

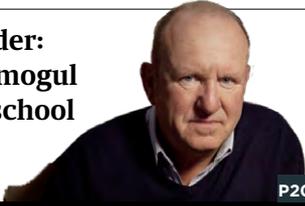
SCHOOLS WEEK

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

No exams, but boards raise fees



School Raider: the games mogul opening a school



P20-22

Ofqual: Don't feed teachers to the lions



P23

Skills white paper: what schools need to know



P8

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UNLOCKING SCHOOLS: REWRITING THE PLAN



SCHOOLS WEEK

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Involve us in reopening plan, leaders tell ministers

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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INVESTIGATES

Leaders have urged the government to hand them back freedoms to make decisions on reopening schools – with staggered returns and rota systems being touted again.

Ministers have refused to give a firm date for when schools will reopen, although education secretary Gavin Williamson said this week he hoped pupils would start returning before Easter.

With hopes of a daily testing regime to keep close contacts of positive cases in the classroom now on hold, attention is turning towards coming up with a strategy to get schools open again.

Schools Week understands unions were consulted on the issue at a meeting with the Department for Education yesterday.

Martyn Oliver, chief executive of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust, said he would like to see exam classes and year 6 return, "on a rota, leaving the extent of which to the professional judgment of headteachers who know their context best".

Geoff Barton, leader of the ASCL union, said that high on the priority list was for leaders to have flexibility to make decisions "without it feeling that they're then put on the naughty step".

"I think we ought to be discussing something more than either everybody's in school or everybody's not," he said, adding that a phased return would be "reassuring" for parents.

Deputy chief medical officer Dr Jenny Harries said this week that it is likely any easing of lockdown would include "regional separation of interventions".

But she added they will be "right at the top" of the priority list.

However, a team of scientists led by the University of Birmingham warned that school reopening policies worldwide lacked a "rigorous evidence base". They want randomised control trials to create evidence to inform political decisions.

Their report pointed to "wide variation" between countries. For example, Swedish schools remained open to under-16s throughout the pandemic, while Italy and Spain chose to keep schools closed until



last autumn.

Other European countries are also struggling. Earlier this month, AP reported that authorities in Berlin had been forced to backtrack on plans to partially resume in-school teaching following protests from parents, teachers and the national government.

The government suffered a blow to its plans this week after daily testing of contacts was paused because of high transmission rates and concerns over how accurate the rapid tests are. This was seen as a key tenet of keeping more pupils in the classroom and headteachers felt it worked well in trials.

Sir Jon Coles, chief executive of England's biggest academy trust United Learning, said daily testing was "the one thing that seemed to us to potentially be really very helpful".

However, mass testing of staff and pupils to pick up asymptomatic cases will continue.

On Thursday last week, 21 per cent of primary pupils were still in school – five times higher than the last lockdown.

Dr Dougal Hargreaves, the DfE's deputy chief scientific adviser, told MPs on Wednesday that schools had "broadly, a system [of controls] that was working".

But Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT union, said: "Should we be considering rotas rather than bubbles?"

"I think we need a proper debate about that. We should be using the time that we've got with restricted access to be having that debate."

Pressed on whether there was a case for enhanced measures, including face



Dr Jenny Harries

coverings in classrooms, Hargreaves admitted the "big question" was over the new variant.

"We will know more about that within the next few weeks. At the moment, the emphasis is on doing all the things we were doing last term, but doing them better because we have a little bit less margin for error with the new variant."

But Professor Russell Viner, a member of the government's SAGE committee, said the approach should be different to last summer. "We should be thinking about the schools being first to open and not opening as part of a broader reopening," he added.

