

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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



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Top marks for teacher grades?



P4

Superhead's honour under scrutiny



P15

Keep calm and carry on with what works



P25

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## New normal. Old problems



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## 'If we can help save the lives of people in our community – of course we will'

- Army helps turn first school since WW1 into makeshift hospital
- STEM staff make visors for NHS, with pupils on production line
- Schools dip into their own funds to feed poor pupils over Easter

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# SCHOOLS WEEK

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# Study gives 'confidence' to predicted grades plan

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

An analysis showing the vast majority of predicted GCSE grades are within one grade of being correct will “give everybody confidence” in this year’s plans to replace exams.

Analysis by Data Educator of 19,029 predicted grades across 22 subjects last year found that although only 40 per cent turned out to be the same as what pupils were actually graded, 84.6 per cent were within at least one grade of being right.

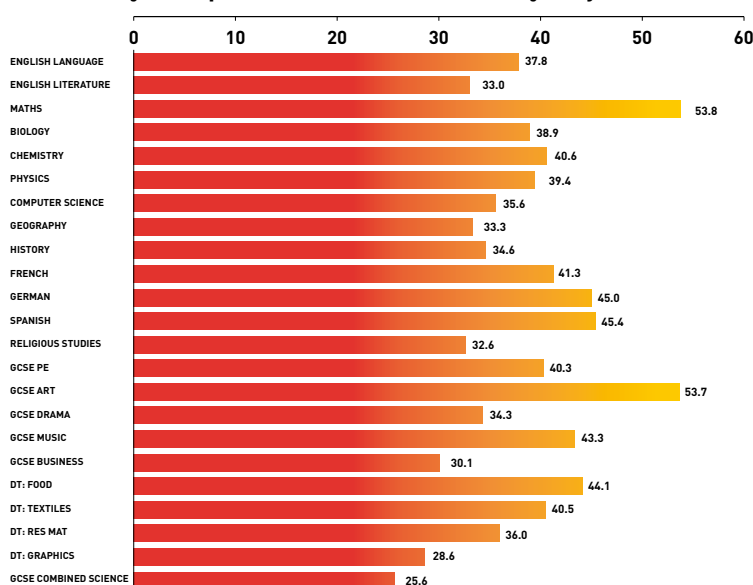
Of the 60 per cent that were incorrect, 31 per cent were too positive and 29 per cent too negative.

The findings will likely be seen as a vote of confidence in teachers’ ability to accurately grade their pupils. It was announced last month exams will be scrapped this summer with moderated teacher assessments being used to award grades instead.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the ASCL leadership union, said the findings should “give everybody confidence that predicted grades are generally close to the actual results”.

However, there are some

% Accuracy 2019 predictions to exam results by subject



variabilities.

Disadvantaged pupils are slightly less likely to have their grades predicted accurately than their non-disadvantaged peers (37.1 per cent vs 41.2 per cent), as are SEND pupils compared to those without SEND (38.4 per cent versus 40.2 per cent).

The accuracy of predictions varied by subject too.

For example, maths, which is tiered,

offering teachers fewer predicted grades to choose from, had a 53.8 per cent accuracy rate, while GCSE combined science, which has more combinations of grades available, had a rate of 25.6 per cent.

But Barton said it was “important to understand that the system proposed this year following the cancellation of exams does not rely only on a prediction of what a student would

have achieved in an exam”.

“What matters is that teachers can rank pupils; research suggests that teachers can do this with reasonable accuracy. There will be an external moderation process which will bring grades into line with what would be expected. This will ensure consistency and fairness for students.”

Proponents of teacher assessment point to the reliability of examiner-assessed grades. Last year, 20.2 per cent of all GCSE grades challenged were changed.

Furthermore, an Ofqual study from 2016 showed that nearly half of pupils in English literature were not awarded the “definite” grade for their exam. Although this was higher in other subjects, for instance, examiners in physics were 95 per cent likely to agree with the definitive mark per question.

David Weston, chief executive of the teacher development trust, said that “even in a ‘perfect’ year, most overall grades have a level of tolerance... From what I’ve read of Ofqual’s approach it’s the least bad option right now – flawed, certainly, but less flawed than other options.”

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Exam boards considering exam fee rebates

England’s largest exam board has said it will seek to pass on to schools savings from the cancellation of exams this summer.

AQA, which issues more than three million GCSE and A-level certificates every year, has pledged to be “transparent with schools” over its costs and to keep leaders informed about plans to offer rebates on fees.

Exam fees cost schools thousands of pounds each year, and following the decision to call off this summer’s exams, headteachers’ unions have raised the prospect of a rebate with the government, regulator Ofqual and the exam boards.

AQA’s chief executive Mark Bedlow said: “As an education charity, we have no wish to gain financially from this summer’s exceptional circumstances, so we’ll certainly be looking to pass any savings on to schools.

“It’s too early to know what the final cost of getting students their grades will be, but we’re going to be transparent with schools and keep them updated.”

The government is yet to set out exactly how this year’s system will work, so it is not yet clear what exam boards’ role will be.

But Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the NAHT, said: “Government, Ofqual and the exam boards must work together to answer these valid questions and let schools know as a matter of urgency whether there will be any reduction in exams fees or a rebate later in the year.”

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of ASCL, told *Schools Week* that although exam boards will have accrued some costs this year, those costs will be “clearly nowhere near what would normally be expected, and schools and colleges should be given some form of appropriate

refund”.

Other exam boards have also pledged to keep schools informed.

Pearson, which runs Edexcel, said it continued to “work around the clock... to define the detail of how this will work and will share information as soon as we have it”.

WJEC added they are also “working to agree an approach to fees”. OCR, the fourth provider of GCSEs and A-levels, did not comment.

Meanwhile, some schools are already planning for savings.

Jonny Uttley, chief executive of The Education Alliance academy trust, said it does not expect exam boards to hold on to their full fees for awarding grades this summer, so has redeployed some of the budget to pay for free school meals for pupils over Easter.



# Sector puts hand in its own pocket to feed pupils over Easter break

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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INVESTIGATES

Schools, councils and academy trusts are delving into their own finances to make sure poorer pupils stuck at home during Easter continue to get free meals.

The Department for Education finally launched a national scheme this week to provide £15 weekly vouchers for pupils entitled to free school meals.

However, headteachers reacted with dismay when the department confirmed they will not cover providing meals over the Easter holiday.

Free school meals would not normally be provided during school holidays, but food poverty campaigners, unions and many school leaders believe an exception should be made, given the financial impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on poorer households.

But schools have taken the matter into their own hands by providing either food parcel deliveries, meals for collection or their own vouchers over Easter. The government has confirmed it will not reimburse their costs.

Andy Burns, chief executive of the 15-school Redhill Academy Trust, told *Schools Week* his decision to continue providing free school meals to families over Easter will cost around £12,000.

"Our conclusion was that it's our free school meals families that are probably particularly suffering with job losses and furloughing at the moment. And if we're honest about it, schools' running costs are lower at the moment than they would be, and if we're saving money in some places, then this is a good area to spend it."

South Hunsley School and Sixth Form, in Yorkshire, will also continue to send out its own vouchers during the holidays. Others are taking a different approach. Whinney Banks Primary School, in Middlesbrough, for example, said it would be "open for eligible families to continue collecting packed lunches over Easter".

Birmingham City Council launched a voucher scheme before the government



announced its own.

Jayne Francis, the city's cabinet member for education, skills and culture, said: "Now we know the national vouchers cover school term time only, we are encouraging schools to use those, and they will then have the Birmingham vouchers for the Easter break."

In Halton, in the north-west of England, the council will be offering meals through schools open at Easter. Phil Harris, a councillor in the area, said in some cases this would mean "delivering two-week hampers".

The government appointed Edenred to supply the vouchers. Schools were supposed to get emails with activation codes on Tuesday, but some were still reporting they hadn't received the email yesterday (Thursday).

The department was also criticised for including Waitrose and M&S supermarkets on the list of stores where vouchers can be claimed, but not more affordable options, such as Aldi and Lidl. The DfE said it was "working to see if additional supermarkets can be added to this list".

It comes as the school catering industry lobbies ministers to facilitate the establishment of "community hubs" in schools to provide meals from their kitchens, rather than vouchers.

Official government guidance states that schools should try to find ways to continue offering meals through their caterers before resorting to vouchers. However, *Schools*

*Week* understands many schools have come under pressure from hard-up parents, who prefer vouchers over food parcels.

A Teacher Tapp survey undertaken before the government voucher scheme was set up showed that 23 per cent of teachers reported their schools were already providing vouchers to families, while 26 per cent said they were delivering meals from their school kitchens.

LACA, which represents caterers, warned the government this week that children and families "should not be given the additional pressure of finding food in supermarkets which not only conflicts with government's advice around social distancing but also the unavailability of supply when they reach the supermarket".

The school food industry has also warned of an impact on livelihoods as a result of the voucher scheme. Although schools have been told to continue to pay suppliers as normal, even if service is interrupted, a number of catering firms have nevertheless taken the decision to furlough their staff.

In a letter to industry leaders, children's minister Vicky Ford said giving schools "flexibility" means they can "make the most appropriate decisions for families in their communities".

Meanwhile, the DfE would not answer when asked if it will pay for schools to provide free school meals to those vulnerable pupils and children of key workers who attend school during the Easter break.

# Pupils get online etiquette lessons for live-streaming classes

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**  
**@SAMANTHAJBOTH**

Teachers have been warned against using live-stream technology to run classes from home, but one school running lessons virtually says they feel it keeps children safer.

The National Education Union issued guidance this week on distance learning, saying it "cannot be business as usual" while schools are closed, warning online lessons should be kept "to a minimum".

Mary Bousted, the union's joint general secretary, said: "Teachers cannot be working as though they are sat in front of a class, and children cannot be expected to be able to study full time with online resources."

Part of the secondary school guidance states teachers should only live-stream lessons from their homes, or engage in video-calling, in "exceptional circumstances" with the parent.

Concerns include teachers' online safety, for example the opportunity for screengrabs to be taken of a staff member.

A survey of more than 6,700 respondents by pollsters Teacher Tapp last week showed 64 per cent of schools were using an online learning platform to set or collect work.

Just two per cent of state schools were using live video conferencing, compared to 28 per cent of private schools. But eight per cent of all schools used online chatting, while 19 per cent provided online video clips.

Geoff Barton, general secretary at the Association of College and School Leaders, urged "caution" over live-streaming lessons, but said teachers will know their groups "better than anybody" and are "best placed to make a judgement on the use of these platforms".



He said it can be "problematic when used with groups which may be difficult to marshal, have varying levels of engagement, and in which individuals may find ways to abuse the technology".

Staff at King's Leadership Academy, a free secondary school in Warrington, were consulted on potential live-streaming plans before school closures were announced.

The school uses video call platform Zoom, which they say meets safeguarding requirements because they can enable security settings and give teachers the option to turn off the camera.

All children are given secure digital tablets already as part of the school's model.

Vice principal Katie Sharp said unions were "right maybe to bring this up, if staff and children aren't protected then live streaming I suppose can be problematic".

The FBI has issued a warning over "zoom-bombing" in America, where conferences were hijacked and disrupted by pornographic or hate images.

Anne Longfield, the children's commissioner, said as popularity of video conferencing has grown, so has "concern for how secure the services are".

When using the Zoom service, she recommended locking the classroom – so no one else can join – using the "virtual waiting room" feature, and stopping

private messaging.

