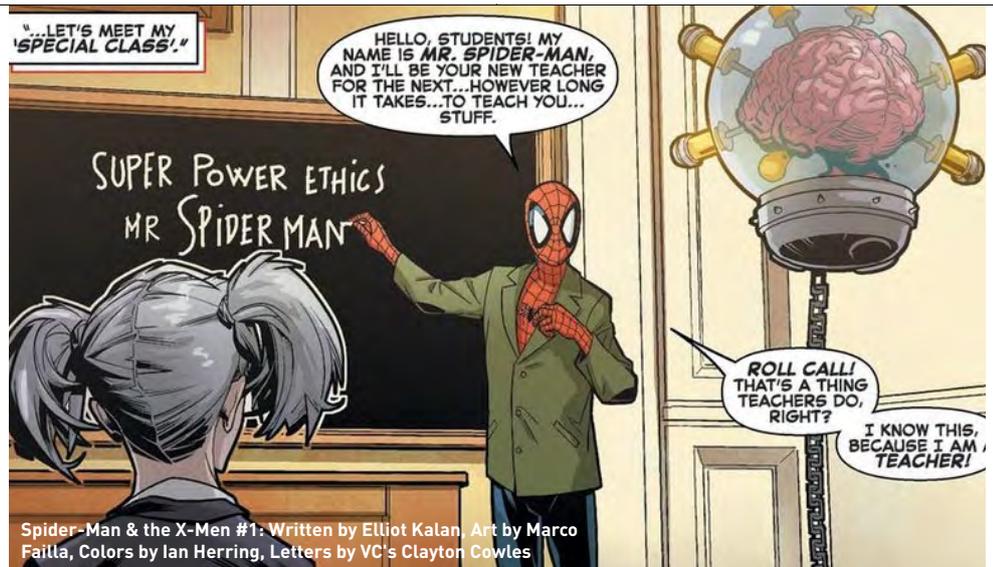
In his autobiography, Straczynski explained why he gave Spider-Man this double life: "It has become a cliché that the right teacher, in the right place, at the right moment, can change someone's life. But [...] everything I've ever achieved as a writer can all be traced back to the moment that two teachers entered my orbit."

Comic-book heroes aside, teaching is a job that involves "double lives" in the real world. Teachers experience an "in-classroom life" and "out-of-classroom life", and the two are often quite distinct.

How do we know? Well, there's the 69 per cent – nearly seven in every ten teachers – who told Teacher Tapp on Christmas Day that they had not told anyone off all day because they were "very good at turning off their teacher role at home".

Of course, they were among the 5,500 teachers who answered Teacher Tapp on Christmas Day, so their dual lives are perhaps less distinct than they think. On the upside, we know that only five per cent of teachers did any school-related activities on the festive date, and most of those who did were simply messaging their colleagues.

A second source of double identity recently revealed itself



Spider-Man & the X-Men #1: Written by Elliot Kalan, Art by Marco Fatta, Colors by Ian Herring, Letters by VC's Clayton Cowles

when we learned that 16 per cent of teachers – roughly one in six – earn additional money from a job outside the classroom, not including the standard activities of exam marking or making and selling resources. Around eight per cent of teachers do some private tutoring, but what about the vast majority of others?

We fired up the Tapp signal to find out, and teachers got in touch to remind us that many of the skills they teach are also useful for paying jobs. Music teachers play in bands or work for recording studios. PE teachers often coach sports teams. (We also had a science teacher write in to say they coached netball.) Arts teachers often make and sell items. All of which is an excellent reminder of what an incredibly diverse and talented profession teaching is!

When it comes to exam marking, it's the middle leaders who are making the most cash, with 18 per cent of them taking on extra workload in the summer term. Given middle leaders consistently report they have the worst work-life balance, as they try to keep up simultaneously with high teaching loads and increasing administrative demands on their time, it seems odd that

they voluntarily take on even more work. However, in secondary schools at least, they also tend to be the most excited by their subject, and may have been financially motivated to take on the job. No surprise then that they would also keep their eyes peeled for other opportunities.

However, middle leaders are not more strapped for cash than other teachers. One way social surveys ascertain respondents' financial comfort is to ask them whether they could access either £1,000 or £5,000 without a bank loan in the case of a sudden emergency. The majority of teachers at all levels said they could access £1,000, but that reduced dramatically at the higher £5,000 point – with just 36 per cent of classroom teachers and 44 per cent of headteachers saying they could find the cash if needed. Note that middle leaders were in the middle – not as cash-strapped as classroom teachers, but not as well-off as heads – so their moonlighting for extra cash isn't because they have less money to hand. Other factors are at play.

