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The schools wanting both barrels from Ofsted



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Ditch 'incorrect' DfE Covid helpline, schools urged



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**Berridge:
'No place in our
sector for academy
rule breakers'**

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- Court papers lift the lid on investigation kept secret for years
- Leaders' £500k payments blew hole in schools' finances
- Best-paid primary head's 'abusive' communications revealed

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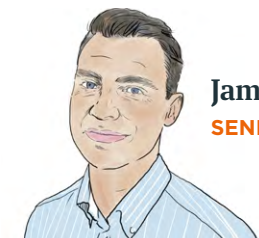
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News

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Break the rules and you're out, minister tells academy bosses

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

The academies minister has declared there is “simply no place” in education for discredited academy bosses – and vowed to “take action” against those who flout the rules.

Baroness Berridge's threat comes after the education secretary barred a third school leader this month for breaking academy rules.

Nardeep Sharma, the former chief executive of the Thrive Partnership Academy Trust, was banned from school management or governance for “failing to act with integrity and honesty” in “allowing” breaches of academy rules.

A government investigation last year found the trust, which is now winding up, spent almost £140,000 on website design services from a company connected to school staff. The company had submitted the highest bid.

It also bought gift hampers, ordered alcohol to hotel rooms and made unapproved severance payments.

The notice follows publication of two other barring orders – for Liam Nolan and Thomas Marshall – earlier this month. It's the first time banning powers have been used for those implicated in academy scandals.

Berridge told Schools Week there was a “small handful of individuals whose conduct fails to meet the high standards we expect of those who are entrusted with making sure children receive the education they deserve, and that public money is spent effectively.

“There is simply no place for these individuals in our education system – whether that's in academies or elsewhere. As recent cases demonstrate, they will be identified and action will be taken to make sure children's right to a high-quality education is protected.”

However, the government is already facing calls for “much more consistency” in its bans – highlighting a failure to take action in other high-profile academy scandals (see page 6).

Sharma, who was a member of the headteacher adviser board for Sue Baldwin, the regional schools commissioner for the East of England and North-East London, said he was “surprised to learn of the notice”.

He claimed the first he heard of it was when he was contacted by Schools Week.



Nardeep Sharma and Alastair Campbell

Schools Week understands that Sharma, whose website says he is now providing “executive education leadership services” and is writing a book on mental health in the education sector, has signed a gagging clause that restricts what he can say about his time at the trust.

“Perhaps a public inquiry could get to the truth of what happened at Thrive,” he added.

He has three months to appeal the order.

Under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the education secretary may give a direction prohibiting a person from taking part in the management of an independent school on prescribed grounds connected with the person's suitability.

The orders also prevent the former academy

leaders from serving as governors of local authority maintained schools.

Analysis by Schools Week found 16 section 128 orders have been issued since 2015. However, more than half (ten) have been published this year – with six this month alone.

Four relate to people running illegal schools, with five banned because of criminal convictions.

The government investigation into the Thrive trust found a “number of significant findings and breaches of the academies financial handbook” including “poor oversight, poor procurement practices, questionable recruitment and severance processes and instances of irregular expenditure”.

Sharma and Catherine Hutley, the executive principal, were suspended in March 2018 after allegations of “inappropriate conduct and financial mismanagement”. The pair quit in October of that year.

Annual accounts up to December 2018, the most recent published by the trust, show Sharma received between £45,000 and £50,000 for the last four months of that year.

The accounts state this included contractual notice pay.

Howard Freed, a former headteacher at the trust, previously said the suspension of Hutley was “unfounded. She ultimately resigned and no disciplinary action followed.”

Thrive transferred its two schools into Sigma Trust in January last year and has since closed.

THE DFE'S BARRED LIST

Name	Reason	Month and year published
Tahir Alam	Trojan Horse	Sept, 15
Waseem Yaqub	Trojan Horse	Aug, 17
Mohammed Mizanur Rahman	Terrorism offences	Feb, 19
Sophie Rahman	Breached professional standards	Mar, 19
Mohammed Alamgir	Terrorism conviction	Sept, 19
Zahid Begg	ABH conviction	Sept, 19
Nacerdine Talbi	Illegal school	Feb, 20
Maryam Bernhardt	Illegal school	Feb, 20
Arshad Ali	Illegal school	July, 20
Nadia Ali	Illegal school	July, 20
James Stewart	Fraud conviction	Sept, 20
Timothy Peter Cook	Child sex offence conviction	Sept, 20
Samuel Abayomi Kayode	Fraud convictions	Sept, 20
Liam Nolan	Academy scandal	Sept, 20
Thomas Marshall	Academy scandal	Sept, 20
Nardeep Sharma	Academy scandal	Sept, 20

Fraud police drop Bright Tribe investigation

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

Fraud police have dropped their investigation into the Bright Tribe academy trust, *Schools Week* can reveal.

The investigation was launched after a Panorama probe accused the trust, founded by businessman Michael Dwan, of making false claims for hundreds of thousands of pounds for building and maintenance government grants.

However, the City of London police said they found "insufficient evidence" to support a criminal investigation.

Campaigners have said that the dropped investigation now means the government should release documents relating to the case that it has so far refused to because of the police involvement.

Julie Rayson, a campaigner involved in revealing failings relating to the now collapsed trust, said: "I would now like to see all the documents released by Bright Tribe and the Department for Education.

"They've previously said they can't release such documents because of they are part of a criminal investigation. Now those reports should be in the public domain – there's no excuses now."

That includes an investigation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency that is currently still to be published.

A DfE spokesperson would only say: "We are aware the City of London Police's investigation into Bright Tribe Trust has concluded and are unable to comment until all legal matters and due processes are fully complete."

Most of Panorama's allegations centred on the Whitehaven Academy, in Cumbria, where Bright Tribe was alleged to have claimed hundreds of thousands of pounds for incomplete works.

One of the allegations involved substantial funding for LED lighting at the



Michael Dwan

BrightTribe
learn grow prosper

school in 2015. However, the work was not completed, with Panorama capturing images of the lights still stored in a shed.

Annual accounts published for Bright Tribe in 2019, while it was under new leadership appointed by the government following the fall-out, stated there was "insufficient evidence in the completed evidence for some of the capital grants and salix loans".

The accounts claimed that following investigations "works that had been capitalised in previous accounting periods had not been carried out, despite invoices and certificates confirming that works had been completed being provided to the trust".

It was part of a series of financial issues that have also been raised with the ESFA relating to material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance.

There was also a "lack of clarity" over how the trust spent its £1 million northern hub funding from the government and

"insufficient evidence" to support the rationale behind settlement agreements for departing staff.

The trust was reported to Cumbria police back in 2017 following allegations of financial mismanagement at Whitehaven Academy.

The case was referred to the fraud police in October last year.

But a spokesperson for the City of London police said an initial investigation found there was "insufficient evidence to support a criminal investigation".

The initial investigation was to ascertain if there were viable lines of enquiry in support a criminal investigation. But they said the case has now concluded.

A spokesperson for Bright Tribe, which is being wound up, would only say they were aware of the investigation into the trust's previous leadership, adding: "This is a matter for the police."

Rayson added the "good thing" to come out of the investigation was that the trust has been disbanded and "highlighted poor financial practices" leading to academy funding guidelines being changed to "bring in closer scrutiny of related-party transactions".

A representative for Dwan did not respond to a request for comment.

Academy trust expansions – it's all about the money

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

EXCLUSIVE

Around half of academy trusts say boosting their finances is one of the main drivers to take on more schools, amid concerns chains feel “under pressure” to grow in size.

The National Governance Association has today released the results of its annual school governance survey of multi-academy trusts.

The survey, which included around 1,800 school trustees, found 48 per cent of trustees said ‘finances and resourcing’ was among the top reasons for wanting to increase the number of academies within their trust.

Sam Henson, director of policy and information at the NGA, said there is “without a doubt a pressure that lots of trusts feel” to grow in size.

“There is still very much an idea in people’s minds that the bigger you get the stronger you get and the better position you are in financially, but a lot of that is rooted in those early ideals of what being a trust of a certain size can offer”, he said.

The report found it was those governing smaller trusts which focused on this reasoning.

Of trustees with five academies or less, 55 per cent listed finance and resourcing considerations as a reason for growth – while 51 per cent of trustees in charge of between six and 10 academies listed it.

In comparison, just 29 per cent of those with 11 academies or over listed it as a reason, and just 23



per cent of those with 21 academies or over.

A report by the Key last year found that while the majority of academy trust leaders are worried that growth could have a negative effect on schools in their trust, financial pressures mean many are trying to expand anyway.

An investigation by Schools Week in 2018 found an increasing number of “super-sized” trusts. A total of 31 trusts took on five or more schools in 2017/18, compared to 20 in 2016/17.

But we revealed in July how one of those, the Galileo Multi-Academy, was investigated by the government over allegations relating to financial mismanagement just 14 months after opening.

However, the NGA study found improving outcomes for more pupils was the most popular reason for expansion, at 73 per cent.

Leora Cruddas, chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said she “would be concerned if trusts were simply growing to sure up their financing and resources” but was “reassured the vast majority” say their purpose comes from improving outcomes for pupils.



Sam Henson

“It is understandable – because trusts are organisations that have to be financially sustainable – that they would want to grow to a size where they can be financially sustainable”, she added.

The NGA survey also found local authority-maintained school governors and single-academy trustees “demonstrated a lack of interest in joining a MAT”.

Of those surveyed, 54 per cent reported that their school had not considered joining an academy trust, while 77 per cent of respondents whose schools had considered joining a trust ultimately decided against it – up from 70 per cent in 2019.

Henson said while there had been an expectation for schools to join an academy earlier in the decade, “there is a growing acceptance of having a mixed economy” and the conversion of schools had slowed as there is now “less pressure on schools who are in control of their destiny”.

Elsewhere, the report found the factors least likely to be used when determining executive pay are pension costs and benefits, at 17 per cent, and the ratio between the highest and lowest paid in an organisation, at 15 per cent.

The NGA said this demonstrates “a consistent picture of looking beyond the basic salary and considering the whole cost of the package has not emerged”.

A Schools Week investigation into chief executives’ pay in academy trusts earlier this year found the number of bosses paid over £200,000 had risen to 23, up from 21 the previous year.

EXCLUSIVE

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENS

School census days could be postponed

Schools may be able to postpone their census day should pupils be off self-isolating, with the government preparing new guidance to ease their worries that they may miss out on thousands of pounds.

Funding that schools receive under the government’s universal infant free school meals policy is decided on the number of pupils who have a school dinner on the October 1 census day.

In the past schools have offered special menus to ensure they get maximum take-up. The funding totals more than £600 million each year.

But some schools with pupils off on the day because of coronavirus are worried they could take a financial hit.

Government figures show 4 per cent of schools were not fully open last week because of Covid.

Current guidance says schools can use a different day to record the census information where there are “exceptional circumstances”.

The Department for Education told *Schools Week* it was updating guidance to provide “more clarity” about “how exceptional circumstances can be applied in the context of school absences related to Covid-19”.

It would not provide any further comment.

Investigation

The fall of a superhead: what was behind Sir Craig's dismissal

SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHABOOTH

A superhead received “unauthorised” payments of nearly £300,000 that helped to plunge his former federation of schools into deficit, court documents have revealed.

Sir Craig Tunstall is suing Lambeth Council in south London in the High Court for at least £200,000 over claims that an “excessive workload”, exacerbated by plans to open a free school, left him depressed.