Sharp added: "We've had this in the pipeline for weeks where things were being checked, safeguarding measures – we worked with the local authority to tell them what we are doing, to get them to proof read our policies and make sure all those structures are in place so it is safe and manageable for all involved."

Sharp also said that live-streaming could be a "deterrent" to parents who don't keep children safe at home.

When asked about pupils taking screengrabs of staff, the school said pupils had online etiquette lessons about using the system and have "strong social norms to encourage professional behaviour".

But many schools aren't using it – particularly primaries.

Ottery St Mary Primary School, in Devon, uses live-streaming for staff calls only, with Google Classroom for pupils' communication.

Issues for them include lack of good internet access, parents having to deliver different curriculums for children in different years, and safeguarding concerns.

Assistant head teacher Frankie Finlay said: "There is a big difference in that we are primary, and I think that's probably crucial to it."

"We didn't want to add layers of new things or look into new technology or jump into something different."

The NEU's guidance states "online lessons are not desirable for primary children as the teacher-pupil interaction is not easily replicated".

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# Trust ploughs ahead with redundancies - via conference calls

JAMES CARR

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An academy trust has been criticised for telling staff their jobs are at risk during the first week of coronavirus school shutdowns, and its plans to run redundancy consultations via conference calls.

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) launched a restructuring consultation process at Shipley C of E Primary School last week – despite guidance from unions calling to halt such action.

Under consultation plans sent to all staff members, and seen by *Schools Week*, staff could be dismissed by as soon as the end of May.

Tim Toepritz, NASUWT's national executive member for West Yorkshire, branded the decision "shocking" and said the union was "astounded that they are doing this".

Last week, three teaching unions issued joint advice stating it was "not possible to proceed on matters such as reorganisation/redundancy...which require meaningful consultation in order to meet the law's requirements".

Toepritz said the trust is planning to carry out consultations via conference call, but claimed the decision to proceed is "verging on unlawful" as it "doesn't meet the parameters for an adequate and meaningful discussion".

The union executive explained he was especially surprised by BDAT's actions as the Church of England has already recognised the enormity of the national emergency and suspended all services.

"It's so sad to be having these conversations at such a desperate time," Toepritz added.

BDAT declined to comment when contacted.

It comes as the NASUWT union this week sent a letter to education secretary Gavin Williamson raising "deep concerns" about the "unacceptable actions" some employers are taking against school staff during the coronavirus crisis.

The union claims it is receiving hundreds of calls from teachers where contracts are being prematurely terminated, government

EXCLUSIVE



Shipley C of E Primary School

safety guidance is being ignored, teachers are being penalised for self-isolating and high-risk teachers are being told to carry on working.

Chris Keates, NASUWT's acting general secretary, said: "Teachers' rights and entitlements are being trampled over, as these opportunistic employers drive through procedures and processes and make decisions which will lead to job loss and in some cases immediate loss of income as contracts are prematurely terminated.

"The cases we have been dealing with in the last few days sadly demonstrate that too many employers have lost their humanity when dealing with their staff and not even a national crisis has been able to cause them to change their ways."

She has provided a list of the employers' names to the government.

BDAT's decision to carry on as normal is also at odds with other trusts – which have halted redundancy plans amid the outbreak.

Harris Federation – one of the country's largest trusts – is among those that are calling off restructuring plans until the crisis is resolved.

The trust said its decision to postpone talks was a "common-sense response to the current situation".

Elsewhere, Kents Hill School, part of the Milton Keynes Education Trust, likewise confirmed it was postponing its restructuring plans.

Headteacher Jane Mackie said: "We are in very challenging and stressful times and working, at risk, in order to support key workers. With this in mind, the decision was taken last week, with the full support of the school's governing body, chief executive of the trust and human resources manager, to postpone the restructuring of our workforce and redundancies until the beginning of the autumn term."

Sara Ford, deputy director of policy at ASCL, said: "Employers should give careful consideration as to their ability to run meaningful consultation processes in order to meet the law's requirements with regard to redundancy and restructuring.

"BDAT would need to ensure that affected staff are able to engage fully in the process during the current restrictions."

Ford said it would "be very difficult, in the present circumstances, for an employer to be able to follow due process".

The Bradford trust was criticised last year for its "unprecedented" plans to change teachers' pay and conditions. Unions said this would see teachers go unpaid during summer holidays.

# MPs demand PPE and Covid-19 testing for teachers

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Teachers should get "priority access" to protective equipment, MPs have demanded, as schools still wait for further guidance on how to stay safe in school.

The education committee has also urged education secretary Gavin Williamson to prioritise teachers and school staff for Covid-19 testing "as it comes available".

The government is currently under fire for not testing enough NHS staff. Just 2,000 of the 500,000 workers have been tested for coronavirus so far, despite up to one in four staff being off with suspected symptoms in some areas of the country.

In a letter to Williamson on Wednesday, education committee chair Robert Halfon said he was "concerned teachers on the frontline may not have access to priority Covid-19 testing, which is currently being developed."

"We feel that this is particularly important for teachers and school staff who continue to be asked to look after the most vulnerable children, even though most schools remain closed."

He said guidance on social distancing will be "much harder to observe" for schools that provide "significant levels of specialist and personal care and support".

Halfon added: "While testing alone will not prevent the transmission of Covid-19, it will help schools and headteachers to make agile and



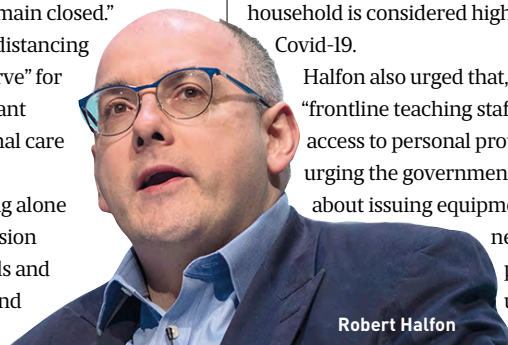
A person is swabbed at a drive-through coronavirus testing

informed decisions and ensure those who are identified as having Covid-19 are not inadvertently asked to work on the frontline in close proximity to children."

New government guidance yesterday said school staff who live with people most at-risk from coronavirus should work from home "where possible".

A quarter of teachers and leaders said in a recent Teacher Tapp survey that somebody in their direct household is considered high-risk if they contract Covid-19.

Halfon also urged that, where necessary, "frontline teaching staff are given priority access to personal protective equipment", urging the government to publish guidance about issuing equipment to schools that need it "as soon as possible, to end uncertainty".



Robert Halfon

Vic Goddard, co-principal at Passmores Academy, in Essex, said it seems "inappropriate to complain about a lack of PPE for schools when you see the bravery of our NHS staff, who continue to be let down in this regard".

But he added: "The time is rapidly approaching where we need to be protected too. The thought that one of our staff may catch the virus and lose their lives because of something I am asking them to do means sleep is very difficult right now."

The government has published "initial" guidance on how to keep safe in schools, but it was branded "inadequate" by unions.

The guidance – which made no mention of PPE – included basic advice which most schools are already following, such as ensure class sizes are smaller, staggering lunch-break times and urging staff to wash their hands regularly.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said staff have demonstrated "phenomenal resourcefulness and ingenuity to get schools up and running as safe spaces", adding this is often before official guidance is published.

"I am very pleased that yet again schools and school leaders have demonstrated that they can be trusted to find the right solutions."

However, he added, as "time goes on" leaders will need "advice with greater depth", but said civil servants are also "working flat-out during this crisis".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, added that while the pace of published guidance may have been "slightly frustrating", they do "recognise this is an extraordinary situation in which very many questions have arisen at great speed".

## NQTs will face no induction delays due to virus

Newly qualified teachers will not have their induction period extended if they are absent because of coronavirus, the government has said.

The Department for Education has announced plans to amend the law to ensure NQTs currently doing their induction can complete it this academic year.

Under the current system, NQTs with ad-hoc absences totalling 30 days or more get an automatic extension to their induction of the aggregate number of days they have

been off.

The government's proposed amendment means "any absence related to the current Covid-19 public health emergency, including school closures, sickness or self-isolation, will not count towards this limit."

"This means that NQTs who are currently undertaking statutory induction can complete their induction this academic year as expected, provided they meet the teachers' standards," the DfE said in new guidance published today.

Heads and appropriate bodies "should continue to judge whether an NQT has met the teachers' standards upon completion of the induction period".

However, they are being "strongly encouraged" to use discretion to recommend an extension where NQTs are found not to have met the standards.

This will allow NQTs "further time and opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet the standards".



# Schools should be 'flexible' on resignations to avoid recruitment blockage

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Schools should be “flexible” over staff resignation dates to ensure there’s not a “deficit of teachers” unable to move this year, with leaders urged to conduct interviews online.

Education unions say schools should not be conducting face-to-face interviews amid the coronavirus outbreak, and instead should consider managing applications and interviews virtually.

This has come at what is usually a busy recruitment time. Resignation dates for staff starting in September, followed by most schools, are set through the burgundy book. Headteachers must hand in their notice by April 30, and the deadline for other staff is May 31.

However, unions have ruled out changing the notice periods and are instead encouraging schools to be flexible around late resignations.

They are in talks with the government over support to ensure there’s not a deficit of teachers or leaders, who have been unable to move around the system, in the autumn term.

Julie McCulloch, policy director at the Association of School and College Leaders, said the current situation presented a “significant challenge, particularly because recruitment is already difficult as a result of national teacher shortages”.

She added employers will need to decide whether to continue with recruitment processes if they feel that it can be done in a “meaningful and fair way” through technology and video interviews, adding that ASCL believes school leaders will find a robust process.

Helen Stevenson, a multi-academy trust chair of trustees and director of education leadership recruitment consultancy Satis Education, said the only issue with tech-based interviews is the lack of engagement with pupils, which is traditionally part of the selection process.

Stevenson has used online interviews to longlist clients, but is working to find out for whom technology can be used in the final stages.

Joint guidance published this week by education unions, the Local Government Association and

## INVESTIGATES



the National Governance Association states there will be disruption to the recruitment and resignation processes for schools governed or using the burgundy book.

However, it states the “extent of the impact will vary from school to school and therefore we do not believe that there should be any changes to the notice periods”.

“In this difficult period, there will need to be an element of flexibility all round. We would encourage schools to have a flexible response, if it appears that teachers and leaders are impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and submit a resignation outside of the normal timeframe.”

They add that any employees looking to resign or retire should provide the governing boards or senior leadership teams with “as much notice as possible” and stay within the standard notice dates.

The LGA said they were “confident” the industry was working together to be flexible. But they added school closures will “undoubtedly” cause significant disruption to notice periods, adding it will be “inevitably be limited” on what schools can do with virtual applications and interviews.

A spokesperson added:  
“The ongoing

uncertainty for the country may also mean some teachers decide that now is not the right time to seek employment and some schools may decide to delay advertising vacancies.”

SchoolDash, which monitors teacher recruitment by analysing school websites, has seen a “big decline” in activity.

Founder Timo Hannay said that up until March 13 there were higher levels of activity than during the same period last year. However, they are now about 60 per cent down on job advertisements compared to last year.

He said: “If this proves to be more than a short-term blip, which seems likely in the face of school closures, it may have an effect on school staffing when the new academic year begins in September.”

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the situation will pose a “challenge”, but said “all job offers already made and resignations will need to be honoured.”

The Department for Education said it will trust schools to use their judgment in implementing online interviews or choosing to delay them.