Maybe they just really like marking. Or maybe they are secretly off fighting crime. After all, what would Spider-Man have tapped for that question?



# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### How to be an Outstanding Primary SENCO

Author: Jackie Ward

Reviewer: Karen Ferguson, director, Linrow Education

Publisher: Bloomsbury

Any aspiring or newly appointed primary SENCO will benefit from the wealth of experience Jackie Ward has drawn on to write this book. It's an easy-to-read and realistic "how to" guide that shows a real appreciation for the reality of the job on the ground. With teacher workload and wellbeing causing so much concern across the education system, it's a testament to Ward that this theme is the golden thread that ties all the chapters together.

The book itself seems designed with this in mind. The layout is clear and accessible, drawing attention to the interesting case studies, effective top tips and key "take aways" from each of its 11 chapters.

For a more experienced practitioner, some of the advice could possibly border on patronising. However, there are enough golden nuggets throughout to make it a good read for even the most seasoned SENCO, and in any case, positive reinforcement is always comforting in what can be an isolating role.

Each chapter focuses on a specific aspect of a SENCO's responsibilities, and Ward's singular focus throughout is to give practical advice to move readers forward in their development of the role. Early chapters break down the support that SENCOs can give to children, parents and colleagues, with each group of stakeholders getting their own dedicated chapter. The chapter for children is linked directly to current

guidelines, the one on parental support is a good starting point for signposting and meetings, and the one on working with colleagues (in reality, often the most challenging part of the job) clearly identifies their most common areas of need and provides useful advice on how to support them.

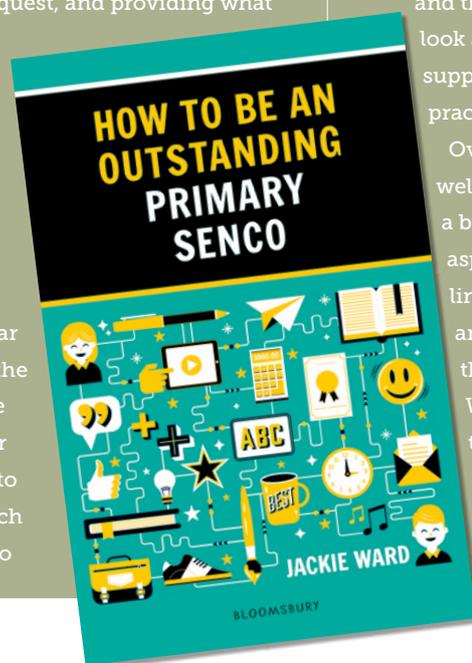
A later chapter on working with outside agencies will be very beneficial for any new SENCO. It sets out clearly what each agency's role is in supporting students, and the "Pros and Cons" section is of particular interest. Knowing that the challenges of waiting lists and appointments are not just in your own area is comforting in its own right.

For me, the most interesting and useful chapter is the one entitled "Applying for statutory assessment: EHCPs" – a fantastic go-to guide with step-by-step advice on the process. Starting with who may request, and providing what is almost a checklist of what is needed before even getting started, it goes on to lay out a clear timeline of the process. The latter is clear about what to expect at each stage, how to

use the EHCP once it is in place, and even how to handle appeals and mediation – an area that is not often openly discussed or shared. This will be invaluable for anyone working with EHCPs for the first time. I certainly would have appreciated it when I started.

Unfortunately, for all the focus on workload and wellbeing, the advice on how to manage it is not as strong or as practical as the advice on doing the job itself. While the book will no doubt help new SENCOs hack their way to more efficient practices, most of the specific tips for workload and wellbeing appear to rely on asking senior leaders for dispensation. In an ideal world, this should be sufficient but, especially in smaller and more rural schools, SENCOs not only have teaching commitments but other responsibilities too. Having said that, it is great to see wellbeing and workload being discussed, and the emphasis on the need to look after oneself before you can support others is something all new practitioners should be taught.

Overall then, this is a very welcome book that can only be a benefit to newly appointed or aspiring SENCOs. With guidance linked to the latest legislation, and a clear structure taking in all the role's main responsibilities, Ward has given us an excellent tool to ensure more can get on the right track towards sustained and sustainable careers in primary SEND.