Tunstall, formerly England's best paid primary headteacher on £367,000 a year, was dismissed as chief executive from the council-maintained Gipsy Hill Federation (GHF) in 2018 for “gross misconduct”.

Until now, the details behind his dismissal have been secret, despite requests by Schools Week for investigation reports to be published. The council said this would breach the Data Protection Act and “could cause distress to the individuals”.

But papers submitted to the High Court by lawyers on behalf of Lambeth and GHF reveal Tunstall and two senior colleagues were found to have received unauthorised payments totalling nearly £500,000 – leaving a hole in the federation's finances.

A disciplinary panel also found that a text sent in May 2017 by Tunstall to Lambeth's head of schools' HR, in which he called her a “vindictive c**t”, was “bullying, abusive and highly unprofessional” (see box).

The council's submission was presented to the court in response to Tunstall's lawsuit.

It shows an internal council investigation into forged documents, completed in February 2017, found at least 13 payroll forms “appeared to contain forged signatures”.

The papers say an Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Service investigation uncovered evidence that Natalie Walters, GHF's head of human resources, had been using electronic signatures,

EXCLUSIVE



Sir Craig Tunstall

The Disciplinary Panel made multiple findings of mismanagement and misconduct on the Claimant's part including

(a) receipt of additional remuneration payments totalling £288,399 that were paid to him without the knowledge of, or authorisation by, [the federation's governing body]

(b) a deficit of £400,000 in the federation's funds that was significantly contributed by the making of unauthorised remuneration payments to himself

without approval, to procure payments from Lambeth's payroll department – including “substantial” payments to Tunstall.

The investigation report, into “failures on the part” of Tunstall, identified evidence of “failure to adopt and operate proper financial systems”, “failure to control budgeting and expenditure” and “accepting remuneration payments that had not been authorised” by GHF.

The subsequent disciplinary panel made “multiple findings of mismanagement and

misconduct”.

This included that Tunstall was allegedly in receipt of additional sums – totalling £288,399 – that were paid to him without the knowledge, or authorisation, of GHF. Tunstall was suspended in May 2017.

The papers say the panel also found a deficit of £400,000 in GHF's funds that was “significantly contributed by the making of unauthorised remuneration payments”. As well as the payments

Continued on next page

Investigation

to Tunstall, these include £105,491 to Walters and £103,926 to Kevin Sparkes, the federation's finance director, the court documents reveal.

However, in a legal response to the council's submission, Tunstall's representatives say no allegations of fraud or dishonesty are made against him, and that it is not alleged that he was aware he was receiving unauthorised payments. They say the fact that any such payments were unauthorised or unlawful is denied.

They also say it is not alleged that Tunstall "colluded" with Walters or Sparkes, or anyone else, to procure unauthorised payments to himself or others.

Walters did not respond to a request for comment. Sparkes could not be reached for comment.

The council papers say that at a meeting with governors and the council in March 2013, Tunstall indicated he would take a "less-hands-on role" as chief executive in a restructure, which he denies. The council also claimed Tunstall was told he should not continue to "receive large payments every time a new school joined" the federation.

Documents show he had received additional yearly payments of up to £46,000 for each new school.

GHF governors must approve any further salary increases and payments, the papers say he was told.



From November that year, the papers claim Walters submitted "various" signed payroll forms that "purported" to authorise payments to Tunstall as part of his remuneration package, despite not being approved, by using electronic signatures of the then chair of governors.

Lambeth claims that in March 2017, two months before his suspension, Tunstall told an HR officer at GHF that he had only recently become aware of various "ongoing allowances and honoraria" that were being paid to Sparkes and Walters and that the payments should stop.

But, it claims, he "did not take any steps" to stop the unauthorised payments that he received.

Lambeth denies that Tunstall's later dismissal in 2018 was unlawful.

In his claim to the High Court, Tunstall's representative Asela Wijeyaratne said plans to

academise the federation's eight schools in 2016, which included setting up a new secondary free school, "resulted in workload and work pressure that was too great".

Lambeth denies this, saying that his role as executive headteacher at each school had "diminished significantly".

He had "enthusiastically" promoted the expansion of GHF.

But Tunstall's legal team claims that in December 2016 he sent an email to Lambeth council about the academisation and the free school project, saying he was the "lowest I have ever been in my teaching career" and his "personal well-being has been eroded with every day of delayed conversion". He also claims he had informed a previous chair of governors he had been diagnosed with depression.

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

In a statement, Lambeth Council said it understood that Tunstall was seeking a stay of his High Court claim, pending the outcome of the employment tribunal.

Tunstall refused to comment.

Commenting on behalf of GHF, Lambeth council said that it would be "disputing" the contents of the latest reply by Tunstall's representatives.

EXCLUSIVE

'Useless b*tch' and 'vindictive c**t' – abusive comments revealed

The court documents reveal Tunstall also sent a text to a HR manager at Lambeth calling her a "vindictive c**t".

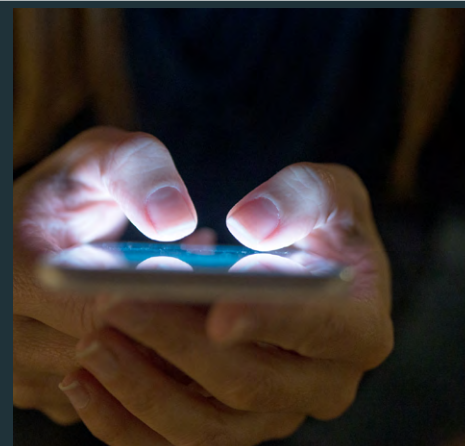
The manager had texted Tunstall in May 2017 after he had been signed off work with a "stress-related problem" to consult on a response after the press had found out about his suspension.

The papers say he replied saying: "Are you trying to kill me? Is that what you f**king want!? I'm in bed

unwell, signed off sick and it's my Friday night. Are you trying to totally destroy me? F**k off you vindictive c**t. Put it on your CV."

The disciplinary panel found the message was "bullying, abusive and highly unprofessional"

Also, on the same day GHF wrote to parents about his suspension, the papers allege Tunstall sent a zip file to at least 21 individuals containing "confidential information, offensive comments and inaccurate



information", including describing one of Lambeth's employees as a "useless b*tch".

Ministers 'knew' vouchers would cover Easter

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Ministers have been accused of knowing "all along" they would extend the national voucher scheme into the Easter holidays.

But Michael Gove, the Cabinet Office minister, did not announce the decision to continue providing the vouchers to families eligible for free school meals until April 4, the day after most schools broke up for the holiday.

Information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act shows that the Department for Education's initial contract with the voucher supplier Edenred, which came into force on March 28, was for a month. That included the Easter holidays.

The government claims the contract was set up in this way to give it "flexibility" over when to offer the provision.

But Andy Jolley, a school food campaigner, said the claim was "disingenuous".

"It would make no sense to sign a contract



Michael Gove

where 50 per cent of it is holidays," he said. "It appears the DfE knew all along it would be providing vouchers over Easter, but left vulnerable families in the lurch until Gove's announcement."

The voucher scheme was launched in March following the decision to close schools to all but the most vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers.

Schools were given access to an online portal, run by Edenred, to order supermarket vouchers worth £15 a week that could be sent to families of eligible pupils not attending school.

But the website struggled to keep up with demand, leaving some of the country's poorest

children hungry.

The government appeared to initially resist calls to continue to provide vouchers over holidays, when pupils would not normally receive free school meals.

But ministers capitulated, eventually providing them over the Easter, May half term and summer breaks.

A spokesperson for the NAHT, the school leaders' union, said it was "immensely frustrating" to discover the option to keep pupils fed was "there all along".

And Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was "pretty shoddy" that the government ruled provision out and then changed its mind after schools had broken up. "It could clearly have done the right thing several days earlier and given families and schools greater certainty."

The National Audit Office, the government's spending watchdog, has since announced an investigation into the scheme.

Edenred was approached for comment.

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An open and shut case: the new normal of Covid-19

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools having to fully or partially close and then reopen will become "a way of life" until a vaccine against Covid-19 is found, the national schools commissioner has said.

Dominic Herrington told an online conference for academy trust leaders yesterday that a rolling system of "opening, reopening, closing, partially closing" would continue. The need to send bubbles or whole year groups home also would become "more prevalent".

However, the senior civil servant said he was "pretty clear" he did not want schools to close to the majority of pupils again, as they did in the spring.

Schools reopened more widely earlier this month, following four months of partial closure between March and July.

However, although government figures show 99.9 per cent of schools are open, about 4 per cent are partially closed as a result of confirmed or suspected Covid cases.

Boris Johnson also signalled his commitment to schools remaining open, despite a ramping up of restrictions on other sectors after a spike in cases. The new restrictions are expected to last six months.

Herrington said the virus had "upended" school systems around the world.

"Opening, reopening, closing, partially closing will continue until we have a vaccine ... become a way of life," he said.



"Schools and colleges will stay open as long as possible. But the capacity of bubbles, of year groups, to need to go home will become more prevalent. So that's just a challenge that we all have to cope with."

His comments come after the government said it was doing its best to get school staff and pupils tested, following widespread reports of delays that forced adults and children to isolate at home.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, announced on Monday that teachers were fifth on the government's priority list for testing. However, pupils did not feature, despite a pledge that they too would be prioritised (see box below).

A statement by the UK's chief medical officers referenced by Johnson as evidence that schools are safe also warned that the "prompt availability of testing" was "key" to the safe return of pupils to schools.

It follows reports that school staff and

pupils were facing huge difficulties in accessing virus tests, and come after the government was forced to take action to stop schools having to wait days for guidance from local health services.

Speaking in parliament earlier this week, Johnson dodged questions about problems with testing, and insisted once again that schools were safe.

He told the Commons earlier yesterday that there was an "exceptionally small risk to children of primary and secondary school age from this disease", and that children "have a significantly lower rate of infection".

The government has also suggested that schools with bans on mobile phones relax their policies so pupils could use the NHS Covid-19 app.

New guidance even talks of the benefits of the use of smartphones by pupils, despite recent support from ministers for schools that ban phones from their sites.

Gibb's promise for pupil testing falls off the list

Teachers with Covid-19 symptoms will be fifth on the government's priority list for testing. But pupils do not feature at all, although ministers pledged that they too would be given priority.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, told the Commons yesterday that teachers with symptoms would be prioritised "so we can keep schools and classes open".

However, staff in clinical care, care homes, the NHS and those involved in outbreaks and

surveillance studies will be tested ahead of teachers.

According to the Department of Health and Social Care's list, teachers will get tested quickly "where it is needed to keep schools and classes open".

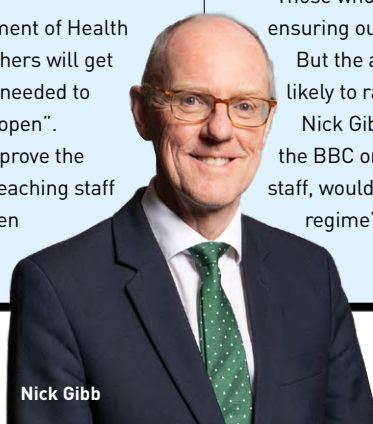
"We are continuing to improve the testing system to ensure teaching staff can get priority access when they have symptoms," the

guidance states.

"Those who test negative can return to work, ensuring our schools can remain open."

But the absence of pupils from the list is likely to raise eyebrows.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, told the BBC on September 1 that pupils, like staff, would be "given priority in the testing regime".