Julie McCulloch



Kevin Courtney

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We are offering Alps Connect Interactive between now and June 2020 at no extra charge to all schools and colleges. Existing Alps schools and colleges will have Connect Interactive enabled for both Key Stages by 29th March 2020.

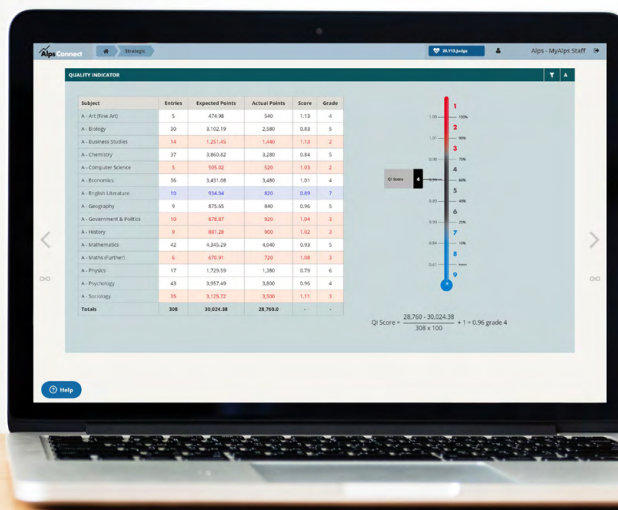
We believe that our tools can really help colleagues to determine fair and accurate judgement grades. We understand that arriving at the right grade is not always easy and brings challenges, but our unique tools can support you in the quality assurance process. Our Education Team offers some advice and guidance on how Connect Interactive might help.

## Steps using Alps tools to help you determine fair judgement grades

1. Submit your judgement grades into Connect as a new grade point
2. Compare the analysis of your judgement grades with previous years' results using our *Monitoring Accuracy tool*.

**Are there big anomalies? Can these be fairly explained? Are there gross over or under-estimates?**

3. Ask your staff to consider – is this an accurate representation of the grade that I would submit as the final judgement grade, taking into account the performance of this subject over the past 3 years?
4. Staff can moderate their grades by performing simple and easy *'What Ifs'* to model informed changes to their judgement grades on their subject or teaching sets value-added.
5. These moderated judgement grades can then be submitted to your MIS and re-submitted into Connect Interactive as a new final judgment grade point.



6. SLT final checkpoint – is the overall picture in line with your expectations and how does it compare to historical trends?

## The unique tools of Connect Interactive

1. *Monitoring Accuracy tool* - can be used to check the proposed final judgement grade for each subject against both previous years' results and previous in-year monitoring point grades, including mock grades to show any big shifts in modelled outcome.
2. *The What If tool* - can be used by each teacher to simply and easily model your judgement grades against national benchmarks at a subject and teaching set level.

Detailed guidance including some short demonstration videos can be found on our support webpage [www.alps.education/judgement-grading-intro](http://www.alps.education/judgement-grading-intro)

If you wish to take up this offer, please visit our website at [www.alps.education](http://www.alps.education) and follow the link to the registration form on the homepage

**Sue Macgregor**  
Director of Education

**Alps Helping students aim higher**

**“The importance of Alps as a tool to support in your quality assurance processes Alps is completely embedded in our college’s quality assurance process. As we enter this unprecedented time of uncertainty for students, parents and staff we know Alps will be more important than ever. We are able to use previous internal teacher judgements and mock exam grades to review subject performance alongside external grades. Above all students who have worked so hard deserve fairness, Alps is a system that helps us achieve this.”**

**Anton McGrath, Principal at Ashton SFC.**



## On the frontline



## School becomes makeshift hospital in just two hours

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A Cumbrian school has been converted into a makeshift hospital in just two hours, in what is thought to be the first use of a school for that purpose since the First World War.

Installed with the help of the military and local public bodies, extra bed capacity at Furness Academy in Barrow will be used to provide care to hospital patients who are "on the road to recovery".

According to headteacher Simon Laheney, it is thought to be the first time a school has been re-designated as a hospital since Cambridge Primary School was used in August 1914.

The school, which is closed, is one of five sites in the county that will provide 500 beds between them.

"We have said all along that we will endeavour to do whatever it takes to work with our support services to ensure that we combat this crisis together. So, when the request came through for help, it was an easy decision to make," Laheney said in a letter to parents.

"If we can help save the lives of people in our community, our parents and grandparents, our sons and daughters, our aunts and uncles, our friends and colleagues, by providing crucial support for our NHS – of course we will!"

However, he was keen to highlight the set-up is "not a similar facility to the NHS Nightingale hospitals you may have seen reported in the



The ARMY along with help from the Optech Fibre Lads and Pickering Lads have been turning Furness Academy into a hospital today. Well done to every involved!



1.2K

206 comments 473 shares

media or a 'field hospital'.

"The intended purpose of this additional bed capacity will be to provide a suitable place where care can be administered to patients who are on the 'road to recovery' before they are discharged home.

"This will free up bed capacity at the hospital for those patients who will be in need of intensive critical care."

He said the community was "fortunate" that Furness Academy's facilities are suitable not only for additional bed space, but also washing and

rest facilities for NHS workers, catering for patients and staff, and "access to the school network and Wi-Fi".

"These arrangements have been made in anticipation of the likely demand on NHS bed space. I am sure you will agree that it is better to act now and put this provision in place in case it is needed, rather than wait and see."

Laheney said parents who were "considering childcare" at Furness Academy would receive further communication "as things develop".

The other four sites providing beds in the region are Whitehaven Sports Centre, The Sands Centre in Carlisle, Penrith Leisure Centre and Kendal Leisure Centre.

Andrew Slattery, Cumbria's assistant chief constable, who chairs the county's multi-agency strategic co-ordination group, said the "full operational model of how the new facilities would work is still being developed".

He said the work now will ensure "basic physical infrastructure is in place should it be needed. This is a prudent and sensible approach given how this pandemic has developed in other countries."

Lyn Simpson, chief executive of North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, said this was a "fantastic response from our multi-agency partners, and we will now work together to plan how these facilities can be used".

Furness Education Trust, which runs the school, is keeping one of its four schools – Victoria Academy – open over the Easter break to provide childcare for parents who have requested it.

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

## Teachers say a special 'thank you' to NHS heroes

Teachers have joined the hundreds of thousands of people volunteering to help the NHS to say "thank you" to "incredible" hospital staff whose care has transformed their own lives.

The Royal Voluntary Service last week appealed for 250,000 volunteers to help with the NHS coronavirus response.

The target was reached within 24 hours, and at 750,000, the service has now paused recruitment in order to process applications.

Two teachers at Wykham Park Academy in Banbury, Oxfordshire, part of the Aspirations Academies Trust, will deliver food and medicines, as well as drive patients to and

from appointments..

Stacey Walsh, part of the school's senior leadership team, was hospitalised as a child for a lung infection and described the NHS staff who helped fix the problem as "incredible".

The 30-year-old said: "I have an active and fit lifestyle and it's all thanks to my hospital treatment. My life could have been very different and I don't ever forget that.

"We are key workers and are still being paid. Teachers are working on a rota, but we have time and I wanted to put the time I have to good use."

Meanwhile, Maria Martin, an art

teacher, is helping in dedication to her twin sister Tania Shankland, who received almost £1 million of treatment after being left paralysed from her armpits down after a horse-riding accident four years ago.

Kayleigh Trainor, assistant head at Forest Hall School in Stansted, Essex, had a mini-stroke aged 27 and is also volunteering. The 31-year-old said: "The treatment I got was amazing from the NHS staff. Having friends who are A&E nurses, and midwives also, gives

me an insight into how tough a day can be, so volunteering during a pandemic is my way of saying thank you. It's the least I can do."



# On the frontline



## School staff step in to make protective gear for medics

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**

**@SAMANTHAJBOTH**

Schools are making use of their science and design labs to produce protective equipment for medics amid pleas hospitals are running out of supplies to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

One school is using its STEM lab to make oxygen masks for a critical care unit, while others are making face visors for GPs – and children of key workers in the school are helping dispatch the supplies.

Ladybridge High School, in Bolton, is using 3D machines – normally used by students to make products such as phone cases, lampshades or furniture parts – to create protective face visors.

Philip Cotton, director of technology and art at the school, said GPs from as far as Essex have been in touch “pleading” for face visors, as they “have no other option”.

Using open source designs, he’s made over 60 so far, with children of key workers in school helping to package them up and send them out. “It’s a troubling time we are in at the moment but just to be able to give a bit back and help a few doctors out is really good,” said Cotton.

“When I saw this I thought, I can do that, I’ve got all the kit, it’s not a difficult job, it’s just a case of getting it done.”

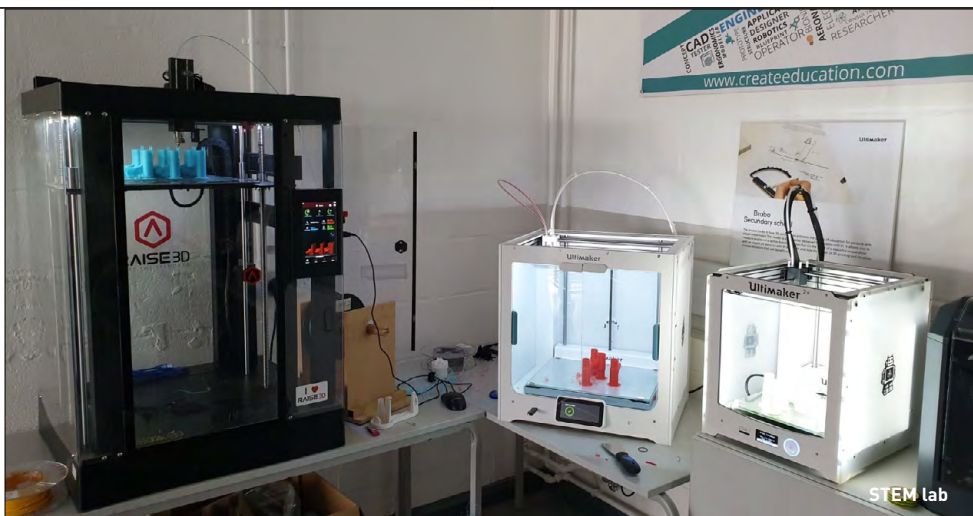
Scores of schools are doing similar work. Norwich School, in Norfolk, for instance, has made over 130 visors. Meanwhile Sam Booth, head of design and technology at Bradfield School, in Sheffield, has appealed for schools across the city to pool their resources to create thousands of full-face visors, launching a Crowdfunder to pay for materials.

Ewell Castle, an independent school in Surrey, has delivered its first batch of visors to a doctor’s surgery after seeing a prototype made earlier this week.

Principal Silas Edmonds said: “They have no visor type masks currently, as hospitals have been the priority, understandably. They are pleased to have some protection at least.”

Guidance from the Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services states design and technology departments are “perfectly placed” to be involved in these initiatives.

But they warn that effective PPE needs “specialist conditions and rigorous testing”, adding its advice is that schools should not go into “production of PPE/other items unless this



Visors

has been through the government procurement website”.

Edmonds said his school was clear with doctors that the visors had not passed any British safety standard tests, but that medics said they need something to keep them going until the supplies arrive.

Cotton also said his school follows strict hygiene recommendations and has issued a disclaimer to doctors that it’s down to their own professional judgement on how to use the visors, as they are not medically tested.

But he added one of the masks he is producing has been approved in the Czech Republic and the other has been endorsed globally.