# Reviews



**Jon Hutchinson, assistant head, Reach Academy Feltham and visiting fellow, Ambition Institute**

@JON\_HUTCHINSON\_

## How should we teach writing in primary schools?

@solomon\_teach

Any primary school teacher knows that teaching writing is perhaps the most complex and challenging aspect of the job. Solomon Kingsnorth points out that any particular unit of work contains “an extraordinary number of things that a novice writer is expected to do successfully”, using real resources to illustrate the demand. Restated within “the language of cognitive science”, Kingsnorth notes that “many writing lessons contain a very high level of element interactivity”. It seems that the current scenario, where “almost a quarter of children” fail to reach a surprisingly modest ‘expected standard’ is not only predictable but inevitable, given the orthodox approach to teaching writing.

## The voodoo art of ranking schools

@profbeckyallen

Education is rife with junk data. From pupil progress meetings to political declarations, we mostly receive and rehearse a diet of lies, damned lies and statistics. Thankfully, Becky Allen is on hand to cut through the

## TOP BLOGS of the week



noise and elucidate the different analyses relevant to school rankings in a way that doesn’t make my brain dribble out of my ear. In this post, Allen looks at the manner in which we currently rank schools against each other, and sets out the case for the prosecution. The argument is far more sophisticated and nuanced than the senseless cries to scrap any sort of accountability. As Allen herself concludes: “Many people who don’t like school rankings are warm, optimistic people who believe life would be rosy without school accountability. I’m not one of those people – monitoring schools has its merits, but we have to do it on the basis of comparisons that are valid.”

## How to teach an essay on the Battle of Hastings

@bennewmark

Although certain specialised knowledge and evidence-based strategies can help expedite a teacher’s journey to expertise, there really is no substitute for hard-won experience. In this post, we get to borrow some of Ben Newmark’s as he sets out step by step how to teach an essay on the Battle

of Hastings. A niche explainer, you may be thinking, but the process that Newmark reveals in terms of what he expects pupils to achieve (and, crucially, what he no longer insists on) can be followed for any subject. There is an honesty and authenticity to this post which I find refreshing and, as a teacher, relatable. Newmark seems to confess with a shrug that the work is “heavily structured, led largely by me, certainly not everything and certainly not perfect, but a solid start build upon”. And I’d suggest that, when planning the next big piece of work you expect pupils to complete, this blog from Newmark is just the kind of foundation you’ll be looking to build on.

## Powerful knowledge in the teaching of educational leadership

@nmgilbride

Over the past decade, the latest chapter in the ongoing epic battle between skills and knowledge has been lost and won. With the Department for Education and Ofsted now aligned in their insistence upon a knowledge-rich approach to curriculum, schools have been busily rewriting schemes of work from scratch. Whilst the tremendous workload that this has created (rightly) irks many, I can’t confess to being too cynical since I think it is probably a good thing that schools are thinking about exactly what they are teaching, when and why. It doesn’t make you very popular to say, “Well this is something that we should have been doing all along,” but, well, it is probably something that we should have been doing all along. A welcome addition to this discussion is provided here by Neil Gilbride, who considers the role of “powerful knowledge” in educational leadership. Arguing that “to develop critical leaders, we need knowledgeable leaders”, Gilbride sets out three relevant theories and threshold concepts that might help us to get them.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## FRIDAY

National schools commissioner Dominic Herrington might have got himself into a spot of bother with his underlings.

At the Headteachers' Roundtable annual conference, Herrington was asked by a school leader about his strategy for the next five years.

The leader explained that he was under pressure from his local RSC to produce a future growth plan after a recent trust review, and wanted to know the lie of the land.

Herrington's advice? As the new government is bound to come up with some plans sooner rather than later, just "stall the RSC [regional schools commissioner] a bit further", he suggested.

But he admitted this "will get me in trouble" with his subordinates. Can't begin to imagine why...

## TUESDAY

The government is obsessed with getting schools to cut costs, but not obsessed enough, it seems, to bother checking up on those advising schools on cost-saving measures.

The Department for Education has updated its list of financial advisers available to schools to provide external support on spending.

All very exciting. But a closer look at the webpage reveals there's something amiss...

The department admits on the webpage that it "only includes suppliers who have added themselves to the list", and that the services haven't even been "checked" by the DfE.

Brb, just off to register myself as a financial adviser! Ker-ching.

## WEDNESDAY

It was a full house for anyone playing Nick Gibb bingo during the minister's appearance in a debate on the performance of white working-class boys.