Nick Gibb

Coronavirus outbreak

Schools urged to snub new DfE Covid helpline

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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EXCLUSIVE

A council is urging schools to ignore new protocols for contacting the government's national coronavirus helpline to report positive cases after it issued incorrect advice.

The Department for Education seized control of handling calls about school Covid-19 cases last week after some were left in "limbo" waiting three days to get health advice from local Public Health England teams.

But Essex County Council "encouraged" schools this week to instead use the Essex Contact Test and Trace Team for advice in the first instance, "rather than the DfE advice line", if they have a positive case.

Clare Kershaw, the council's director of education, said on Wednesday this was for "a number of reasons" including situations where the advice from DfE was wrong.

"I have heard of instances where it has been very helpful, but unfortunately where it has not been correct," Kershaw said. "The DfE have today requested details where the advice is not correct to enable the service to improve."

One of the other reasons, she says, is that the ECTTT will notify public health colleagues and the intelligence about the school "will be captured more quickly as



well as providing more local and contextual support".

A *Schools Week* investigation revealed last week how schools were waiting days for advice from local health protection teams on how to handle outbreaks.

The DfE then overhauled the current protocols for reporting positive cases, just weeks after schools opened.

The change was welcomed by unions with James Bowen, director of policy at the NAHT school leaders' union, saying it had the potential to be a "step in the right direction – as long as it works".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of school leaders' union ASCL, said the feedback they've had so far shows there have been a "few teething problems" but that schools have "generally found it helpful".

He added: "We are continuing to monitor the situation. We are pleased that the department responded quickly to the concerns we raised about the difficulty experienced by schools in obtaining timely advice from local health protection teams, which were obviously overwhelmed."

An Essex County Council spokesperson said they were "committed" to ensuring schools have access to coronavirus advice and guidance "when they need it" and have worked with the DfE on a "blended approach to support locally".

"This includes the DfE helpline and the ECTTT. We are working hard to support schools and ensure they have the information they need during what are fast-moving and evolving circumstances."

The DfE has been contacted for comment.

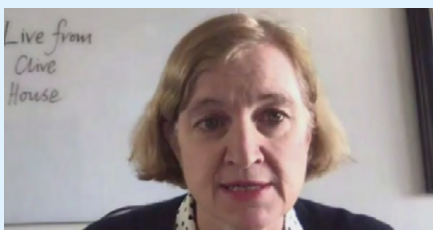
Online teaching expectations 'unrealistic', says Spielman

It was not "sensible or realistic" to expect schools to provide a "full on-screen taught programme" for all absent pupils, Amanda Spielman (pictured) has said.

The chief inspector of schools told academy trust leaders that interim visits, due to start next week, would look at how schools were "responding intelligently and doing what is within their capacity".

She warned against adopting models "that make life impossible for children or parents or staff in this context".

The government has said that it expected schools to "immediately offer" access to



remote education to pupils who were not in school because of self-isolation or partial closures.

During the lockdown between March and July, many schools were criticised for failing to offer live online teaching, despite government guidance that said it was not required.

Speaking to the Trust Leaders online conference yesterday, Spielman said there were "lots and lots of things that schools don't control".

"One of the things that's very important for me is to make sure that people's expectations are realistic. Aspirational, but also realistic.

"When I have seen some people saying in public that every school should be able to provide full on-screen taught programme for all children all the hours they would normally be in school, I have not supported that. I don't see that as something that is necessarily sensible or realistic at either end."

Coronavirus outbreak

Schools caught in the middle over Covid testing

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Schools have been placed in an “impossibly difficult position” as the government restricts Covid tests to those with “classic symptoms”, despite research indicating children are more likely to show other signs.

Government guidance states the main symptoms of coronavirus are a high temperature, a new, continuous cough and a loss or change to your smell or taste.

As the government’s testing system falls over amid increased demand, health secretary Matt Hancock has warned only those showing one or more of those symptoms should get a test

But experts are warning a lack of information on children’s symptoms means the government is “flying blind”.

Research conducted by the Covid Symptom Study has found 52 per cent of school-aged children “don’t log any ‘adult’ classic symptoms in the week before or after the test”.

Rather, the most common symptoms displayed by children are fatigue, headache, fever, sore throat and a loss of appetite.

Jonny Uttley, chief executive of The Education Alliance academy trust, said the government’s stance was “incredibly confused”.

Uttley said the difficulty schools face is they have “no alternative other than to follow government and public health advice” but admitted “there’s clearly a significant risk of spread throughout the community now anyway”.

“We have no alternative than to point to those three symptoms because unless and until that definition is broadened, for children or for others, it puts the schools in an impossibly difficult position because then we would then have to start playing doctor.”

Health secretary Matt Hancock, speaking in the House of Commons on Monday, said that all councils “should make clear that if students have coronavirus symptoms – and we all know what they are... then they should come forward for a test.

“If they have symptoms of another illness and not coronavirus symptoms, then they should not come forward for a test.”

It’s a stark contrast to comments made by Hancock in July when he encouraged the public to get tested if they have symptoms “or if

TOP FIVE SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN WITH CORONAVIRUS

1. FATIGUE
(55%)

2. HEADACHE
(53%)

3. FEVER
(49%)

4. SORE THROAT
(38%)

5. LOSS OF
APPETITE (35%)

you have any doubt”.

Dr Joshua Moon, a research fellow at the Science Policy Research Unit, warned the government has “largely ignored children” when thinking about policy and testing because assumptions early in the pandemic suggested “children were either protected or not as badly affected”.

“That has weakened our ability to do anything at this point because we don’t have the information – we are again flying blind.”

He added: “From a school’s perspective I can see why that is not good enough because it doesn’t protect the parents, it doesn’t protect the teachers and it doesn’t protect the other children”.

The UK’s chief medical officers, in a letter to schools on Wednesday, said that transmission of Covid to children in schools does occur, but is “probably not a common route of transmission”. They said it may also be lower in primary children than among secondary students.

The letter added transmission to staff also does occur, but studies suggest it “may largely be staff to staff rather than pupil to staff”.

Moon, who is currently studying Covid-19

testing systems, called for more studies to be conducted into the symptoms characteristic of youth infection.

“Research into this is going to be really important – the question is how to conduct that research if testing capacity is limited,” he said.

The Covid Symptom Study App’s findings are based on data from 198 children with positive tests and around 15,800 negative tests.

It found 55 per cent of children who tested positive for Covid-19 displayed fatigue, while 53 per cent complained of headache.

In addition 33 per cent of those who tested positive didn’t log any of the 20 symptoms listed in the app.

The proportion of pupils attending school fell from 88 per cent on September 10 to 87 per cent on September 17.

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson added: “An expert scientific group keeps the symptoms of Covid-19 for all age groups under review as we increase our understanding of the virus.”

THE SYMPTOMS REQUIRED TO GET A TEST



A new,
continuous cough



A high
temperature



Loss of smell
or taste

Grenfell fallout forced us to break rules, says trust

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

EXCLUSIVE

An academy trust says it had no choice but to break finance rules and use £530,000 of revenue funds to save its multi-million pound sports centre after regulation changes threatened to derail the project.

Herts and Essex Multi Academy Trust (HEMAT), which operates two schools, was issued a financial warning to improve after breaching the academies financial handbook. The warning notice was published on Friday.

The trust had failed to ensure spending had been “used for the purpose intended” after using revenue funds as capital to help to build a £6.5 million sports centre at The Hertfordshire and Essex High School.

The sports centre broke ground in May 2018 and was due to open by Easter last year.

However, new regulations banning the use of combustible materials in certain structures came into effect in December 2018. The new rules followed the Grenfell fire in west London in which 72 people died.

A building inspection of the centre showed that alterations had to be made, including swapping cladding for bricks, while 30-minute burn-time glass was updated to 60 minutes.

A trust spokesperson told *Schools Week* the redesign created a “significant delay”. The trust had already utilised “sizeable grants” from Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts District Council.

“As a result . . . it was decided that the project would have to go ahead, even with the knowledge of the deficit that would inevitably accrue,” the spokesperson said.

The extra design work, building and delay costs – with the cost of the waste from materials ordered, but not used – plunged the trust into a £530,000 deficit.

Matthew Clements-Wheeler, the chair of the Institute of School Business Leadership, admitted he had “a degree of sympathy” for the trust. But when projects went wrong, trusts had to make “swift communication” with the Education and Skills Funding



“The project would have to go ahead, even with the knowledge of the deficit that would inevitably accrue”

Agency (ESFA).

“Whenever something goes awry the first port of call should always be back to the department – officials there are reasonable, measured and experienced in taking steps.”

However, he warned “conversations” with officials were not the same as approval.

The financial warning also noted the trust “has evidenced significant weaknesses in the

control of its cashflow and the monitoring of its financial position”, requesting urgent financial support on “multiple occasions” only to “withdraw or delay the request at the last minute”.

In its most recent annual accounts, which cover the year up to August 2019, the trust admits it has “considerable reliance on continued government funding through the ESFA”, with most of the school’s incoming resources “ultimately government funded”.

But the trust spokesperson added: “We have a solid plan that will enable us to pay back the existing deficit. HEMAT is pleased to working closely with the EFSA with regards to this.”

The warning notice will mean the trust has to have some actions, such as paying compensation payments and writing off debts and losses, approved in advance by the ESFA.

The sports centre, which has facilities such as an artificial turf pitch, dojo, gym and six outdoor courts, finally opened in September last year.



Grenfell Tower

Labour Party conference



Green: 'Messing' with school structures not priority

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

"Messing around" with school structures should not be a Labour priority, the shadow education secretary has said.

Speaking at an online event at Labour's "Connected" party conference, Kate Green said she would not be "scrambling successful schools for the sake of having perfect structures", indicating the party would not move to bring all academies back under council oversight.

Green's comments suggest the party will not stray too far from its existing position on academies, despite Sir Keir Starmer, the party leader, telling *Schools Week* in March that he wanted "all schools" under "local democratic control".

Green, who has been in post since June, told the Socialist Educational Association event that schools should be structured and resourced to be "the centre of communities", and spoke of the need for "a lot of work to be done" on the party's national education service policy.

But the LabourList website, which reported on the members-only event, said that when Green was asked about academies and free



Kate Green

schools, she said: "I don't want to spend the whole of the first term...messing around just with structures. I want to get to the equality of what's going on in class."

"On scrambling successful schools for the sake of having perfect structures, that isn't where I'm going to start. We want to start with a different set of values and objectives that aren't about pitching schools into a competitive situation."

Since her appointment, most of Green's interventions have been about the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

But her comments at the conference offer a glimpse at what Labour's policy platform will look like during her tenure.

Like her predecessor, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Green has re-committed the party to its national education service, a flagship policy of former leader Jeremy Corbyn that proposes free education for all from "cradle to grave".

And like Long-Bailey, Green acknowledged there was "a lot of work to be done to fill out what it looks like, what the detail of it is".

"I think everybody would acknowledge we didn't have the time to do that before we were bounced into the early election. But of course we want

a guarantee, if you like, a national offer for everyone."

Green's comments follow those of Angela Rayner, a former shadow education secretary, who told *Schools Week* in 2017 that she wanted Labour to "move on" from the debate over academies and focus on campaigning for greater controls over the way they were run.

The following year, the party announced it would stop forced academisation and the free schools programme, allow councils to open schools and take on failing academies, reintroduce national pay rules and ban related-party transactions.

However, it stopped short of saying it would return all academies to local authority oversight, something its annual conference has repeatedly pushed for.

Green is also facing calls to apologise for her comments at another conference event that coronavirus was a "good crisis" and that Labour should "use the opportunity" to make a point about the problems in education the pandemic had exposed.