A medical centre in Trafford has also thanked the school for “their time and hard work in manufacturing protective face shields for our team. Great to see education and the NHS working side by side”.

Beamont Collegiate Academy, in Warrington,



Oxygen masks, Beamont Collegiate Academy

is using its STEM centre and digital workplace, called a Fablab, to develop oxygen face masks, alongside face visors.

The masks are the same type as those used to treat patients in Italy – an adaptation of a diving mask with a hospital oxygen line attachment. They were requested by a critical care centre in the UK, which has tested them.

Chris Hillidge, Beamont’s Fablab director, said the masks have been made to comply with CE safety regulations and have been certified in other countries, however “there has not been time to secure the certification in the UK due to the fast-changing nature of the Covid pandemic. We are offering very clear guidelines to the end user with regard to this and all users are fully aware of the limitations of the devices.”

He added: “A lot of workers are going out without PPE and equipment they need, so if we were able to help out in any way we were duty bound to do it.”



## Speed read



## Education unions have published joint guidance on the coronavirus crisis: here are the key findings

### 1 Don't monitor staff performance

The guidance states that schools "should not be formally monitoring staff performance during this period".

The unions say teachers should also not be asked to personally contact individual pupils on a daily basis, except when such contact has been agreed with headteachers for vulnerable children.

Teachers should also not use personal phones or emails, and all staff and pupils should be reminded of the school's policies on safe internet usage. A "clear statement" for parents on home learning and communication should also be considered.

Any setting of exam-related work for year 11 and 13 students, grading and marking it, collating portfolios, and/or doing predicted grades is also advised against.



### 2 Halt redundancies and disciplinary matters

The unions have warned that it is "not possible" to proceed on matters "such as reorganisation/redundancy or academy conversion which require meaningful consultation in order to meet the law's requirements".

Schools should also not proceed on disciplinary, capability or grievance matters which require hearings and representation.

The guidance adds: "In the most serious disciplinary cases, suspension on full pay may be necessary to facilitate this."



### 3 Don't make teachers come in to clean if there are no pupils

Teachers should not be asked to be on site if they are not looking after pupils, the guidance states.

For example, they should not be asked to attend full staff meetings, clean cupboards or take down displays "because this increases their exposure to the virus and endangers the NHS".

Supply teachers must also be "fairly treated" – kept in post, supported if unable to work and employed as part of local authorities' response to the crisis.



### 4 Inform staff when they will work during Easter

School staff should know when they are expected to work (either in school or at home) and when they are on holiday during the Easter break.

Staff who are on holiday should not be expected to keep in touch because they need "time to switch off and physically and mentally recuperate", and holidays should be operated on a rota basis so staff get two weeks off, "either before, during or after the period when the school would normally be closed for Easter".

Unions are not expecting schools to be open on Good Friday or Easter Monday.

If schools don't have enough staff to care for pupils safely, even based on the new reduced provision approach, then full or partial closure "may be necessary", the guidance adds. This must be subject to a risk assessment and undertaken in consultation with chairs of governors.



### 5 Only healthy and low-risk staff should be in

The guidance states that school staff who are "healthy and not in a high-risk vulnerable group" can be called upon to be in school, but should be consulted first on whether they are able to work.

Staff with health conditions that make them vulnerable to being badly affected if they catch the virus, and those who live with someone in the most vulnerable health groups, "should not be included on staff rotas for working in school".

Government guidance published this week states similar: staff with less serious conditions and those in the same household as people from the most at-risk group should work from home "where possible".

A quarter of teachers and leaders said in a recent Teacher Tapp survey that somebody in their direct household is considered high-risk if they contract Covid-19.



### 6 Staff cannot 'home school' the nation's children

With exams, tests and Ofsted inspections cancelled, the guidance reminds schools that "this is not education as we have known it".

Schools are being reminded that children will have "very different" home lives and levels of parental support, and that it is "not feasible to carry on as before during this crisis".

"We cannot 'home school' the nation's children," the guidance continues.

Children will not follow a normal timetable, and while schools are starting to put in place processes and resources to support home learning, it is "not reasonable, or feasible, for schools to continue to provide a 'normal' school education during this time".



# Emails reveal Ofsted permitted use of its logo to private company

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR\_93

EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted did give permission to a private firm that sells curriculum packages to schools for thousands of pounds to use its official logo in a magazine, an internal email chain has revealed.

In February, Ofsted's involvement in Cornerstones Education's *The Curriculum* magazine was brought into question after the publication bore the inspectorate's logo and the phrase "Ofsted-approved articles".

Inside the magazine, two articles are said to have been "reviewed" by then Ofsted deputy director Matthew Purves.

At the time, the watchdog would only say it "does not approve commercial products" – and refused to confirm if it had given permission for the company to use its logo.

However, a Freedom of Information request for correspondence between the organisations shows the inspectorate provided its logo for inclusion in the magazine.

In an email to Ofsted on November 25, Cornerstones requested: "Would we please be able to show the logo at the bottom of the article that [...] co-wrote?".

Less than five minutes later Ofsted replied, "Sure! I attach the logo."

NEU assistant general secretary Nansi Ellis said public bodies such as Ofsted "should not be sending its logo for inclusion in commercial material precisely because such an action would give a company a de facto stamp of approval from the regulator".

"Ofsted is bound by strict rules regarding the use of its logo and any use of it that could appear to be giving any endorsement of commercial ventures," she added.

In guidance on its website Ofsted warns it "will rarely give permission for our main logo to be used by third parties".

The watchdog has previously threatened to take legal action against a training provider for misuse of its badge.

Cornerstones Education helps primary schools build, develop and deliver their curriculum – with prices starting at £1,000 and dependent on the type of school.

The email chain shows Cornerstones approached Ofsted to fact-check the articles and provide frequently asked questions related to its new framework, to be included

Cornerstones to Ofsted – 25 November 2019 11:59  
Hi [...]

Would we please be able to show the logo at the bottom of the article that [...] co-wrote? We could also include a link to the EIF website page.

The article is being designed at the moment and is looking good!

Best wishes [...]

Ofsted to Cornerstones – 25 November 2019 12:03  
Sure! I attach the logo.

Thanks, [...]



Ofsted logo gov uk.png  
313K

Cornerstones to Cornerstones – 25 November 2019 at 12:57  
Yeah!

[Logo attached]

in its free magazine which is sent to "all 16,000+" primary schools.

*Schools Week* asked the inspectorate for any email exchanges between Ofsted and Cornerstones Education regarding articles featured in its *The Curriculum* magazine.

The emails provided were redacted in many places. Ofsted said this was when information related to "identifiable individuals" or when the information was "provided to us in confidence".

But they also showed that Ofsted said it was "happy to get involved" with the magazine from the start and initially raised concerns about a draft which appeared like an "Ofsted checklist" – leading to a revision of the text.

An Ofsted spokesperson said this week they agreed to participate as "given its wide circulation, it was sensible for us to make sure the information going into schools was accurate".

"That's helpful for schools and means that we don't have to undo myths and inaccuracies further down the line," they added.

However, Ofsted said these actions do "not constitute 'approving' a particular company or commercial product, something that Ofsted categorically does not do".

Cornerstones Education founder Simon Hickton, a former headteacher, said the firm's use of the phrase "Ofsted-approved articles" was actually intended to reassure people the watchdog had not approved the product as a whole.

"Clearly stating 'articles' was important – it was absolutely vital because otherwise it could have been deemed that Ofsted were approving the magazine – which they were not. Or any of our products, which we would not expect. Ofsted won't do that and shouldn't do that," he said.

As the magazine was the "Ofsted inspection framework edition", Hickton said Cornerstones didn't want to include the logo on its own without the caveat of it being attached to clearly signposted "approved articles".

He added: "We could argue about the semantics of the word 'approved'. They were co-written, edited and checked – what's a better word than 'approved' for that?"

"We could have used the word 'endorsed' but we actually felt that was even stronger and shouldn't be used."

Hickton said he had received a verbal apology from Ofsted's communications team after since-deleted tweets had claimed the articles were not approved.



# Former superhead may be stripped of knighthood

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

The government's forfeiture committee is investigating whether to strip a former superhead of his knighthood.

It comes after it was revealed that Sir Craig Tunstall is suing Lambeth Council for at least £200,000 over claims that an "excessive workload", exacerbated by plans to open a new free school, left him depressed.

Tunstall, formerly England's best-paid primary headteacher, on £367,000 a year, was dismissed from the council-maintained Gipsy Hill Federation in 2018 for "gross misconduct".

He was suspended in May 2017 amid a council fraud investigation and is now launching legal action to sue Lambeth Council and GHF.

An email sent from the Cabinet Office to a complainant in late February, seen by Schools Week, states its honours forfeiture committee was "aware" of the case and had "previously commissioned the Department of [sic] Education to provide advice on the matter".

The email states that "a decision on revocation of his honour will be taken in due course".

Both departments said there was nothing to add this week when contacted for comment. The Cabinet Office also said it would not comment on an individual.

The forfeiture committee's website states it "considers cases put to it when the holder of an honour has brought the honours system into disrepute".

Examples include those found guilty of a criminal offence or censured by a regulatory or professional body.

Lawyers representing Tunstall in the case against Lambeth Council did not respond to a request for comment.

The disclosure comes after papers submitted to the high court show Tunstall is pursuing both Lambeth Council and the federation for damages over claims of negligence and breach of contract. The papers state the claim is in "excess of £200,000".

Tunstall's lawyers and the council did not respond to a request for comment on what the actual sum being sought was, which could turn out to be a lot higher.

As the case as in the civil courts, the amount of potential compensation is uncapped – meaning if Tunstall wins the case, the court will take



Sir Craig Tunstall

into account his future loss of earnings when awarding damages. Lambeth Council said the claims will be "vigorously defended".

In the court papers, Tunstall's representative, Asela Wijeyaratne, said plans to academise the federation's eight schools in 2016, on top of his other responsibilities, "resulted in workload and work pressure which was too great".

This included setting up a new secondary free school which, as he was the "public face of the projects", led to Tunstall being "subject to intense and often hostile and confrontational interactions at such meetings".

Tunstall was responsible overall for eight headteachers, 36 deputy heads and 600 members of staff, and he was required to respond to incidents of "actual or threatened violence" towards teachers, as well as prepare for Ofsted inspections, the documents state.

His role required him to work long and unsocial hours during evenings, weekends and school holidays. He was also given less than a week's notice before becoming executive headteacher of each school, the papers add.

Wijeyaratne also argues Tunstall was "unlawfully dismissed" and continues to suffer with sleeplessness, nightmares and depression. He says Tunstall is unable to work.

The documents state Tunstall should either not have been given the academisation project, or should have been relieved of his headship responsibilities until completed.

Tunstall has also issued papers for a separate employment tribunal on claims he was unfairly dismissed and for damages.

In March 2017, Tunstall was asked to attend an interview with Lambeth Council's internal counter-fraud team, held under caution.



Tunstall said he was given no prior warning, and did not know it was part of an investigation into himself.

Two months later, Tunstall was suspended from employment. He did not attend a disciplinary hearing later that year, for reasons including the ongoing fraud investigation and the impact it would have on his health.

In his absence, the panel found "gross misconduct" and dismissed him. An appeal by Tunstall was rejected.

Wijeyaratne said the Lambeth investigation and disciplinary process were flawed and "injurious" to Tunstall's health.

Tunstall's anxiety is also continuing because he does not know whether the council intends to refer its findings for criminal prosecution, the papers claim.