Not only did Nick Gibb manage to mention his absolute fave E.D. Hirsch, but he also talked about phonics, the importance of a knowledge-rich curriculum and praised Michaela Community School, Dixons Trinity Academy and the Outwood Grange Academy Trust.

But eyes will no doubt have rolled when Gibb insisted Conservative reforms over the past 10 years, which he claims have been driven by the desire to make life better for the sorts of pupils raised in the debate, were starting to bear fruit.

Although Gibb is technically correct when he says the disadvantage gap is now smaller than it was in 2011, this conveniently glosses over the fact the gap has actually started widening again over the past couple of years.

## THURSDAY

Not only does academy sponsor and New Schools Network chair David Ross plough his money into transforming the life chances of deprived children, he also seems to care deeply about helping those down-trodden elites from Eton.

Prime minister Boris Johnson is facing questions about his recent holiday to the Caribbean after claiming in the MPs' register of interests that the cost of his accommodation – some £15,000 – was covered by Ross, who is the founder of

Carphone Warehouse.

But Ross, whose charity the David Ross Foundation sponsors the David Ross Education Trust, and funds projects aimed at broadening horizons, has denied paying for the holiday. His spokesperson told the BBC that he only helped to arrange the stay.

Your move, Boris.

Meanwhile, as *Schools Week* was going to press - we got further confirmation that the Immovable Nick Gibb is, indeed, immovable.

To celebrate/commiserate (delete as applicable) we thought we'd reprint our souvenir front page (see below).

In more surprising news, it looks like academies minister Lord Agnew is off.

We can hear the colour printing cartridge companies popping their champagne corks as we speak!





## Principal

Anderson School is a specialist school for autistic students located in Chigwell, Essex which opened in 2017. The school aims to transform lives by preparing autistic students for life, further education and employment. We are looking for an experienced Principal to support the staff, pupils and families so we make sure all our children and young people continue to thrive and reach their potential. This is an exciting opportunity for an inspirational leader to shape the future direction of the school and lead the way in transforming the lives of young people on the autism spectrum and develop a true community school which is linked with community groups, parents, local authorities, and other schools in the region.

For more information about this job please email **Kirstie Fulthorpe**, Director of Education on [kirstie.fulthorpe@nas.org.uk](mailto:kirstie.fulthorpe@nas.org.uk)



## Chief Executive Officer

The Whitefield Academy Trust, one of the largest and most successful specialist multi-academy trusts in Europe, are appointing their next CEO. You will be an experienced educational strategist able to balance both the strategic oversight of the Trust and ensure it retains its outstanding profile, whilst also running its business of education and raising its profile with stakeholders.

Whitefield is an outward facing Trust and has an ambition to leverage its knowledge of SEN education and innovation in the sector to support policy

both here in the UK and abroad. As such, they need a CEO who has substantial and successful experience of leading SEN provision in an educational context; being adept at curriculum design, an expert around SEN funding and able to translate policy into reality. You will be experienced in capacity building and able to spot opportunities which will enhance the Whitefield Academy Trust's reach, influence and position in the sector.

*Peridot*

For further information about the role, or to arrange a confidential chat, please contact our lead consultant at Peridot Partners:

**Drew Richardson-Walsh**  
[drew@peridotpartners.co.uk](mailto:drew@peridotpartners.co.uk) | 07739 364 033



## Education Director

**Location:** Head Office in Reading and schools across South East England  
**Contract type:** Permanent

Anthem Schools Trust is looking to appoint an Education Director to join its ambitious and dynamic Education Executive Team, take responsibility for a group of four secondary schools in London and the South East and contribute to the strategic development of the Trust at this exciting stage in its journey of growth and development. The team have ambitions to work cross-phase and are looking to appoint an Education Director with secondary school expertise who is also interested in developing their understanding of primary education.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to arrange an informal discussion with the Anthem Chief Executive, Andy Yarrow, in the first instance. This can be arranged by contacting his Executive Assistant, Lasma Geide on **01189 021637** or by email: [lgeide@anthemtrust.uk](mailto:lgeide@anthemtrust.uk)

Find out more about Anthem at [www.anthemtrust.uk](http://www.anthemtrust.uk)

# ANNUAL PACKAGES AT EDUCATION WEEK JOBS

**12 MONTHS UNLIMITED BASIC LISTINGS - £3,000**  
Basic listings include your company logo, unlimited text, attachments.

**12 MONTHS UNLIMITED FEATURED LISTINGS - £5,000 (+35% OFF RECRUITMENT ADVERTS IN FE WEEK OR SCHOOLS WEEK)**  
Featured listings include enhanced visibility on our website, posts via our social media accounts, inclusion on our weekly jobs email (sent to thousands of education professionals) and all the features of a basic listing.