"We can really see now what happens when you under-resource schools, when you under-resource families and communities." Amanda Milling, the joint chair of the Conservative Party, has written to Starmer that Green apologise for her "appalling" comments.

Green has been contacted for comment.

DfE snubs Starmer's call for taskforce on attainment gap

The government has resisted calls by Sir Keir Starmer to set up an independent taskforce on the attainment gap.

The Labour leader told the party's "Connected" online conference on Tuesday that the country needed "a national strategy with clear targets to close the education gap at every stage in a child's development".

He said such a strategy should be "enforced through an independent body, such as the children's commissioner, and embedded in everything that we do". He added that Labour would set up its own taskforce if the prime minister "won't act".

The Department for Education this week declined to comment on his call, instead

pointing to its efforts to help pupils make up for education lost as a result of the pandemic – including the £650 million catch-up premium and £350 million national tutoring programme.

A spokesperson said school leaders were "best placed to make decisions about their pupils and which of them need the most support, which is why they have the flexibility to decide how to spend the premium in their best interests".

But Starmer said that the government's promised catch-up support had "failed to materialise".

"And now the failure to get tests for children and teachers who need them means kids are

missing out this term as well.

"Opportunity for the young should go way beyond party politics. It has to be a national mission to end the deep injustice that a child's future is determined by their postcode, not by their potential."

His comments come as concerns rise about the education lost, particularly by disadvantaged pupils, as a result of the pandemic.

Anne Longfield, the children's commissioner, has been vocal about a "lost generation" of teenagers.

Last month, she called for education to be prioritised in future lockdowns.



Sir Keir Starmer

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0300 102 1023



School data breaches: cyber attacks, hacks and legal threats

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

An academy trust was left facing legal action after sending student assessment reports to the wrong parents.

The incident at Aspire Schools in Buckinghamshire last year is one of dozens of examples of data breaches uncovered by a Schools Week investigation.

Documents released under the Freedom of Information Act show how academies were subjected to cyber attacks, hacked by their own students and even left copies of personal data at top London tourist attractions.

Aspire Schools in Buckinghamshire reported that in July 2019, two student assessment reports were “accidentally posted to the wrong parents” because reports were placed in the wrong envelopes.

Although the matter was “dealt with at the time”, the trust “subsequently received a legal request for compensation by the mother of one of the students”. The trust did not respond to a request for comment.

The incident was one of 177 reported across 135 academy trusts to the ESFA in 2018-19.

In February of last year, a register for pupils at Raynsford Church of England Academy was mislaid at the O2 in London during the Young Voices singing event.

Luckily, the register was found and stored in a safe by O2 staff and then returned to the school by secure post.

Julie Ashwell, the school's head teacher, told Schools Week it had switched to digital registers as a result, as well as reviewing its policy and practice for educational visits.

In another instance, a teacher information pack



from the Pioneer Academy containing names of pupils, medical conditions and contact details for all adults on the trip was “inadvertently” left at the London Transport Museum.

Another example where a data breach has led to a big change in trust policies was the Estuaries Multi-Academy Trust, which banned staff at one of its schools from taking home physical documents after an encrypted laptop and papers were stolen from a staffmember's car.

Several of the data breaches reported to the ESFA involved sensitive data being shown to pupils by mistake, including on whiteboards or projector screens. Others related to information about job applicants being disclosed.

In one instance, Mayflower High School was found to be in breach of GDPR legislation after it confirmed to another school that one of its employees was attending a job interview.

In December 2018, the Chelsea Academy reported that permanent exclusion packs for two pupils

were sent to the wrong parents.

Principal Mariella Ardron said sensitive letters were now double enveloped, with an inner envelope bearing the name of the student and urging the recipient not to open it if they are not the parent or carer.

And St Christopher's C of E Primary Multi Academy Trust reported itself to the ICO after a document containing sensitive personal data of a pupil was circulated “in error” to all persons involved in a complaint.

Jo Wilkey, the trust's data protection officer, said they had since “looked at the way this particular process operates” and changed elements to “avoid future issues”.

Some trusts, however, were victims of cyber attacks. The 5 Dimensions Trust reported that a student obtained the log-in details of a teacher's Go4Schools account and “published them on social media”, leading to the details of some students at the school being changed.

Schools ‘prime targets’ for ransomware attacks

Schools have been urged to be vigilant after an academy in Merseyside fell victim to a “malicious ransomware attack”.

The Information Commissioner's Office is investigating after St John Plessington Catholic College in Wirral reported its files and servers had been affected by the attack at the beginning of term.

It comes as the National Cyber Security Centre warned of an “increased number of ransomware attacks affecting education establishments in the UK”.

Ransomware is a type of malware that prevents users from accessing their systems or data, with cyber attackers often demanding money in return for their release.

The Diocese of Shrewsbury, which runs St John Plessington, said the recent ransomware incident was “resolved by the school's dedicated IT support” and reported to the authorities.

They also insisted its management information system, child protection online management system and other cloud-based systems “were not affected”, but would not give further details.

Mark Orchison, managing director at education technology consultancy agency 9ine, said schools, colleges and universities were “prime targets” at the moment, in particular because of their reliance on technology to deliver distance learning, which has meant operational tasks for managing systems “have been put to one side”.

Orchison urged schools to make staff and students aware of attack trends, ensure all systems and devices that connect to networks and cloud systems are up to date “with the latest system updates and security protections” and ensure all data is backed up.

Schools should also review the encryption of all file-based information and database systems and support the students and families with the lowest resources “to improve the protection of the devices they use to learn”.

“In an attack where devices are targeted, you don't want to compound the learning impact for those students who are already suffering the most.”

Key points

Applications rise but beware of false dawn

The National Foundation for Educational Research this week published research looking at the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on initial teacher training. We look at six key findings

1 Surge in teacher training applications

Analysis by NFER of UCAS data found that overall, teacher training applications are up by 16 per cent on last year, and there was a 35 per cent increase in applications between mid-March and mid-August. This could plug shortfalls in some shortage subjects. In maths, for instance, applications for postgraduate ITT courses are up 26 per cent compared to last year, while applications for modern foreign languages are up 23 per cent.

But based solely on recruitment data and the government's current predicted leaving rate, researchers predicted that recruitment in 2020-21 would still fall short of targets in physics, design and technology, MFL, maths, chemistry and computing.



2 Fewer teachers may want to leave ...

An NFER survey of over 1,700 teachers in July showed that the proportion of teachers considering leaving in the next 12 months was 15 percentage points lower than in 2019.

The proportion of teachers considering leaving with a destination in mind is also substantially lower this year, by six percentage points for primary and secondary teachers.

The report states that teacher retention is influenced by the economic cycle, with higher retention during recessions due to uncertainty in the wider labour market.



3 ... which could plug gaps in shortage subjects

NFER believes the DfE's predicted leaving rate may be overestimated by as much as 25 per cent. Once likely new retention rates are factored in, they predict the recruitment gap would close in all subjects – except physics and D&T.

The government has missed its secondary school teacher recruitment targets for seven years in a row.

In some subjects, recruitment could be "substantially higher" than the system needs. For example, history could be as much as 240 per cent of what is needed.

But the report warns the analysis "should be treated as indicative of the possible effects, not as an accurate prediction of likely outcomes".



4 More teachers in regions with highest unemployment

The largest increases are in the West Midlands, London and the North West with smaller increases in the East of England, North East and South West.

NFER say this may reflect local variation in economic conditions. The three areas with large increases are regions that also have the largest increases in unemployment benefit claims up to July, whereas the latter three have the smallest increases.

The surge since March was also strongest among younger applicants.

The number of new accepted offers between March and August 2020 is 54 per cent higher than in 2019 for those aged 21 and under, compared to only 22 per cent higher for those aged 40 and over.



5 But warnings about school placements capacity

NFER recommends the government continues to tackle "placement bottlenecks" for trainees, after the capacity of schools to run placements dropped by 20 per cent in primary schools and seven per cent in secondaries.

This work includes DfE relaxing the requirements that trainees spend 120 days physically in schools, train in at least two schools and cover the full age and ability range of training.

Schools with the most disadvantaged pupils reported a larger average reduction in placement capacity due to Covid-19, compared to other schools.

Jack Worth, the report author, said the "vulnerability" could "continue to impact the ITT sector and the number of trainees the system is able to accept, with applications to teacher training likely to be high again next year".



6 And heads urge caution on recruitment boost

Nick Brook, deputy general secretary at school leaders' union NAHT, urged ministers to be "wary that this could be a false dawn".

He said that those who joined teaching as a result of the 2008 financial crisis "melted away as economic conditions improved, while attrition and wastage rates grew over the following decade".

The DfE said they are introducing "the biggest pay rise" since 2005 and that it was continuing to work with schools and IIT providers to address coronavirus challenges, including working with the sector to support schools to host trainees.



EDITORIAL

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

Minister must bite bad apples and protect good academy leaders from bruising

Has the government finally followed through on promises to start holding those who abused academy freedoms to account?

Academies minister Baroness Berridge, who has very much kept her head down after taking over from the outspoken Lord Agnew in February, is certainly talking the talk.

She tells *Schools Week* today there's "simply no place" for academy scandal bosses in the sector - and vowed to "take action" against those flouting the rules.

The spate of action barring three such chiefs from the sector seems to back that up. But a real test of that promise could be the Bright Tribe case.

Arguably the biggest academy scandal, the news that police have dropped their fraud investigation will disappoint campaigners who believe action should be taken against the trust's former leaders.

But the disclosure will now put pressure back onto the Department for Education to show its teeth.

The findings from the government's own investigation and annual accounts put together by those parachuted in to take over the trust make for damning reading.

You could argue those findings alone are more serious than the offences the trio of academy bosses who have been barred from the profession this month have committed.

So, while the new approach will be welcomed, there is also caution needed.

Showing you are willing to take action on the "bad apples" is important - it protects the reputation of the majority of leaders who put so much into their role, and do always play by the rules.

There's no doubt the handful of academy scandals has tainted the 'academy trust' brand. Taking tough action will help repair that.

Let's hope the government follows through on its promise, and puts accountability for scandals ahead of quietly brushing them under the carpet.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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IF YOU FOLLOW THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES THAT'LL BE THE END OF IT. I WILL NOT LOOK FOR YOU, I WILL NOT PURSUE YOU, BUT IF YOU DON'T, I WILL LOOK FOR YOU, I WILL FIND YOU...



Stan.



New 'flagship' study to solve why teachers leave

... Lisa Farley

The study seems flawed.

1. If you mainly use management data, you will not find the true reason that teachers leave. Nobody tells management they left because the head had no people skills or the MAT had an academic-only vision.

2. You need to look at teacher training and motivation before starting.

E.g. did the person always dream of teaching and go into the job to work with children or did they choose it after say a geography degree and couldn't find a job?

3. Did the person have enough knowledge to do the job at the start?

Readiness to start and motivation to do the job are key.

Those who want to teach will only move schools when the job doesn't match their vision.

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Emma Hardy, @EmmaHardyMP

TV presenter deletes tweet supporting back-to-school campaign

During a pandemic when businesses are going bust and @ExcludedUK are not getting support the @educationgovuk is paying people £15k to tweet support for them?! Really?!!

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

£50m for expansion, but some grammars get less inclusive

... Matt Hood, @matthewhood

Aside from everything else wrong with this, 1 school had 7% PP pupils *target*. And missed it. All it needed to do to was send offers to 7% of applicants who are eligible for PP. If those pupils didn't score top marks on 11+? Do some catch up like everyone else! Give me strength.