They also claim there was a "failure" to protect Tunstall from dealing with press "intrusion", including failing to provide an "adequate formal statement to the press" concerning his pay.

In 2018, Lambeth Council refused a request by Schools Week under the Freedom of Information Act to provide a copy of its investigation into Tunstall.

The council said this would breach the Data Protection Act and "could cause distress to the individuals".

## Ofsted complaints reform fails to allow independent review, warn heads

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted's plan to reform its post-inspection complaints system won't restore leaders' faith in the process because it still doesn't allow an independent reviewer to overturn judgments, a heads' union has warned.

Ofsted launched a consultation earlier this year, proposing that complaints raised by schools within two working days of receiving their final report will effectively delay publication of the report until the complaint is dealt with.

The consultation also proposes that schools will receive five working days to review their draft report and submit concerns about issues of "factual accuracy and the inspection process". At the moment, they only receive one.

However, the current system of internal reviews, the last step for those not satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled, will be retained.



"Holding an internal review at step three, with the inclusion of an external sector representative, is welcome but it appears to be a toothless process," said the Association of School and College Leaders in its response to the consultation.

"It can draw conclusions about whether the process was followed at step one and two, but it does not appear to be able to issue an amended inspection judgment or even to instruct a reinspection. Many school and college leaders lack faith in Ofsted's complaints process as a result."

"This is further exacerbated by the lack of an external authority with the power to change

judgments or order a reinspection."

Ofsted's proposals come after the watchdog admitted its current approach has led to it having to take action after publishing reports "when a complaint investigation highlights an error in the inspection process".

ASCL published its response after Ofsted announced it was extending the consultation deadline by a month to April 30 as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Geoff Barton, ASCL's general secretary, said he was "pleased" Ofsted was reviewing its complaints system, but "disappointed that it seems to assume that the upper end of the process is fit for purpose".

"We do not agree. It flies in the face of natural justice to have a review system which cannot actually overturn the original judgment."

Elsewhere, the Department for Education has suspended a consultation to revise 'keeping children safe in education' guidance because of coronavirus. The guidance sets out what schools should do and the legal duties they must comply with to keep children safe.

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR\_93

## Hackwood to join Astrea as new chief exec

The departing chief executive of one of the country's biggest academy chains is going back to her family roots to join the Astrea Academy Trust.

Rowena Hackwood (pictured), currently chief executive of the David Ross Education Trust, will join Astrea, which has 27 schools in South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire, in the summer.

She will replace Astrea's founding chief executive Libby Nicholas, who stepped down in November.

Hackwood, who announced she was leaving DRET last year, said the trust takes her "right back to my family roots in South Yorkshire".

"My mum actually attended one of Astrea's primary schools, and my granddad lived just a few doors down from one of the secondaries – so I have a deep-felt understanding of the communities that Astrea serves."

Astrea has grown quickly since opening its first schools four years ago. The trust was forced to delay publishing its 2017-18 accounts

after calling in forensic auditors when its expansion of struggling schools "raised question marks".

However, a spokesperson for the trust said it is in a "strong position" and has reversed inherited debts of £5.2 million through "prudent financial management and robust curriculum-led financial planning".

Earlier this year, Hackwood told staff at DRET they should treat "every penny" of funding as if it was their own and apply the same "discipline" to financial management as they do to improving educational performance.

DRET had asked its schools to consider using cover supervisors instead of supply teachers and "only boil as much water as you need in kettles" – as the trust attempted to tackle a £1 million deficit.

The former education director at outsourcing firm

Capita has also been vocal about the benefits of academy trusts pooling their schools' general annual grant funding, which she implemented at DRET to tackle seven-figure deficits.

Under general annual grant (GAG) pooling, trusts take direct control of their schools' funding before allocating their own budgets, as opposed to top-slicing funding for central operations from money allocated directly to individual schools.

Astrea currently does the latter, charging its schools a 6.5 per cent top-slice.

Professor Sam Twiselton, trustee chair of the CEO recruitment panel, said Hackwood brings "both local understanding and empathy, together with strong sectoral experience and so is extremely well placed to take the helm as we move forward".

Hackwood added the sector is facing "some of the most challenging times it has ever known. But it is at times like this when family bonds are at their most strong, and it will be no different with Astrea."





# EDITORIAL

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

## A 'new normal' emerges, but old problems become more vital

After the announcement of school closures two weeks ago, teachers seem to be settling into new ways of working. It's a testament to the profession's resourcefulness, adaptability and dedication that they resolved complicated issues such as how to provide poor pupils' free meals and who qualifies for key-worker status – many doing so before the government eventually got round to providing a solution.

As Dr Sarah Charles notes this week, aftershocks are bound to follow an earthquake, and faultlines are clear to see across our new educational landscape: inequality of access threatens to grow the disadvantage gap, and teaching digitally challenges teachers' workloads and wellbeing.

According to Teacher Tapp's Baz Ramaiah, there are signs that at least initially, most teachers' workload has actually reduced. While that is certainly to be celebrated, the reality is that the work has been passed on to unequally prepared parents. As a result, much of what was deemed vital just two weeks ago is simply not being done. The more disadvantaged the school's context is, the less likely it is that the work is happening.

Among the profession itself, a remarkable coming together to share resources, expertise and support has not made old divisions disappear. As one of Jon Hutchinson's top blog picks this week, Matthew Evans, points out, schools have little left by way of accountability but trust. In that context, the question of what education is for is up for grabs.

For Daniel Muijs and colleagues, now is not the time for experimentation. Tried-and-tested approaches will keep students achieving and motivated. For Hannah Wilson, on the other hand, there is an opportunity to make space for creativity to support families through trauma, and for teachers to reflect on the values of their role.

Of course, if less is indeed being done overall, these positions can and probably should be seen as complementary. What's certain is that everyone in the sector has some idea of what they don't want to go back to when the crisis is over. Dangerous cracks in the system have been exposed, and it won't do to ask teachers and school leaders to continue to simply paper over them.



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## Coronavirus: help poorer children access online learning, charity begs tech firms

Sal McKeown

The whole system has been driven for years by market forces. The Department for Education wants good deals on everything, and this is driving some of the smaller assistive technology companies to the brink. Schools are buying bits of this and bits of that. It is a fragmented system because the different parts are not compatible and do not work together or transfer information seamlessly. Many schools are struggling to recruit the right staff to develop and implement online learning policies. Children may have access to computer devices at home – although not as many as politicians like to think – but they don't necessarily have proper internet access.

## Schools urgently need more guidance around key-worker status

Derenda Shell

I am a key worker working at a very small receiver kitchen at a small school. Social distancing is almost impossible. Staff and the children are not adhering to social distancing within the school, and some of the children's parents work for the NHS. Where does that leave me, potentially putting myself and own family at risk?

## Ofqual admits teacher assessment not possible for all vocational qualifications

Ros Lucas

Not sure about teachers not being able to assess or predict work for those completing applied BTECs if in second year. Surely over two years there are records of grades and work already assessed which we used to utilise when moderating internally and externally? I do understand that competence might prove more difficult if insufficient has been achieved so far, but perhaps that means a report stating where the candidate is, and employers or next level go over what should have been learned? I am sure experienced personnel will be able to ensure our students do not lose out.

## FSM vouchers to provide '£3 per meal'

Mel Williams

At our school, we strongly believe that any vouchers issued for supermarkets should have restrictions on them, ie can be redeemed against food items only. I'm sorry to say that we have concerns that the voucher might otherwise be spent on items for the parent(s), to put it politely, rather than on food for the children. I've had no luck in trying to convey this feedback to the DfE.

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

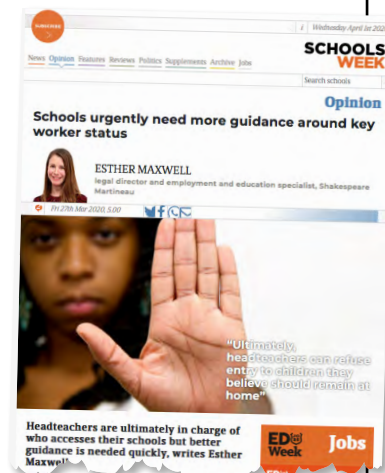
Kirk Hayles

## Schools urgently need more guidance around key-worker status

A fundamental point has been ignored in this article and it is one that is leading to more children needing to be in school than necessary and putting headteachers in the firing line with parents.

It is quite frankly ridiculous that only ONE parent needs to be

a key worker to entitle a couple where one parent is NOT a key worker, to send their child(ren) to school. Let's take an example of one parent being a doctor but the other parent is a home-maker, or in a non-critical role. Should this family be allowed to send their child(ren) to school? By doing so, it potentially increases the number of teachers/support staff (ie other key workers) who are, in turn, exposed to greater risk. All schools are more than happy to do their bit to support the nation's critical workers, and thankfully, in my own school, parents are making supportive and sensible choices; but give us a framework/rules that make sense and protect all.



THE REPLY OF THE WEEK WINS A MUG. CONTACT US AT [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK) TO CLAIM

## Coronavirus: committee of MPs to probe DfE's response to disease

Wizzo

The DfE has hardly been a shining light when it comes to supporting schools in anything recently – the national curriculum, anybody? However, the response to coronavirus has been nothing short of shameful, whether you consider the muddled announcements over closure and key workers, or the painful lack of clarity over examinations.

There has been little or no practical help to schools, which are largely unprepared for remote learning, especially primaries. They have an ideal position to prepare for closure and to coordinate, but academisation has fractured the system in England, and so schools have been left in the hands of very variable academy leadership.



# Aspiration Awards 2020

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## Feature

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



# The trailblazer programme aiming to improve mental health support

**Jess Staufenberg visits Greenshaw High School, where a new programme is bringing health and education together to improve mental health**

In the canteen at Greenshaw High School in south London is a door with a sign that reads The Junction. Posters in nearby corridors point pupils to an online counselling service with questions such as “Are you OK, Greenshaw?” and “Do things feel like they’re getting a bit much?”. But the more serious intervention work takes place in this room, the heart of mental health work at this secondary academy.

Inside are walls adorned with posters about stress and diet, while on one table is a tray of sand (a staple of play therapy) and on another an hourglass. Although this may be familiar to schools lucky enough to have in-house mental health provision, the person I’m looking for probably won’t be. She’s an education mental health practitioner (EMHP), and her job is a central part of the “trailblazer” mental health support teams the government has been trialling since the start of 2019.

It’s perhaps reassuring that she’s not in her office. “There’s been a situation, so she’s dealing with that,” someone tells me. It sounds quite serious.

In time, I find Sam Terry outside a senior leader’s office kick-starting a chain of communications, and we walk slowly back to The Junction. She has

an undergraduate degree in psychology, a masters in mental health and clinical psychology, and was paid by the Department of Health to train at UCL as an EMHP on a one-year course. For two days a week Terry is based at Greenshaw seeing eight pupils, and for the other three she’s in a primary school. “It’s busy!” she laughs, before I have to leave her again to allow her to deal with something else.

Governments of recent years have a chequered history on mental health support for schools, pouring millions into new initiatives but coming

since 2010, while the average maximum waiting time for an appointment had more than doubled since 2011. In 2015, it was revealed NHS spending on children’s mental health services had fallen by £50 million. So in December 2017, funding for mental health support in schools was announced – £95 million to train “senior mental health leads” and £215 million for mental health support teams, in a “trailblazer” programme. It’s effectively a pilot led by NHS England and its local clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

## “We were really quite anxious about the levels of self-harm. This is to reduce that”

under fire for their design and reach as other local services have been cut back. The “trailblazer” programme has its roots in the government’s 2017 green paper for transforming children and young people’s mental health, and was implemented following alarming data from the ground.