Rates displayed are per school or college. Group and MAT rates are available.

To discuss our recruitment packages with a member of our Sales Team, please call 020 3432 1394 or email [advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk](mailto:advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk)



# Head Teacher

For September 2020 | Contract Type: Full Time | Contract Term: Permanent

Leadership Group 4: L20 £66,698 - L27 £78,169

Closing date: 9.00am Monday 24th February 2020

Interviews: 5th and 6th March 2020

St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School- Windsor

St. Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical is a distinctively Christian school in which we as individuals achieve and thrive with dignity, knowing we are loved by God. In our supportive and exciting environment, we are given opportunities to grow and learn; to aim for excellence in all we do and develop enquiring minds.

**“ The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.”**

Carl Jung

*Our Headteacher of 16 years is retiring and we are seeking to appoint an experienced, enthusiastic and highly motivated leader.*

#### Can you ....

- Offer inspirational leadership skills
- Provide the drive and ability to bring our vision to fruition
- Empower us to become the learning hub at the centre of our community
- Help us become an innovative place to learn
- Maintain and grow our strong Christian ethos

#### We will offer...

- A competitive salary.
- Opportunities to work flexibly.
- Access to rich and diverse CPD opportunities.
- A relocation package for exceptional candidates.
- A dedicated team of talented, caring and conscientious staff
- Thoughtful, charitable and supportive families who enjoy being part of school life.
- Supportive partnerships within the community.
- Opportunities to work alongside local cluster groups on various projects and represent other schools as well as us at school's forum.

#### We have ...

- A thought-provoking, knowledgeable and supportive governing body.
- Well-maintained buildings and grounds, providing a safe, calm and well-ordered and resourced environment for pupils and staff.
- A well-managed, balanced budget.
- 94% of our pupils think they are taught well
- A fantastic group of children who are polite, work hard and are a delight to teach.
- A caring and happy environment, with a strong ethos and values that reflect our Christian ethos.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful applicants.

If you would like more information please visit our website: [www.sterf.org.uk](http://www.sterf.org.uk) or call **01753 867809**

Applications to be submitted to **Mrs Nav Amar-Choi** - Business Manager,  
[headteacher-vacancy@sterf.org.uk](mailto:headteacher-vacancy@sterf.org.uk)

# Associate Headteacher

Application Deadline: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2020

Interview Date: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 Start Date: Easter 2020

Visits to school: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Salary: L18-L24 £62,733 - £72,662



**Bloxwich Academy**  
'Be The **Best** You Can Be'

Bloxwich Academy is a school on the up - and we need you to take it even higher.

Are you an enthusiastic deputy who is looking for their next career step? You should be an exceptional leader who can inspire staff and make a real difference to the life chances of every child.

We need someone who can build on the school's recent, rapid improvements. Over the last three years pupil behaviour, attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching and learning have led to a significant improvement in pupil progress.

Bloxwich Academy is an all through school with 435 primary pupils and 755 secondary pupils. Andy Seager is Headteacher at Bloxwich Academy. As Associate Headteacher you will be responsible for the primary phase and will have regular support from Matrix Academy Trust. You will be in charge of the primary school which is just ½ mile from the secondary school.

There's a real buzz about the place which no amount of words can convey, so please come to see Bloxwich Academy for yourself.

To apply please fill in an application form found on our website:  
[www.matrixacademytrust.co.uk/vacancies](http://www.matrixacademytrust.co.uk/vacancies) and send to  
[mbrennan@matrixacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:mbrennan@matrixacademytrust.co.uk)

Matrix Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.  
All appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS clearance.



## ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCIES HERE!



**ED<sup>JOBS</sup> Week** BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
SCHOOLS WEEK  
AND FE WEEK

Jobs in schools, colleges and education;  
leadership, management, teaching and  
administration

**We've made finding your next colleague easier.**

Visit our website at [educationweekjobs.co.uk](http://educationweekjobs.co.uk)

To place a recruitment advert please contact:  
**Clare Halliday 020 3432 1397**  
[Clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:Clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk)

ALSO MAKES  
A GREAT  
GIFT

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

# SCHOOLS WEEK



VISIT [SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK/SUBSCRIBE](https://www.schoolswEEK.co.uk/subscribe)  
OR EMAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS  
[@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:subscriptions@schoolswEEK.co.uk)