£85m laptops scheme falls short

... Shaun

Our school received our laptops for the children, but they didn't arrive preinstalled with MS Office (fair enough as it does require a licence). The email from the supplier advised that the parents should download and install Open Office for free. The issue comes as the parents don't have access to an admin account so they can't install programs or printers. I contacted the supplier and initially I was told that I'd be given the admin account access but since the start of August my emails have been ignored.

In tribute: Martin Matthews

Tributes have been paid to Martin Matthews, a popular member of the schools governance community, who died following a heart attack last week.

Raj Unsworth @rrunsworth

Utterly devastated to hear the news of the death of a dear friend, Martin Matthews (@mm684), a hugely respected colleague from my governance circles. I will miss our chats, the last one (just a few days ago) was to fix our country, and the world of education.

Andy Jolley @ajjolley

Such sad, sad news. Martin was always a voice of reason and sense, who cared passionately about schools and school governance.

UKGovChat @UKGovChat

Martin was that rare breed, someone with



great knowledge and experience who was always ready to help and support others. He was a great friend and supporter of UGC. RIP, dear friend.

Emma Knights @NGAEmmaK

He was a very active and knowledgeable member of the governance community and moreover he positively did good,

looking out for others and doing that extra. He was a passionate advocate for #VisibleGovernance. He is and will be missed.

Julia Skinner FCCT @TheHeadsOffice

Such a staunch supporter for governance and education. Although I never met him, I count him among friends. He will be sorely missed and leaves his work on honours.

Michaela Matthews @Michael54714895

To everyone who knew Martin Matthews, I would just like to say how wonderful to read amazing things about him. We had 30 years together and seeing this means a lot. He was My Martin – that's what I called him. The world has lost someone very special. Love you Martin.

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Feature

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



Give us both barrels, say heads of 'inadequate' schools

Suspicion of 'outcome letters' from Ofsted's proposed autumn visits comes from a surprising quarter

This week's news of another six months of tighter lockdown restrictions has unsurprisingly reignited calls for Ofsted to call off the planned resumption of inspections from January.

It's a debate that has raged since inspections were abandoned in July because of the pandemic, and heightened amid plans for new "visits" this autumn.

One of the main concerns over the latter is plans to publish an "outcome letter" which union leaders warn would "feel like an inspection report" and be particularly tough on 'inadequate' graded schools.

But not always heard amid the shouting are some leaders of such schools. Many have told *Schools Week* that the biggest problem with the

outcome letter is that it's not a full inspection report – they want both barrels of Ofsted's full judgment.

'The wrong score on the door'

The power of an Ofsted judgment to directly impact, as well as mirror, school turnaround efforts was stressed across the board by leaders with a low Ofsted label hanging over them.

Graeme Napier, principal at Bexleyheath Academy in Kent, joined the school last year after it was graded 'inadequate' in 2018, hot on the heels of a 'requires improvement' grade two years before. The last report for the school, which is under the Academies Enterprise Trust, is bleak: poor pupil behaviour, low expectations and low staff morale. Despite a positive monitoring

visit in December last year, Napier says written comments are not enough for parents. "We've still got the badge of special measures over the door".

Now he expects only about 100 year 7 pupils for next September where there should be 330. Overall, Napier reckons he is missing about 600 pupils over three year groups: "The financial implications for a school this big are huge."

Ofsted's plans for full inspections in January do little to reassure Napier and others like him, since parents must choose secondary schools by October 31. "Parents and carers will be applying to schools over the next 45 days so even if our Ofsted rating changed in January, it will be too late for us."

That's despite encouraging comments in the

latest monitoring report, including that “leaders’ actions to improve pupils’ behaviour [...] have transformed the learning environment of the academy”.

Another principal staring down an ‘inadequate’ grade is Peter Bloomfield of Great Yarmouth Primary Academy in Norfolk, part of the Inspiration Trust. The grade, issued in 2018, prompted the government to issue a ‘minded to terminate’ notice soon after unless “rapid and sustained improvement” was achieved. With the stakes so high, Bloomfield, who arrived at the school in 2019, wants a full inspection as soon as possible.

“We had a really good relationship with Ofsted until lockdown, with that constant professional dialogue back and forth. So having a long break without that dialogue can feel like momentum is stalling.”

The longer a new Ofsted outcome takes to achieve, the less staff can feel rapid improvement is being made, Bloomfield explains. “It’s exciting for staff to work in a turnaround school, but the longer it stays with that label, the less it’s a turnaround school. It feels less transformative.” Like Napier, Bloomfield has signed up to be in Ofsted’s visits pilot in September before they



begin properly next month, just to see inspectors face to face. But for schools in the pilot, no outcome letter is published and Bloomfield is clear; only a full section 5 inspection can properly legitimise the school’s improvements.

Another school threatened with termination is

“I never thought I’d say this, but I can’t wait to have a section 5 inspection”

Khalsa Secondary Academy, a Sikh ethos school in Buckinghamshire. Having been ‘good’ in 2017, it was plunged into special measures in December 2019 for, among other issues, not following

“essential safeguarding procedures”. The school has successfully blocked rebrokerage to another trust for now, and was due to be inspected this month. Nick Kandola, chief executive of Khalsa Academies Trust, claimed the poor rating was “essentially an administrative issue”.

While this is contested by Ofsted, he said: “We just wish Ofsted would look to make exceptions where they’re due. If they can visit schools in September and October, why not carry out a monitoring visit if we want it?”

It’s not only ‘inadequate’ schools that are affected. In 2017 the Pingle Academy joined the de Ferrers Trust, which has seven schools across Staffordshire and Derbyshire, thereby officially wiping its previous ‘requires improvement’ grade. But the trust’s chief executive, Ian McNeilly, says the fact the school has not been reinspected five years later impacts the local perception. “School leaders are really keen to get that external validation for the community. They’ve worked so



Peter Bloomfield



Ian McNeilly



Nick Kandola



Julie McCulloch

hard for so long, they were absolutely ready for an inspection, and then lockdown came. They are so disappointed."

McNeilly, who is a former Ofsted inspector, adds the lack of reinspection could also slow the trust's plans for growth. "The DfE tend to use quite basic metrics for allowing you to grow. We are in a much better position than this Ofsted grade reflects. I absolutely know it has the wrong score on the door."

For other leaders, a full inspection would allow them to demonstrate that tougher days are behind them. Headteacher Nichola Smith is keen to prove she and her team have moved Meadstead Primary Academy in Barnsley on from a 2019 inspection which left the school with a 'good' in three areas and 'requires improvement' in two areas, but RI overall. "I never thought I'd say this, but I can't wait to have a section 5 inspection. The stigma of RI doesn't reflect us." Not knowing when a full inspection might happen at the school, which is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust, is frustrating for a team that has come through one difficult experience already.

Vague inspection windows are also on the mind of Martyn Oliver, chief executive at Outwood Grange Academies Trust in the north of England. "It would be good to have a sense from Ofsted what the plan is, so that we're not permanently waiting for an inspection." The trust, which has 33 schools, has one 'requires improvement' school –

Outwood Academy Adwick. It also has a number of 'outstanding' schools due for re-inspection, with the oldest report from 2012. Oliver reckons the trust was due about 15 inspections when lockdown happened. "The problem is now Ofsted are going to be massively backed up, so one can only presume they can't do all those inspections in January. Are they going to push 'outstanding' judgments down the line?" Without clarity, Oliver adds it will be "more difficult to make sure staff don't feel additionally anxious".

'Let us request an inspection'

Most school leaders who spoke to Schools Week want Ofsted to consider requests for a full inspection before January; Smith, Napier, Bloomfield and McNeilly all call for this. Oliver, meanwhile, asks for clear communication from Ofsted about the order in which differently graded schools will be prioritised for inspection.

What's striking is several leaders don't support the argument made by unions that schools can't be inspected fairly during Covid. As Bloomfield puts it: "Surely the purpose of inspection is to judge the quality of provision. Whether schools are operating normally or with some remote working, it shouldn't matter."

Napier adds: "The Covid measures shouldn't be a concern, because inspectors should always take the context of the school into account."

But not all school leaders want a full inspection just yet. Gemma Simon, the new principal of

Tamworth Enterprise College near Birmingham, is currently stuck with a negative section 8 monitoring report that predates her arrival. Simon wants "to request a non-judgmental visit that gives written comments. That would give schools like mine positive feedback that can then be shared with staff and parents."

Divided opinion

Ofsted face a tricky balance. When asked about requests for inspections, a spokesperson said "plans for how inspections should be rolled out" are under review, adding "at the appropriate time we will tell school leaders and teachers about these plans before we resume full inspections".

Representative bodies are also cautious. Steve Rollett, deputy chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, points out that "if a school was to be inspected and the judgment didn't improve, they might be left with a sense that the context of Covid-19 was to blame – and this might leave them in an even worse situation".

Nick Brook, deputy director of NAHT, strikes a similar note, warning that although it makes sense for Ofsted to consider prioritising certain schools when full inspections return, this year schools have "far more important matters to be dealing with".

But Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, has rallied behind schools stuck with poor grades. She says that suspending inspections was the right decision, but it has "left uncertainty and frustration" for many schools.

"We think there's a good argument for Ofsted to consider some sort of mechanism to inspect schools which would like to receive an inspection sooner rather than later – as an exception to the general approach."

"We are in a much better position than this Ofsted grade reflects. I absolutely know it has the wrong score on the door"



Martyn Oliver



Nick Brook



Gemma Simon

Opinion

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

Existing data can help us learn the lessons of Covid disruption without putting more pressure on schools, write Natalie Perera and John Moore

The Covid-19 pandemic is arguably the biggest post-war challenge this country has faced. While the road to full recovery still seems a long way off, schools up and down the country have been working tirelessly to support pupils.

But steep challenges remain – most children have already lost almost five months of formal schooling and the risk of further disruption still looms large. Disadvantaged children, who were already over a year and a half behind their peers by the end of secondary, are likely to have suffered the most. Evidence from the Institute for Fiscal Studies finds that they were less likely to have access to digital resources and online teaching during the lockdown. Combined with existing evidence about the impact of school closures, the Education Endowment Foundation suggest that the disadvantage gap could widen by over a third this year.

We cannot afford to wait until pupils sit formal exams next year to truly understand the impact of lost learning. That is why EPI and Renaissance Learning – the providers of Star Assessments – will be working to analyse data in as close to real time as possible.