Research from three years earlier showed two-thirds of councils had slashed their Children and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) budget

But the strategy got short shrift. The timeframe came under fire, since the trailblazer would only reach 25 per cent of the population by 2023. A joint report by the education and health committees said the plans “lacked ambition” and were “failing a generation”. The government “completely rejected” the criticism, adding that the plans “do not create new jobs for teachers”.

Greenshaw is in south-west London, one of 25



# The trailblazer programme aiming to improve mental health support



Sam Terry, an education mental health practitioner (EMHP) for the "trailblazer" programme in the south-west London area

areas to win central government funding (in this case £6.1 million) and seven of which are in the capital. The academy leads the Sutton cluster (one of nine that make up the south-west London area), which includes 140 schools and serves 80,000 pupils.

As Greenshaw headteacher Nick House puts it, "I now have a much better understanding of how commissioning in the health system works. My relationship with people in the CCG and the CAMHS manager means we understand each other so much better."

## "I have a much better understanding of how commissioning in the health system works"

The package of interventions the programme offers is broad, covering group and one-to-one work with pupils, online resources, staff training and parent workshops. One of its most striking effects seems to be increased collaboration between schools and the NHS. CCG leads, teachers and CAMHS practitioners meet on a regular basis.

And those benefits are tangible; House has secured the services of a self-harm nurse for the school "directly out of having those meetings". The rising level of self-harm among pupils in south-west London was central to the bid for trailblazer cash.

NHS funding has also enabled the school to offer



Headteacher Nick House

Kooth, an online counselling service for pupils, while the cluster's primary schools run a ten-week workshop for parents in which they learn how to spot and prevent mental health crises. The purpose of the trailblazer is "deliberately

## South-west London 'trailblazer' funding facts:



CENTRAL  
GOVERNMENT

**£6.1M**

SOUTH-WEST LONDON  
CCGS

**£60,000**

FOR CLINICAL AND  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT  
SUPPORT TO THE PROJECT

HEALTH EDUCATION  
ENGLAND (HEE)

**£75,000**

FOR TEACHER  
SUPPORT

HEALTH INNOVATION  
NETWORK

**£540,000**

FOR ONLINE  
COUNSELLING SUPPORT



# The trailblazer programme aiming to improve mental health support

preventative”, explains House. “We were really quite anxious about the levels of self-harm. This is to reduce that.”

Siobhan Lowe, headteacher of Tolworth Girls’ School, and the lead for the Kingston cluster, explains that the trailblazer helps ease pressure on local mental health services with simple but effective solutions. “We’ve introduced ‘twangers’, which are hairbands you put on your wrist when you feel anxious to help calm you, as well as red pens instead of cutting your wrists.” Since joining the programme, mental health awareness has become an even more visible part of the school. “There are signs everywhere. There is a far better understanding that this is a health issue.”

One of the concerns of the education and health committees was that the trailblazer might cause schools to “further cut their current provision of mental health support”. That worry seems unfounded – both House and Lowe are clear the programme has boosted their existing provision. As House says: “Being part of the trailblazer means we have access to resources and professionals that most schools currently don’t.” Although he acknowledges that co-ordinating the cluster adds to his other duties, the school is compensated for his time at £500 for one day a week. “Knowing I can get extra money into the school makes a real difference.”

But the question is, are schools on the trailblazer programme getting mental health support that they should expect as the norm? The cross-sector



Pupils at Greenshaw High School in Sutton stand beside a poster promoting an online counselling service

## 2018/19 Trailblazers by region

North	Midlands and East	South West	South East	London
Newcastle	Hertfordshire	Gloucestershire	Buckinghamshire	Camden
Northumberland	Stoke on Trent	Swindon	Berkshire West	Tower Hamlets
South Tyneside	Nottinghamshire		Oxfordshire	Hounslow
Liverpool	South Warwickshire		North Kent	Haringey
Doncaster and Rotherham	North Staffordshire			Bromley
Kirklees				SW London HCP
				West London
Greater Manchester				

## “We have access to resources and professionals that most schools currently don’t”

partnership is clearly brilliant, bringing together education and health in a no-brainer scenario. But the committees seem right to criticise the programme for only reaching 25 per cent of pupils in the next three years.

“I know heads who still feel mental health provision is a luxury product,” House warns. Even Terry, his EMHP, only sees eight out of the 1,800 pupils in his school on a regular basis. Similarly, at Tolworth Girls’ School the EMHP only sees about five pupils. Nor are EMHPs trained counsellors or education psychologists (EPs) who can provide therapy for the most serious cases. EPs are meant to be available in every local authority, but news reports reveal huge shortages, and since 2010

councils have begun to charge schools for much EP work. I ask Lowe whether access to CAMHS is any better because of the trailblazer programme.

“The waiting lists for CAMHs are still there. Because we’re working with the CCG there is a lot more conversation taking place. But it is a long waiting list, they still haven’t got the psychologists in post. It hasn’t sped up.” The national figures back her up: a report in June estimated more than 100,000 10- to 17-year-olds were turned away from mental health services because their problems were not deemed “serious” enough. “We don’t have a counsellor in school, we can’t afford it,” adds Lowe. “It’s about £50 an hour. For 20 pupils in each year group, that’s a lot of money, isn’t it?”

It sounds as though the government has hit the nail on the head with the preventative, cross-sector work taking place through the trailblazer. Dr Andrew Murray, a GP who has spearheaded the south-west London work, reveals how enthusiastic schools have been. “For me it’s been quite humbling because I’ve seen how passionate headteachers are about trying to help their young people, and they’ve not felt supported in that until now. Just by providing them with support, it’s snowballed, and that is credit to the schools.”

So there seems little question that the trailblazer programme should be rolled out nationally to all schools over the next three years. But crucially, ministers should be aware the hard work by schools and CCGs could be seriously undermined if not backed by an injection of local authority funding for CAMHS and free education psychologist services – so that the most distressing and complex cases can receive clinical care, and fast.

# Opinion

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

**The school system finds itself in uncharted territory, but it has its moral compass to fall back on and an opportunity to explore new horizons, writes Hannah Wilson**

What the world needs now is values. As hubs, leaders and role models for our children and communities, all the more so the world of education.

This global crisis is felt first and foremost locally, and by now we will all be aware of rising anxieties and stresses triggered by uncertainty and precariousness, of colleagues and families under strain due to increased workload, of vulnerable neighbours and friends whose emotional and physical safety are not guaranteed.

All of these things are affecting school leaders and teachers too, yet our schools have faced those challenges head on. As I have watched from the safe distance of my new role as PGCE programme leader, I have felt awe at that. I have also felt a sense of guilt and a deep desire to help.

Until last summer I was the executive headteacher of two schools. Letting go of the drive and the habits of being on the frontline, of leading a team in solving students' families' and communities' problems is far from easy. But while I know the sense of purpose it gives us, I am also concerned for the dangers it can lead us into. Our mental health and wellbeing are important too.

Many of our communities have already recognised that. Our social media streams are filling up with impromptu concerts in front gardens and at upstairs windows and house fronts decorated with #RainbowsOfHope. On my daily walk, I took a photo of each rainbow I saw and posted it on our village's Facebook



HANNAH WILSON

Head of secondary school teacher training, University of Buckingham

## Now more than ever what the education world needs is values

group to say thank you to the children for brightening up my day. It resulted in a positive outpouring of love from the community as they

of normality, there is also a risk that in simply pursuing what we are used to doing, we lose sight of what we ought to be doing.

**“Pursuing what we are used to doing, we lose sight of what we ought to be doing**

recognised their artwork, and I was inspired to act.

The sheer fact of it is that we are strapped into a seat on an emotional rollercoaster that has left the docking station, and nobody will be the same at the other end. And while there is value in maintaining a sense

As headteacher of a STEAM school I hosted The Art Room – art therapy sessions that made a massive difference to our vulnerable learners. And as social media is already showing, singing is also a source of happiness and positivity. We must make time to process the situation



we all find ourselves in. Creativity is a great source of therapy for trauma.

So with a few teacher friends, we decided to start a little something that's already having a big impact. Writing is another cathartic, creative process, so we have created an opportunity to blog about our feelings – to help ourselves make sense of our situations, and to share that sense-making with others. The #DailyWritingChallenge is already receiving dozens of entries a day.

Each morning, we share a value and anyone can post on the theme. We've received poems, personal reflections and short stories. We launched with "kindness" as a stimulus, and we've followed up with courage, honesty, guilt, resilience and empathy. They all make for an equally cathartic reading experience – rainbows of hope for a profession that's keeping the light of learning shining amid a stormy period.

As VbE (Values-based Education) founder Dr Neil Hawkes says, it's about more than reading and writing. It's also about how we "put into practice positive values such as empathy, compassion, honesty and trust. Thinking about how we are living our values is helping us to act ethically and responsibly."

So as we come to Easter and consider the longer-term ramifications of our global predicament, let's ensure we take stock of what we are doing, what we are asking of others, and what values we are putting into practice. The education system has not seen such room for creativity for what feels like an age – if we are bold enough to act on our values.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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DR SARAH CHARLES

Head of the Institute of Education,  
University of Derby

## Online learning success requires leaders to manage expectations

**Faultlines are emerging in the home-based school system, but there are ways to protect families and teachers from the aftershocks, writes Dr Sarah Charles**

Educational technology's potential for positive impact is plain for all to see, but parents and teachers alike are quickly learning its limitations. After the task of managing the initial, massive shock to the school system caused by closures, school leaders will now need to focus on negotiating a path through the risks and challenges of this new normal.

Just a few weeks ago, it was estimated that some 60,000 children in the UK were home-schooled. The UK lockdown caused that number to rise to millions overnight, resulting in a seismic shift from traditional schooling methods to the use of edtech to support home learning.

With a matter of weeks – if that – to prepare for closures, teachers across the UK raced to put together physical learning packs and a plethora of online learning resources. For many, this was too little time to devise coherent whole-school approaches, let alone to

train teachers to upend their usual practices.

In addition, a vast number of celebrities have taken to social

media to deliver content and a raft of companies are providing free access to their software and resources. This explosion in the production of curriculum resources – albeit well-intentioned – has caused some parents to suffer overload, and many are reporting feeling stressed about which to use with their children from this over-abundance of choice.

Yet, that problem is a relatively privileged one, because even if a school has a well-planned and well-communicated digital learning strategy, it will have no impact if children have no access. That the learning gap may widen between the technological haves and have-nots is of grave concern, and it causes a dilemma for schools. If they do not fully exploit the potential of technology to support home learning, the majority of children may miss out on several



months of learning, leading at best to stagnation and at worst to regression. However, doing so almost guarantees that a sizeable proportion of disadvantaged children will fall further behind.

school budgets and after a lengthy accountability focus on no-frills curriculum basics. As a result, the move to online learning threatens to exacerbate rather than alleviate teacher workload and stress.

Digital access also has the potential to create an “open all hours” expectation of teachers from school leaders and parents alike. Parents may only see their own home-learning struggles, and school leaders must set reasonable expectations for their communities, informed by a bigger-picture view, while resisting the 24/7 temptation themselves. Though their resources may be, teachers simply can't be on hand all the time without having a serious impact on their wellbeing. The teaching profession is already under considerable strain, and this will be especially true for teachers who are parents themselves and are experiencing both sets of stresses.

The teaching community is remarkable for uniting in times of challenge. There exists an excellent community of teachers who are coming together to share both their resources and experiences about online and home schooling. Together they will succeed in keeping teaching and learning going, provided leaders don't lose sight of the twin pillars of professional development and care.

“The move to online learning threatens to exacerbate teacher workload and stress

The concern about widening inequality has led some trusts, such as Academies Enterprise Trust, to purchase extra devices to enable all their pupils to access digital learning during the school closures. But then, what of students of more disadvantaged schools and smaller trusts with tighter budgets? The new context is likely to shine a spotlight on the disadvantage gap, not just within schools but between them.

And while school leaders ponder how best to protect their vulnerable pupils, they must continue to build up their teachers too, because the digital divide also exists for them. Even assuming that all teachers have the hardware, it is questionable whether CPD has done very much to boost their confidence or their competence to exploit the digital resources at their fingertips, especially at a time of austere



# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**At this time of rapid and dramatic change for teachers, the best solution is to keep calm and carry on with what we know works. Daniel Muijs, Dominique Sluijsmans and their co-authors draw on their forthcoming book, *Lessons for Learning: 12 Building Blocks for Effective Teaching*, to set out what that is.**

The sudden switch from face-to-face to online distance education has brought a new dynamic to teaching and raises many questions from pupils, teachers, mentors and parents. At the same time, they are being bombarded with advice, tools and good practice from companies, social media and blogs. It's a situation that could too easily result in e-tools overshadowing learning objectives if three key risks aren't avoided.

First, limited experience with distance learning and the overload of advice can be counterproductive. The focus may shift to the tools instead of the coherence of learning goals, curriculum, teaching strategies and assessment/feedback – what might be called constructive alignment.

Second, the knowledge and experience some institutions have of distance learning can't simply be transferred to other contexts. The starting point should always be the pupils.

Third, however well-intentioned, teachers and schools can easily overload pupils and staff. At a time when we are already dealing with a lot of change, we need to focus on what really matters.

Keeping these risks in mind, we should resist being drawn into experimentation, and draw on three important lessons we are familiar with from face-to-face education. Rather than allow the sense of urgency to convince us of their irrelevance, they are even more important to online education.

In the first instance, we should remember that structure and

DANIEL MUIJS

Head of Research,  
Ofsted



DR DOMINIQUE SLUIJSMANS

Associate professor,  
Zuyd University of  
Applied Sciences

## Why this is not the time for large-scale educational experiments

transparency lead to greater peace of mind. It is important not to overload pupils with busy work, but to help them develop two fundamental habits instead: attending limited but scheduled online lessons (health

on their own is an effective strategy, and online videos are particularly good for this.

The second lesson is to use assessment formatively. Instead of focusing on regular tests or exams,

“Evidence-based instructional principles are just as valid online as in the classroom”

permitting) and completing specified independent weekly tasks.

When organising sessions, keep them at fixed times, and not too frequent. Appropriate lessons for online learning are concise (15 to 20 minutes). Then, carefully choose the delivery channels and check the environment's functionalities to maximise potential, and make objectives and expectations explicit to focus on supporting progress. Sharing worked examples with students before they start practising

the shift to distance learning is an opportunity to use testing as a learning strategy. This kind of retrieval practice can be quicker and less time-consuming, and research shows pupil motivation and success increase when they're given low-stakes (self)-tests to activate prior knowledge. Flash cards and Kahoot are accessible tools for this purpose.

Effective feedback is crucial. It should be goal-oriented and focused on progress. Here, too, worked examples are very useful. An efficient



and effective feedback process should provide clarity on success criteria, transparency about timing, and require pupils to increase effort and aspiration.

The third crucial lesson is that most pupils don't spontaneously choose the most effective learning strategies or plan their time efficiently. Yet that is precisely what distance learning requires them to do, and relying on their metacognitive skills risks increasing the attainment gap.

Processing content by explaining subject matter or problem-solving steps in their own words to themselves, family or peers can be helpful. Importantly, they will need support to space their studying over time. Multiple study sessions for each topic will ensure they review content. Three over a week is ideal. And of course, make sure pupils feel valued for the work they are doing. Success contributes to motivation, so acknowledging progress and attendance is vital.

At a time when we can't expect pupils to attend all classes or to complete all assignments, experimenting with large-scale new educational approaches is too risky. Evidence-based instructional principles are just as valid online as in the classroom, despite what some might proclaim. In the end, the art of teaching effectively and efficiently is also the art of teaching enjoyably – for teachers and students alike.

This article is co-written with professor Dr Paul Kirschner, Kristel Vanhoyweghen and Tim Surma of Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Belgium, and Dr Gino Camp of the Open University of The Netherlands.

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# Research

This week, our guest research reviewer is Baz Ramaiah.

Contact them on Twitter - @TeacherTapp - if you have a topic you would like them to cover

## Two weeks in, what does the new normal look like in schools?

**Baz Ramaiah, research and programmes lead, Teacher Tapp**

A history teacher of mine used to say: "There are decades where nothing happens; and then there are weeks where decades happen."

For teachers, the last few weeks have felt like the latter. What was once normal has been swept away. Luckily, we have data from our daily surveys on Teacher Tapp to tell us what this emergent "new normal" looks like.

School closures got off to a chaotic start, with widespread confusion about which students should still be in attendance. This may explain why 50 per cent of teachers reported being in school on the first day of closures despite the majority of schools having less than five per cent of their students present. The staff-to-student ratio has subsequently evened out, with 20 per cent of primary teachers now in school on any given day and just 10 per cent of secondary teachers.

With most teachers at home, teaching has largely shifted on to digital platforms. Over 80 per cent of secondary teachers and 50 per cent of primary teachers are using these platforms. The remaining 50 per cent of primary teachers have sent pupils home with worksheets and workbooks, or are posting instructions on their school websites.

Adapting to any new technology requires time and effort to restructure approaches to learning. As such, there were concerns that the move to digital would increase their workload. However, three quarters of teachers have reported working fewer hours than they would do in school. This pattern extends to more senior roles too, with nearly half of headteachers reporting a similar reduction in working hours.

We suspected this reduction might be caused by obstacles at home which



prevent teachers from working. These obstacles are commonly known as "children". However, even teachers without children reported a decrease in working hours. The smallest reduction in hours has been for teachers with children aged 9-16. It may be that teachers with older children are more likely to have more than one child at home, or that they're more likely to have subject leadership responsibilities.

While teachers are doing remarkably well at adapting to teaching from home, their best efforts may not be reaching all students. My local councillor recently told me she'd been contacted by dozens of families who lack a device with internet access and whose children can't access school work. One trust has already responded by buying devices for them, but the problem is system-wide.

According to our polling, this lack of access is the case for less than ten per cent of students, even in the poorest communities.

While a small proportion, it works out at hundreds of thousands of students who aren't able to access the work set by their schools. Over time, there is little question that this lack of access will further deepen inequalities in educational attainment if left unchecked.

A second flashpoint for educational inequality comes from the actual amount of work students are completing at home. While there is general agreement among our users that a year 8 student should be completing at least three hours of work per day, the likelihood of meeting this target seems to depend largely on background.

While 70 per cent of teachers in independent schools estimate that their students are meeting this three-hour target, the same is only true for ten per cent of teachers working in the most disadvantaged communities. In those communities, 43 per cent of teachers think that their students are completing less than one hour of work per day. This figure goes down to 14 per cent in the most advantaged state schools. A stark reminder that inequality stems as much from lack of support as it does from lack of access.

Of course, many of these inequalities existed before the lockdown, but teachers had more control in their fight against them. Whether they persist, increase or decrease as education settles into its "new normal" depends on a multitude of factors, and we at Teacher Tapp are very reluctant to engage in forecasting, no matter how short-term.

After all, by this time next week another decade will have passed.



## Reviews



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

@JON\_HUTCHINSON\_

### Gloves off: school leadership in uncertain times

@Missis\_SCS

Director of education and English teacher, Sallie Stanton treats us to an hilarious anecdote setting out a scene in which she yo-yos from disinfecting the kitchen to helping her daughter with online maths homework. Gloves on, gloves off. Inevitably, this leads to the blame game. Tensions rise, arguments ensue, tears flow. This has to be someone's fault. "Of course," Stanton steps back to note, "the blame game is daft." From the perspective of both a parent and a headteacher, Stanton was desperate instead to reach for the playbook to calmly navigate her way out of the crisis. Irritatingly, "the book I need hasn't been written yet". This could easily lead to paralysis, to a "freeze" reflex in the fight-or-flight response. But Stanton's got her gloves back on. And so the remainder of this blog sets out some of the most measured and sensible advice I've read as a school leader to help us all write the book while we read it.

## TOP BLOGS of the week

### All that's left is trust

@head\_teach

Inevitably, bloggers have turned their attention to issues arising from the new challenges that distance learning has created. So much of what we rely on as educators has been whipped out from under us; most notably, as headteacher Matthew Evans notes, the "ability to control" has been removed. Rather than try and recreate the structures that we once relied upon within our new virtual normal, Evans argues that "we must accept that we cannot control most things" and that instead "all we are left with is trust". The blog reminds me of a recent Sam Harris podcast with Matt Mullenweg who developed the WordPress platform on which many of the blogs listed in this article are hosted. Mullenweg argues that when moving to virtual, distributed working, most people default to simply duplicate existing working norms, when in fact a new approach is needed out of which new opportunities will bloom. Evans' foundation of relying on trust as a first principle seems like a sound place upon which to build our new edifices.

### Remote Learning: Impossible Desires

@EnserMark

Teaching is both astoundingly complex and yet incredibly simple. This paradox, along with a way out of it, has been set out lucidly, practically and powerfully by blogger Mark Enser over the past few years, most comprehensively in his excellent book *Teach Like Nobody's Watching*. In these extraordinary times, Enser observes, it is so very tempting to default to our position of unhelpfully overcomplicating the teaching and learning process. Resist, he pleads. Instead, Enser strips back the teaching process and suggests that we should follow the tried and trusted "recap, input, application, feedback" protocol that we all know, deep down, works so well. Sure, it may not be whizz-bangy. It may even be "very far from perfect". But staring the elephant in the room in the eye, Enser reminds us that "perfect isn't achievable". In the meantime, the advice in this blog will serve us all well.

### Time to Reflect?

@DrRLofthouse

The aphorism that "The risk of a wrong decision is preferable to the terror of indecision", usually attributed to Maimonides, has been embraced by many a Silicon Valley start-up with a move-fast-and-break-things approach. Since we all now find ourselves embracing new tech and working mostly in our pyjamas, it's easy to get swept up in such a philosophy. Prof Rachel Lofthouse urges caution, however, and asks us instead to use this period as a chance to "be more reflective than our normal busy schedules allow". This process of "critical reflection" set out by Lofthouse is usually taken by teachers to be a luxury that can simply never take priority over the day-to-day hustle of teaching. But now that we finally have the chance to "connect with our values and beliefs". Let's seize it.



# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### Independent Thinking on MFL: How To Make Modern Foreign Language Teaching Exciting, Inclusive and Relevant

**Author:** Crista Hazell

**Publisher:** Independent Thinking Press

**Reviewer:** Alex Bellars, teacher of French and German, Ballard School

I do like a nice ambitious title which really draws you in! (One of my favourite books of recent years is Jonas Jonasson's *The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out Of The Window And Disappeared*, or, for all you non-Swedes who fancy a linguistic challenge *Hundraåringen som klev ut genom fönstret och försvann* in the original Swedish.)