The project will analyse large scale data gained from Star Assessments across the country – sat by over 1m children every year, with tens if not

NATALIE PERERA

Executive director and head of research, EPI

JOHN MOORE

UK director, Renaissance Learning



We need data on Covid learning loss and we need it fast

hundreds of thousands in each year group – to understand better what it tells us about pupil attainment this year. By comparing attainment among different groups of pupils to that of their peers at a similar stage in

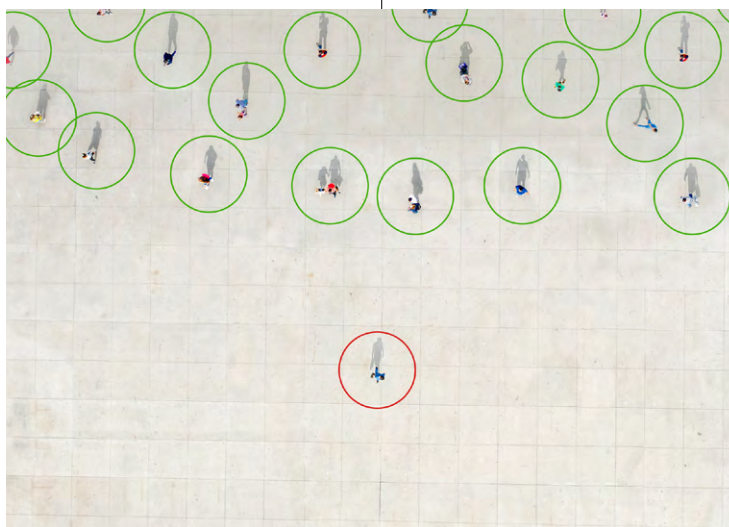
performance which are not related to disruption caused by the pandemic

We will look at data at three points in this year – in autumn, spring and summer – to measure the progress that pupils make and how that

“The disadvantage gap could widen by over a third this year

previous years, we will be able to get a picture of Covid-specific disruption, and account for any trends in

compares with previous cohorts. And we will supplement this analysis with a survey of Star customer schools



to learn more about how they responded to Covid. By acquiring information about approaches schools are taking – and how they are supporting pupils to catch up – we will be building the evidence base in this crucial policy area and learn vital lessons for potential repeated disruption, both from this pandemic and from any other instances which result in an interruption to learning.

The advantage of our approach is that we won't need to provide additional tests to schools, nor will we cause any extra workload for pupils and staff. We will also be able to use the longitudinal data to establish just what is happening, and what is just rumour.

The research will answer questions such as: have particular groups of pupils been disproportionately affected? Are there disparities across different year groups? To what extent are pupils making up for lost time in education? Have regional differences emerged, or differences based on the types of schools which pupils attend? Where future regional lockdowns may take place, what is the impact and what previous interventions seem to have the most impact? And importantly, what might be the long-term implications of this time out of school and can we see signs of recovery?

We plan to produce results early next academic year – long enough to have seen the impact over a whole year, but soon enough that we can work with the department, and school leaders across the country, to take the action that is needed.

Opinion

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MADELAINE
CAPLIN

Executive headteacher, Woodside
Academy and Belmont Academy
(LSEAT)

Special schools show how much the system's resilience is being tested

We're in it for the long haul but special schools are the canary in the coal mine of the school system's resilience, writes Madelaine Caplin

Despite the tiredness, there has been no better sight in the past fortnight than our classrooms being full of children again. We are all delighted to be fully open, but the reality of operating amid a pandemic is becoming evident. This is true in the mainstream school I oversee, and it is even more palpable in our special school.

Here, all our pupils have EHCPs, many with ASD, SEMH and moderate learning needs. Many are particularly affected by a change of routine, and while the past six months have turned all of our lives upside down, for them it's been cataclysmic.

All schools have faced – are facing – the dual challenge of reopening safely and of smoothing the transition to the 'new normal' for children. For the most vulnerable among them, those who populate Woodside Academy, this has involved individual timetables and personalised behaviour plans that require intensive support throughout the day.

As a result of this intricate planning, the return has run smoothly and our pupils are doing well. But the fact is that the school environment has changed, with children having to learn, play and socialise in different ways and this is a constant challenge for us all.

In addition, almost every pupil came back to school on day one but,

“Beyond Covid testing, delays in ASD assessments are also a grave concern

perhaps inevitably, numbers have dropped as children have picked up coughs and colds, as they tend to at this time of year. With the chaos around Covid testing and anxiety around rising infection rates, some parents have no option but to keep their children at home if they display even mild symptoms, particularly if the child or a family member is vulnerable.

This will undoubtedly result in more learning gaps across the board and further disruption for children who are already struggling. We have learning contingency plans for children having to stay at home, including online access to the curriculum and bespoke resource packs delivered to homes, but there

is no real substitute for being in school.

Teachers too have been affected by the testing chaos. We live with constant worry about whether we have enough cover each day, particularly with the high teacher-

pupil ratios needed in a special school. I can only echo the call on government to prioritise schools when it comes to testing, otherwise the important commitment to keeping them open will prove impossible, and many children will be seriously affected, educationally and in terms of their mental and social health.

But beyond Covid testing, delays in assessment for children needing an ASD diagnosis are also a grave concern. Woodside can only admit children with EHCPs and the pandemic has held up the system dealing with these. As a result, some children are not securing places at specialist schools as quickly as they should. We are doing our best

to work with the relevant agencies to mitigate these delays, but it is a challenge.

The pandemic hit when our schools were very much on an upward trajectory both academically and creatively. But rather than pushing forward as planned, we now have to focus on helping the children to make up on lost ground and assessing where gaps are. A huge part of the school day is now concentrated on the new regime: constant hand washing, staggered breaks, staggered lunchtimes and staggered home times. For children with additional needs, this is all-consuming and reduces the time we have to focus on learning and development.

Children across the board are being negatively affected by the disruption and uncertainty the Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed across the globe, but none more so than those with special needs.

Encouragingly, morale remains high. We know we are in it for the long haul for the benefit of the children. But without the wider support we need to stay fully open, ours and the system's resilience could be tested to breaking point.



Opinion

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CATH MURRAY

IntegratED programme lead, Centre for Social Justice



Two out of 27. How government is failing the inclusion test

The government has only implemented two of 27 recommendations from the Timpson review of school exclusion. Cath Murray offers suggestions for how it could improve its score

One of the Timpson review recommendations was quietly implemented over the summer. I like to think the change was made to pre-empt the findings of the online “Timpson tracker” we’ve been dropping hints about.

The tracker is now live, with researchers in the IntegratED partnership – a coalition of organisations working to reduce preventable school exclusions and improve alternative provision – having scoured government publications and found that just four of the 30 Timpson recommendations have been implemented fully, ten partially, and 16 not at all.

So just over 10 per cent completion, right?

Not quite. Two of the four weren’t actually up to the government to implement. One was up to the Youth Endowment Fund and they’d decided to do it before Timpson was published. Another was that Ofsted should judge schools’ leadership

‘inadequate’ if they off-roll pupils, which they included in their new framework.

That leaves two implemented out of a possible 27 that the government have the power/responsibility to do something about. Both are data changes.

“ The common feature of every good local system is multi-agency collaboration

One was about publishing exclusions data for previously looked-after children, which they did for the first time in July 2019, revealing that the permanent exclusion rate is 1.8 per 1000 pupils, compared to 1.0 for the general population.

The other was slipped into the census specifications over the summer with no fanfare, but it’s a significant change. Schools will no longer be allowed to record ‘other’ as a reason for exclusion (the second most-common reason for five years). They will be able to choose from some new and more specific categories instead, including ‘use or threat of use of an offensive weapon’ (which previously fell under ‘verbal abuse/threatening behaviour’), ‘abuse against sexual orientation

and gender identity’, ‘abuse relating to disability’, ‘inappropriate use of social media’, and ‘transgression of protective measures in place to protect public health’.

They may seem like small changes, but they are important; without good data we can’t even start to understand what’s happening. So here are a couple more that ministers could tick off with a stroke of the pen:

First, all moves out of school should be tracked. We’ve said this before. The DfE should publish ALL moves into AP alongside its annual exclusions data. When you do that, the overall figures more than double. Moves into home education should also be published.

Second, the school census should record how much time children spend in AP. There are more children dual-rolled in AP than are permanently excluded each year, but we know nothing about them – how long they spend there, whether they ever return to mainstream, or their academic outcomes. I’d go further than Timpson – I think records should include ‘on-site AP’ too.

But rather than look at what’s easy to do, let’s consider what would have

real impact.

For me, it has to be the ‘partnership working’ cluster (recommendations 2, 8, 9 and 13). Every government research report into exclusions and AP has concluded some variation on this: different systems are operating well (or badly) in different places, but the common feature of effective systems is collaborative multi-agency working, i.e. good communication between AP, mainstream and special schools, local authorities, police, health and social care.

Geoff Barton and Stephen Tierney, who respectively lead ASCL and the Headteachers’ Roundtable, bang on about exactly the same thing, albeit with more emotive language. Both talk about local leaders taking joint responsibility for the children in their area – seeing them as ‘our children’ rather than pinballs to be bounced around.

But partnership working will be less effective if alternative provision staff aren’t highly trained; or it’s cheaper to exclude than to support struggling children; or performance measures disincentivise schools to accept pupils through fair access panels. That’s why the Timpson report was so important: it identified various aspects of the system that need adjusting to create the right environment for local areas to take joint responsibility for their children.

So what can the government do? The answer is simple. Get ticking off those Timpson recommendations.

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Beyond wiping noses: Building an informed approach to pastoral leadership in schools

Author: Stephen Lane

Publisher: Crown House

Reviewer: Daniel Whittall, geography teacher and personal progress tutor, Trinity Sixth Form Academy

Our capacity for learning is fundamentally shaped both by our everyday lived experiences and by our preconceptions about the world around us. Learning, then, is about more than mere cognitive functioning, and taking the implications of this realisation seriously requires that educators attend to the pastoral curriculum as much as to what is traditionally understood as the academic curriculum.

Yet it is a plain fact that in many schools the pastoral is not considered to be an area of education that can be thought of in terms of curriculum. Indeed, for many teachers the pastoral is an afterthought, appearing as a burden to be carried and a distraction from the more important educational task of teaching our subjects to the best of our abilities.

Stephen Lane's important book *Beyond Wiping Noses* intends to challenge this understanding, and to make the case for the need to unhide the pastoral curriculum. By pastoral curriculum Lane means a planned and systematic approach to all aspects of the pastoral, from assemblies, head-of-year interactions and form time, to behaviour systems and lessons on citizenship, relationships, mental health, bullying and the like. His ambition is for schools to adopt 'an approach to the pastoral that gives serious consideration to theory and its practical application in our daily practice'. Lane uses the term 'pragmatic pastoral praxis' as shorthand for this approach. He also argues against utilitarian understandings of the pastoral that frame its importance in terms of improving academic results or readying students for the workplace.

Lane offers helpful overviews of

several areas of research that will be of use to educators. The chapter on bullying discusses the potential importance of the distinction between 'conflict' and bullying, and how conflict-informed approaches can provide a comprehensive and supportive approach to protecting students and resolving confrontations. The excellent chapter on mental health and wellbeing calls for all schools to have a designated senior lead for mental health, and his weighing of research on different approaches to behaviour management is judicious and broadly balanced.

Much of Lane's own praxis rests on a useful reading of the work of Gert Biesta, who has outlined three core functions of education: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. The pastoral bears most directly on socialisation, or the role of schools in supporting the integration of students into a wider community, and subjectification, or the role of schools in helping students to understand themselves as active agents in the world.

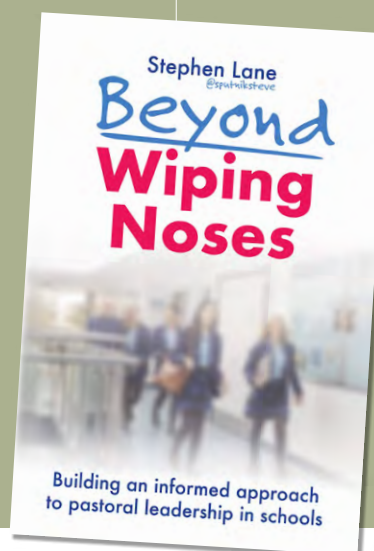
Beyond Biesta, Lane urges educators to embrace a 'post-critical pedagogy' which promotes 'a love for the world'. The argument for a post-critical pedagogy rests on a rejection of critical-theoretical approaches to education. Lane makes clear that he is 'sceptical of the pervasive critique of neoliberalism', though ironically this assertion is buttressed with references to Twitter rather than to actual research on neoliberalism and

education. One consequence of this is that Lane neglects the potentially important implications of work by critics of neoliberalism such as William Davies on happiness and Oli Mould on creativity that might have added to his pragmatic pastoral praxis.