And Crista Hazell has certainly aimed high with the title of her first book for Independent Thinking. The goal: a one-stop-shop for all MFL teacher needs, covering research-based theory, practical pedagogy and skills-based techniques in equal, bountiful measure.

From the newest NQT to the grizzled veteran of the chalkface, there genuinely is something in here for everyone, and all delivered in a friendly, accessible style that will surprise no one who has read her blog.

Those who would count themselves among the more traditional-leaning on the professional spectrum will be delighted with the evident foundation of her work on educational research in phonics and decoding. For my part, as someone who (if pressed) would tend to place himself more in the so-called progressive camp, it is the focus on creativity, on fun and on "the power of lucky socks" that really does it for me.

If I have one minor criticism to make, it is that in trying to cover all these bases and keep all the plates spinning at once, Hazell has talked herself out of a potential series of books. Each

of this volume's themes could easily be developed into a book-length exploration in its own right, yet the book serves as a punchy introduction to them all, a handy compendium of all the key issues specific to teaching MFL and the latest thinking on how to do it well.

As Hazell points out early on, even in a current political context that sees many questioning the value and effects of globalisation, our pupils would be well advised to equip themselves with real-world language skills. It is a vastly more interconnected world than a mere few years ago, and our ability to collaborate with others across linguistic and national boundaries is vital to the future of our country and our natural world. MFL is not simply about language acquisition but cultural capital writ large, and a way to build immunity against populist nationalism.

For this reason, the most crucial section of Hazell's book for me is chapter nine, in which she explores the reasons for the worrying decline in language study in the UK and goes on to offer her recipes for arresting it. I was personally delighted to find that this includes being wary of the current trend towards a narrow, utilitarian "knowledge organiser" approach to curriculum, and instead espouses a broader perspective that embraces the cultural and cross-curricular aspects of MFL learning and teaching.

The closing chapter, entitled "MFL and the wider world", contains an invaluable list of organisations, networks, websites

and tools to further develop one's craft. As Hazell herself concedes, it is not in any way exhaustive. Yet it contains plenty of ideas for any MFL practitioner to broaden their professional engagement. Among them is a reference to the Association for Language Learning (ALL) – of which Hazell is one of 12 elected board members – and its series of MFL webinars.

Even before the pandemic, it wasn't always easy for teachers to physically meet up for quality professional development. Given that it is all the harder now and for the foreseeable future, if there is one thing on her list I'd most strongly advocate, it is to join ALL (and the burgeoning group of #MFLtwitterati) and help Hazell deliver on this book's promise to make language learning exciting, inclusive and relevant.

In this way, the enforced hiatus of much of our practice could lead to a rebirth of our subject. You will certainly spend few better hours of isolation to that end than reading this book.



# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## TUESDAY

The DfE was already in hot water over its free school meals voucher scheme after most schools had got fed up of waiting for actual details of the national plan and instead gone and sorted out their own arrangements.

Anyway, the government finally published details of its scheme today – so all done and dusted, right?

Er, no. First of all, teachers rightly pointed out why upmarket brands like Waitrose and M&S were among the six supermarkets where families can cash the vouchers (that amount to just £3 per day), but budget supermarkets like Lidl and Aldi were excluded.

"Show me a FSM family that does their food shopping at Waitrose or M & S!!!" tweeted school business manager Amanda Gordon. "Out of touch".

Quite.

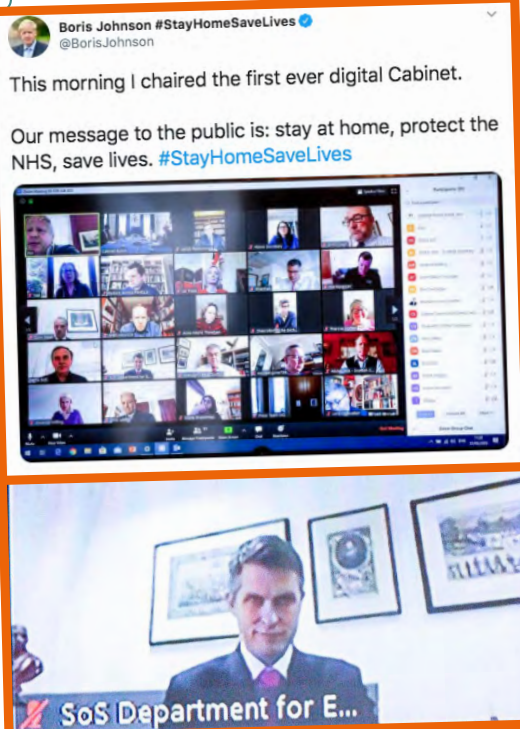
Then school leaders also found out the department was ready to make the announcement on Monday, but waited more than 10 hours to tell schools – all so they could feed some selected highlights to the press first to get some good coverage.

Believe it or not, the plan to not fund the vouchers for pupils over the Easter holidays was one of the details omitted in the government's embargoed press release!

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It's good to know it's business as usual for Gavin Williamson.

Unlike many of his cabinet colleagues, the education secretary was pictured in his office at the Department for Education during the first ever "digital cabinet" meeting.



It comes as the DfE issued guidance stating that "in response to the coronavirus crisis, all DfE buildings are shut until further notice".

"Access to Sanctuary Buildings will only be granted to a select group of staff and in exceptional circumstances."

Of course, it goes without saying that the education secretary is a member of this "select group of staff", but we think it's impressive he's still putting on a tie each morning when there's no bugger else around.

## THURSDAY

Talk about a baptism of fire...

Angus Walker, veteran ITV presenter, has been recruited as Gav's latest special adviser, this time to run his media operations.

Walker is filling a vacancy left by Richard Holden, who was elected as a

Tory MP in December.

What a time to join, with the department coming under fire from school staff across the board for its sluggish communications response over how they should handle the coronavirus crisis.

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On the subject of new starts, Ofsted staff are in the process of being carted off into temporary new roles to assist with the response to coronavirus.

They're a little short of work to do after the government announced school inspections would be suspended.

"We're currently matching our staff into supporting roles within local authorities, social care, education and the wider civil service," Ofsted tweeted.

"We are doing this in a coordinated way to target support where it's most needed. We will say more about this shortly."

Better watch out, there are inspectors about!

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You didn't think the free school meals fiasco had gone away just yet, did you?

Edenred, the firm picked by the DfE to administer the national vouchers scheme, appears to be having some trouble getting through to schools.

The company has been inundated on twitter by schools saying they have not received the email the government said they would receive...on Tuesday.

Schools that still didn't have the email by noon on Thursday were told to call the DfE's helpline, which itself has also been plagued with delays and complications.

Glad to know schools are in safe hands!





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## Academy Business Manager

### Rose Wood Primary Academy

### Full time / Permanent

### NJC 23-28

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#### The organisation:

The Enquire Learning Trust is an established and successful provider of primary education across the North of England. Our motto is 'children first' and we are committed to providing each child within our academies with an excellent educational experience that inspires, motivates and equips learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for future success. To achieve this we need to attract, retain, develop and look after our people so that their performance is as enhanced as possible.

The post is within Rose Wood Academy, a successful primary school situated in Coulby Newham, Middleborough. Our school motto is 'Enjoy and Achieve' and we pride ourselves on the quality of education we provide and the strong sense of community we have created.

#### The post:

We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic, experienced and highly skilled Business Manager who will work alongside the Principal and the Senior Management Team, to ensure effective administration and running of the academy.

The Academy Business Manager is responsible for providing professional leadership and management of school support staff, and in partnership with teaching staff, enhance their effectiveness, enabling the academy to achieve improved standards of learning and achievement in school.

You will have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, be self-motivated, organised and have the ability to work autonomously. The successful candidate will think strategically and have experience and knowledge of business finance, HR and payroll, estates management, health and safety and administration.

The position of Academy Business Manager is wide and varied and therefore requires an individual who can embrace the complexity of this role.

This is an excellent opportunity for a highly professional individual to join our hardworking and passionate team.

In return, we can offer you a competitive salary with the scope for progression based on performance, access to a fully funded health and wellbeing scheme, generous investment in staff CPD, and flexible working arrangements.

If you would like more details about this position or would like to arrange to look around the school, please contact the Principal on 01642 595353.

All completed application forms are to be returned by email to [j.abrol@rosewoodacademy.co.uk](mailto:j.abrol@rosewoodacademy.co.uk) or by post directly to the school.

Shortlisted candidates will be contacted by telephone.

The Trust is committed to Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare of Children and young people/vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.

**Closing Date:** 23/04/20  
**Shortlisting:** 24/04/20  
**Interviews:** 30/04/20



## St Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School - Headteacher

**Dates:** Closing date 9.00am 3rd April  
**Salary Range:** L 12 - 21 depending on experience (£53,856 - £67,183)  
**Location:** Woodston, Peterborough  
**No. of Children:** 234  
**Contract type:** Full time  
**Contract term:** Permanent  
**Starting date:** September 2020

The Governing Body of St. Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School, are seeking a committed, dynamic Headteacher to lead and inspire a professional and supportive teaching team.

The role is an outstanding opportunity for career progression in a supportive, Christian environment. St. Augustine's offers:

- a welcoming and friendly environment, including a team of highly committed and experienced staff
- established partnerships with parents, a supportive Governing Body and the local parish
- pupils who enjoy their school, work hard and come from a diverse community
- the opportunity to work in a caring Christian environment
- professional development opportunities to help us to build on our previous "Good" Ofsted inspection

Our ideal candidate will combine proven leadership and management skills with a desire to drive continuous improvement across the school. They will seek to enrich the school's broad curriculum and will be able to think strategically, developing approaches

to teaching and learning which maintain and develop already positive academic outcomes. They will share our Christian values, calling on strong interpersonal skills to work across the whole school community to ensure every child is supported and challenged to meet their full potential.

Offering Key stage 2 to Years 3 to 6, we were designated a "good" school on our last inspection and are now looking for the Headteacher who can lead our thriving school into its next stage of success.

### How to apply:

If you have any queries or would like to arrange a visit to look around the school please contact the Chair of Governors by email at: 01733 563566 / [office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk)

To request further details and an application pack and form please contact the school office using the email address above. All applications should be submitted on the application form with a covering letter explaining why you are suitable for the role, via email to [office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk)

### Recruitment Schedule:

The closing date for applications is Friday, April 3rd at 9.00am. Any applications received after this

date will not be accepted. Short listing is due to take place in the days following.

Candidates selected for the shortlist will be notified as soon as possible following that date, unsuccessful candidates will also be notified.

**Interviews are scheduled to take place on Wednesday, April 22nd and Thursday, April 23rd** and details of the selection process will be sent to you on application.

St Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointment to this post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check as well as other pre-appointment checks and references outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Applicants should note that written references will be taken up at shortlisting stage prior to interview.

**Our school vision is to be guided by God's wisdom, to embrace challenge and strive to achieve our best, enjoying all that we do together**

# Recruitment advertising during the Coronavirus Pandemic

**SCHOOLS WEEK**  
**ED<sup>JOBS</sup> Week**

**To assist organisations over the forthcoming weeks, Schools Week and EduWeek Jobs will be offering the following:**

- **Free recruitment advertising for Coronavirus cover roles** at education settings remaining open to support key-workers
- **On all online listings**
  - A **free** of charge extension by upto 8 weeks after the closing date
- **On all adverts within the Schools Week digital edition**
  - A **free** of charge second insertion of your advert

**For more information, contact [clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk) or 020 3432 1397.**