The dismissal of critical pedagogy, defined as research that takes a critical stance towards existing institutions, means the book ends up neglecting other important areas of pastoral research. There is nothing of note, for example, on the Prevent Duty. Meanwhile, the chapter on character education neglects the important body of work by Ben Kisby and Lee Jerome, especially their recent book *The rise of character education in Britain*, which offers a comprehensive critical evaluation of the character education project.

Nevertheless, *Beyond Wiping Noses* is an important and well-written contribution. The book will introduce educators to excellent sources for research on the pastoral, including the journal *Pastoral Care in Education* and organisations such as the National

Association for Pastoral Care in Education and the Association for Citizenship Teaching. Lane's argument for the need to codify a planned and explicit pastoral curriculum is convincing, and it is to be hoped that more schools will be inspired by this book to draw up their own research-informed approaches to the pastoral aspect of education.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Jon Hutchinson, assistant head, Reach Academy Feltham and visiting fellow, Ambition Institute

@JON_HUTCHINSON_

Adapting to new routines, responding positively to stress, the importance of representation and tackling the word gap are Jon Hutchinson's top picks of this week's education topics

Teaching from behind the safety line
@teacherhead

Standing at the front of the classroom at the start of September felt like slipping on a favourite jumper; I'd missed it so much that I even gave an involuntary, beaming smile when a child responded to my instruction "Please write the date neatly on the left hand side of the page," with, "Which side shall we write the date on?" A couple of my go-to routines are much more difficult, and sometimes impossible because of the distancing restrictions. Happily, Tom Sherrington has pulled together a number of high-impact strategies that can be implemented in Covid-restricted classrooms. It's a snappy post, and I've found it so useful to have open whilst I plan to help think about what I, and the students, will be doing during lessons.

TOP BLOGS of the week

The (Anti)fragility of our schools
@davidwillows

Schools are, even at the best of times, beautifully complex and volatile places. Never mind no two days, in a school no two minutes are the same. Routine and structure can tame the complexity somewhat, but you can never be quite sure what is around the corner. So, returning to classrooms with new restrictions and protocols, after 6 months of remote learning, you might think that our schools may just buckle under the additional strain. David Willows argues in this blogpost that it is possible for schools to act like a human muscle; "not only can it withstand a degree of stress, it actually benefits from it and becomes stronger as a result." Happily, we are seeing schools across the country demonstrating this 'antifragility', thriving under our new circumstances. In the latter half of the blogpost, Willows offers a few practical tips to really flourish as an antifragile school.

Thank You Chadwick Boseman
@actionheroteach

Back in May, the murder of George Floyd prompted a worldwide conversation about anti-black racism and the role that schools

need to play as anti-racist organisations. Many schools took a good hard look at, amongst other things, the curriculum that they were offering children and realised that we needed to do better. Then, at the end of August, Black Panther star Chadwick Boseman passed away aged only 43. The outpouring of grief was profound, with Boseman's final tweet becoming the most liked post on twitter ever. In this post, Karl C Pupé reflects on the impact that Boseman had on his students and him. "I remember other kids I grew up with saying "shut-up you African" as an insult. But Chadwick & those that worked on Black Panther changed the zeitgeist bringing African colour, music & culture to billions on the planet." Pupé's eulogy reminds us just how much positive "representation matters".

Covid-19 and the literacy Matthew Effect
@HuntingEnglish

During lockdown, the vast majority of schools did their absolute level best to provide pupils with learning experiences that would allow pupils to continue to progress in their studies whilst at home. We all knew that what we were providing was sub-optimal, and that many families, through nothing but circumstance, found themselves unable to access the same level of education as others. In this blog, Alex Quigley refocuses our attention on the word gap, sometimes known as the Matthew Effect, named after the gospel passage. Quigley acknowledges that this persistent problem "preceded our Covid-19 era – and they will last far longer than the virus and its constraints on our society". However, the lockdown would no doubt have exacerbated the disparity. After outlining the challenges, Quigley suggests "first prioritising reading for whole school literacy for the year ahead".

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

Research

The Centre for Education and youth will review a research development each half term. Contact them @TheCFEY if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

How can school-charity partnerships help tackle lost learning?

Susannah Hardyman, CEO, Action Tutoring and Alix Robertson, associate, Centre for Education and Youth

With students back in school after a year of disruption, teachers have their work cut out for them. Many will be trying to carefully balance the increased need for pastoral care following this year's distressing events, with the desire to get young people back on track academically.

How to tackle 'lost learning' has been on the minds of many in the sector, and worries will only have increased in light of findings from the Education Policy Institute that even before Covid-19, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers had stopped closing for the first time in a decade.

One way to address this challenge is through school and charity partnerships. Earlier this year, Action Tutoring and the Centre for Education and Youth brought together 22 school and charity leaders to explore how these connections can be maximised to provide extra support for pupils. Our roundtable event showed that partnerships between charities and schools can be hugely beneficial when they work closely and have trust in each other.

Since then the National Tutoring Programme has been announced; a government-funded, sector-led initiative to support schools to address the impact of Covid-19 on pupils' learning. Action Tutoring hopes to be a part of this initiative, along with many other educational charities, and the roundtable's conclusions can benefit all those involved in delivering on its promise.

The programme provides a

whole new opportunity for partnerships.

Throughout this academic year schools will be able to build new links with high-quality tutoring organisations across the country to help pupils who have suffered the most from school closures.

Certain barriers need to be overcome to make the most of these partnerships. School staff are busier now than ever, therefore any external provision needs to cause as little disruption as possible and avoid placing additional administrative burden on teachers. So how can this be achieved? The roundtable event highlighted a number of key recommendations from both school and charity leaders.

Agree on aims and how to achieve them

Organisations looking to support schools at this time need to be direct and realistic about what they can deliver, when, and what their non-negotiables are. They must make sure that goals are agreed on upfront, as one school leader explained: "Alignment is really important. Is it going to be something that we have to rejig what we do? If the answer to that is yes, is it definitely going to be worth it?"

Streamline communication

Nominating key points of contact from the outset is essential. Our roundtable contributors suggested that one 'link' person on each side of the partnership was the best way to keep communication smooth. At present, it is vital that partners clearly outline their Covid safeguarding procedures in advance.

It also helps if external staff are informed about the working of the school, so their interventions are in line with school policies. One charity

leader explained that understanding expectations around uniform or behaviour, as well as being familiar with the timetable, helped them to operate consistently within these boundaries. They advised "over-communication in terms of logistics".

Reflect, review, refine

Our roundtable highlighted that it is important to build in appropriate opportunities for reflection on how work is progressing and whether students are getting the right support. Schools and their partners should schedule meetings at key points in the year to make sure everything is on track.

Demonstrate impact

School leaders appreciated clear impact evaluations from charity partners, especially when communicating outcomes to governors or trustees. The design of these evaluations should be drawn up collaboratively and schools should aim to share pupil data, even if it is in an anonymised form. Meanwhile, partners should bolster quantitative findings with rich qualitative information. One school leader explained that they found "before and after quotes" from young people the "most powerful" feedback.

Our roundtable attendees worked around logistical challenges to build strong and successful relationships, which provided young people with tailored support. Using the approaches above, schools and other organisations can work together through this busy term and beyond to help students overcome the turmoil they have experienced in 2020.

A summary of the findings from the Action Tutoring and CfEY roundtable event can be found <https://bit.ly/33MyLje>.



Susannah Hardyman



Alix Robertson

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

Conspicuous in its absence from the government's priority list for coronavirus testing was any mention whatsoever of school pupils.

Teachers were relieved to find that they made the list – albeit behind NHS and care workers – but the omission of pupils was glaring.

The government appeared to have completely forgotten that one of its own ministers, Nick Gibb, just a few weeks ago promised that pupils would be prioritised for testing along with school staff.

Never mind, it's not like anybody actually listens to what ministers say on national radio, is it?

TUESDAY

Shadow education secretary Kate Green is in hot water after she was recorded telling Labour activists Covid-19 was a "good crisis", and that the party should "use the opportunity" to point out the government's failings on education.

The Conservative party has demanded that Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer make her apologise for her insensitive words – but so far, radio silence.

Sources say Green is reluctant to apologise for pointing out that when you starve schools of funding for 10 years, maybe they won't be as prepared for a national crisis as they could be.

But one would think Green would be smart enough to tread carefully and avoid silly comments, given what

happened to her predecessor

Rebecca Long-Bailey, Green's predecessor, had to be fired after an "antisemitic" tweet in June.

WEDNESDAY

Boris Johnson ducked and swerved questions about problems with pupils getting coronavirus tests when he sparred with Starmer at the despatch box.

Asked how the country had got to the stage where pupils were having to stay away from school because of their inability to get a test, the PM instead waffled with his usual stump speech about how schools are "safe", while pointing to a recent statement issued by the country's chief medical officers.

Rather embarrassingly though, the CMOs' statement makes very clear that the "prompt availability of testing" is "key" to the safe return of pupils to schools. Ask anyone in the schools sector and they'll tell you there's nothing prompt, or indeed available, about testing.

Maybe the PM knew the statement wasn't the zinger he made it out to be but decided to use it anyway. Or maybe he just hadn't read it.

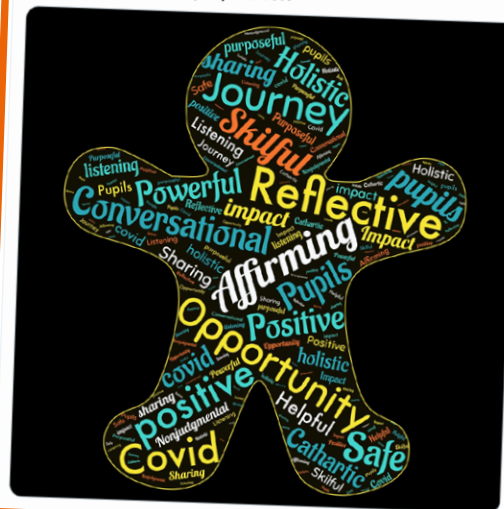
THURSDAY

Congratulations to Ofsted, which managed to make school leaders howl with rage with something as innocuous as a picture of a gingerbread man.

The watchdog has been keen to reassure schools that its "interim visits", taking place this term instead of full inspections, aren't going to be

Ofsted
@Ofstednews

Here's the reaction from school staff to one of our autumn visits – for which you DON'T need to undergo training, hire a consultant or prepare for:



burdensome or stressful for schools.

So, some bright spark in Ofsted HQ thought it would be a good idea to make a word cloud from all the positive feedback received about pilots of the visits carried out last week.

The cherry on the cake, or we should say, the gingerbread man, was that the word cloud was arranged in the form of the popular biscuit.

Needless to say the gimmick went down like a tonne of heavy cakes with union leaders.

"Oh for goodness sake," groaned the NEU's Dr Mary Bousted on Twitter.

"Just stop. Just do the right thing. Stay away from schools and colleges. They have quite enough to cope without your nonsense."

Ofsted has since said the graphic was actually put together by a school that had volunteered for a trial (also known as, 'not me, guv').

Director of the HertsCam Network



HertsCam is an innovative teacher-led organisation dedicated to improving practice in schools. It is a registered charity which provides programmes of support for 'non-positional teacher leadership' in the UK and in many countries around the world. It also engages in advocacy for teacher leadership through its publications and by participating in conferences and international events.

HertsCam is currently inviting applications for the post of Director. We are looking for a dynamic and energetic individual who can take our organisation to the next level. The director would oversee the management of the organisation and provide effective intellectual and strategic leadership to develop the scope and reach of our programmes and activities.

This part-time post would involve working from home, participation in meetings and attending events. Currently meetings and events are virtual due to the pandemic. The pattern of work would be flexible and, in the first instance, will be remunerated on a consultancy basis, the budget for which currently stands at £12-15k for the academic year 2020-21. We anticipate that the extent of the work, and therefore of the remuneration, would grow as the scope and reach of programmes and activities grows.

The closing date for application is 9th October 2020. Requests for an application pack and/or to arrange an informal enquiry should be addressed to the **Network Administrator: hwalker@hertscamnetwork.org.uk**.

For further information, please visit our website: www.hertscam.org.uk

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL CURRICULUM AND INNOVATION, LIVINGSTONE ACADEMY, BOURNEMOUTH

Hours: Full time role

Start date: January 2021 or Easter 2021

Salary: Negotiable, equivalent to Assistant Principal



**LIVINGSTONE
ACADEMY
BOURNEMOUTH**
an Aspirations Academy



Aspirations is a multi academy trust with a deep sense of moral purpose, determined that children receive an excellent education.

Livingstone Academy Bournemouth is an innovative new school for children aged 4 to 18 opening in September 2021 in the heart of Bournemouth. Our ambition is to ensure that all young people leave school equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in their future lives and careers in the digital age. Young people must be creative, critical thinkers who can create technology as well as consume it.

Our inspirational Director of Digital Curriculum and Innovation will work closely with experts to design and develop ground breaking new curriculum resources and approaches to learning.

The role is pivotal to the development of the curriculum at Livingstone Academy Bournemouth which will be pioneering in its approach to equipping young people with the knowledge and know how to succeed in their future lives and careers in the digital age. We aim to revolutionise education by bridging the gap between industry and education,

capitalising on the best tools and technologies that the gaming and broader creative digital industries have at their disposal

Learn more about Livingstone Academy at
www.livingstone-aspirations.org

If you would like to discuss the Trust's vision for this role before applying, please contact Steve Kenning, Managing Director, at stevekenning@aspirationsacademies.org or on 07753 496548.

Visit <https://www.aspirationsacademies.org/work-for-us/> to find out more and apply.

Closing date for applications is 4pm on Wednesday 7th October 2020.

Interviews due to take place on Wednesday 14th October 2020 at Aspirations Academies Trust, HQ – World Business Centre 3, Newall Road, Heathrow Airport, TW6 2TA



The Haberdashers' Aske's Federation is the UK's longest-serving network of state schools, leading five primary, four secondary and a teaching school in South East London and Kent, each proud to embody a rich history of education excellence.

Our heritage dates as far back as the 1680s. A haberdasher, Robert Aske, left a substantial sum to build a school and educate 20 disadvantaged young people – giving them the chance to better themselves and lead fulfilling lives. This act of selflessness continues to give us purpose to this day.

Over the years, we have built a reputation for educational excellence. We have developed our practices, expanded our curriculum and adapted with the times, to produce an all-round education which is pioneering and relevant to this day.

The Federation is at a pivotal point in its journey of school improvement with a new CEO leading the Federation, there is a feeling of genuine excitement across our schools. We are looking to recruit three critical Senior Leadership roles to join us on this journey:

Primary Principal, Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Temple Grove Free School

We are looking for a Primary Principal to lead Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Temple Grove Free School. The Free School is now well established as an over-subscribed and highly successful Primary school. It is an 'outstanding' school, which serves its local community well.

Primary Principal, Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Temple Grove

We are looking for a Primary Principal to lead Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Temple Grove. This is a truly exhilarating opportunity for a driven and dynamic school leader to lead the school's journey of improvement to becoming a school where children can flourish and achieve their very best.

Mathematics Consultant, Atlas Teaching School Alliance

We are looking for a Mathematics Consultant to join the Federation's central consultant team. This role would suit a candidate with extensive experience and understanding of the Mathematics curriculum, assessment and delivery. As a Federation Consultant, the successful candidate will provide practical support, guidance and consultancy in each of the Federation's secondary schools and to schools in our wider network.

Bound by the Haberdashers name, our inclusive community in the heart of South East London is alive with diverse backgrounds, personalities and passions. We are building a culture where pupils, parents, teachers and staff selflessly serve each other, centred on traditional values and behaviours.

Join the Haberdashers' Trust and belong to something more

- An extensive support network, opening doors to countless growth opportunities.
- An established name, which you can be proud to work for
- An unrivalled legacy, born out of Robert Aske's vision to reach young people through education.

Each of these posts are suitable for leaders who have the highest of expectations for what can be achieved. Successful candidates will be able to motivate and inspire others with a clear vision, and have determination to drive school improvement at pace.

If you are motivated by working in a challenging and supportive environment where the key outcome is our shared desire to achieve the very best for our children and young people to secure life chances from which they may not otherwise benefit, if you are a talented, tenacious and passionate leader, we hope you will consider applying to Haberdashers' Aske's Federation.

Join the Haberdashers' community. Belong to something more.





FALKLAND
ISLANDS
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL

Principal of Secondary

Contract term: Up to 4 years

Start date: January 2021 or April 2021

This role is a unique opportunity to live and work overseas, leading a secondary school in an English school system.

We will provide:

- an environment for an effective leader to flourish
- competitive salary Grade A – ranges from £60,302 to £76,209 plus annual 25% gratuity at the successful completion of contract, maximum annual package £95,260
- collaborative executive leadership team
- financially secure school
- favourable income tax rates
- a unique and beautiful environment to live and work
- airfares for the post holder and dependants at the beginning and end of contract, as well as airfares for return flights after every full year of the contract
- a relocation grant
- accommodation to rent
- free education locally for dependent children to GCSE level and possible allowance for overseas studies thereafter

Closing Date: Applications by Sunday 27th September 2020

The successful applicant will join a well-resourced, financially secure school with a supportive staff team, small class sizes and students who are keen to learn. You will work closely with the Executive Headteacher and Principal of Primary to ensure all learners have opportunities to reach their full potential. We are looking for a school leader who will build on the recent, excellent progress and ensure it is embedded into the core of our school to secure a sustainable future and good outcomes for all. The capacity to innovate and shape pathways for our all-ability intake is essential. The successful candidate will inspire the Senior Leadership Team, work closely with the Primary School and engage the entire community in the pursuit of continued excellence.

School Website: <https://www.secondary.ac.fk/>

For more information please contact Kim Greenland

E-mail: kgreenland@sec.gov.fk or **Tel:** 00 500 27420

Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of School Improvement

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Location: New Forest and Southampton

Salary: L25 - L31 (£74,103 - £85,827, subject to national pay awards)

Full Time (Teachers Pay and Conditions)



An exciting opportunity has arisen to join an established, successful and growing Multi Academy Trust. Trustees are looking to appoint a Deputy Chief Executive Officer to enhance the already substantial and successful Inspire Team.

We are a truly collaborative, values led Trust, thriving on the positive relationships and willing involvement of like-minded professionals. We are looking to recruit an individual to champion school improvement, with the insight to identify and promote best practice, and the courage to challenge our schools to improve even further, by leading partnership working across the Trust's academies and within the wider system leaders' network.

This newly created role is an exciting opportunity for an exceptional and inspirational primary school improvement professional who has the aspiration, integrity and ability to help support the ongoing improvements across the Trust's academies. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer will be at the heart of this work.

We are looking for a Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Director of School Improvement who shares our values and who has the drive and resilience to achieve our strategic vision. They will be committed to implementing educational excellence across our Trust, supported by the CEO, the Trust Strategic Leadership Team and a committed Board. I hope you share our sense of excitement at the opportunities that lie ahead to further build and grow our successes.

Applicant letter, full job description, person specification and application form can be downloaded from our website at www.inspirelearningpartnership.org/deputy-chief-executive-officer/

Please return your completed application by email to hr@ILPartnership.org

Closing Date: 12th October 2020 at noon

Interview Date: 3rd/4th November 2020



Southway Primary School
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Principal

Do you have a passion for school improvement and a proven track record in raising standards?

Southway Primary Academy is looking for an ambitious, inspirational, and innovative Principal to drive rapid school improvement and further raise the quality of education for all pupils. As part of United Learning, a national group of academies and independent schools, our mission being 'the best in everyone' and to improve the life chances of the children and young people in their care.

Southway is a large school with the capacity for 630 pupils in Bognor Regis.

As Principal, you will demonstrate a clear commitment to Southway and its community. You will model outstanding leadership and set high expectations for students and staff. Your professionalism, expertise and enthusiasm for education will be evident each and every day.

If you are looking for an exciting, challenging and highly rewarding role within a Group that offers a strong commitment to professional development, we encourage you to visit us.

Find out more and apply
<https://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/current-vacancies>



Chief Executive Officer

Remuneration: Competitive Blackpool

Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) is the major educational provider in the Fylde peninsula. It has now received approval to become an academy sponsor in its own right.

FCAT is looking for an inspirational leader, with vision and imagination who understands the unique structure of a Multi Academy Trust, builds relationships and influences others. The CEO would work closely with the board and the chair in setting and driving a strategy of relentless improvement.

The individual will be comfortable with a corporate governance style and the required financial reporting and planning regime. Education or CEO experience is not essential however, candidates must demonstrate ability to lead a multi-disciplinary organisation and drive its growth and development.

For an informal and confidential conversation please contact our advising partners at GatenbySanderson: Ross Highfield or Paul Aristides on 07891 138 886.

To apply please visit www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe62312.1/chief-executive-officer-44/

Closing date: Monday 7 October 2020.

GatenbySanderson



Head of Academy

Pennyman Primary Academy is a large, complex academy for over 400 children. This includes a specialist designated unit provision for around

55 children. Therefore, Pennyman is a fully inclusive and exciting learning community, where unlocking each child's unique potential is at the heart of learning. This is reflected in the Pennyman motto 'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day'.

This Head of Academy role is varied and complex in scope and would therefore be ideally suited to an innovative, forward-thinking school leader who has an unequivocal commitment to serve children and their families with a commendable proven impact. Being able to demonstrate this for outcomes and life opportunities for children in areas of disadvantage, including for those with special needs would be advantageous.

Visits to the academy are actively encouraged and should be arranged by contacting **Mrs Lucy Simpson**, PA to the Executive Head Teacher, on **01642 304406**. During the visits, masks will be provided and there will be no access to classroom bubbles.



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Are you an inspirational leader with a passion for inclusion and improving the life chances of all pupils? If so, this is a chance to join the high achieving team at Avanti Trust Schools.

We are looking for two inspirational leaders with a passion for inclusion and improving the life chances of all pupils.

We wish to appoint an excellent Assistant Headteacher in Frome & Exeter to lead whole school SEND and ensure that pupils receive the support they need to be successful.

Avanti Park is a community (non-denominational) middle (deemed primary) 3-13 maintained school located in the Somerset town of Frome.

Avanti Hall is a community (non-denominational) all through 4 - 16 maintained school located on the outskirts of Exeter.

If this sounds like you then head to our careers page avanti.org.uk/careers or get in touch with carolyn.dickinson@avanti.org.uk for more information.

Closing Date: Midday (12 noon)
Monday 28th September 2020.