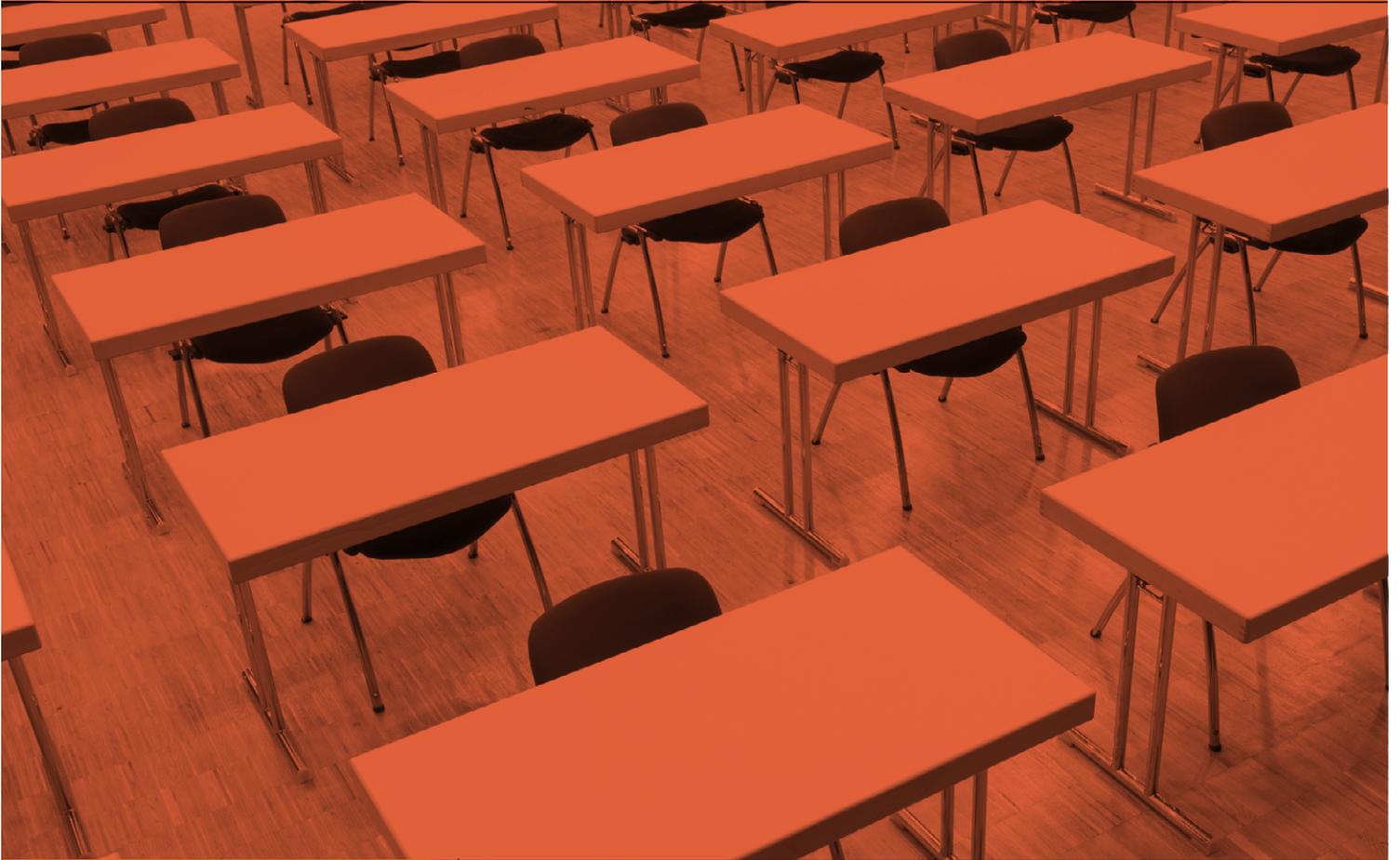
Coles added if the government was "serious" about prioritising schools, they should open them "before opening anything else".

One potential solution to reopening schools was vaccinating teachers. But Harries, when asked about it this week, said vaccinating staff was "not the limiting factor to opening schools, it is community transmission rates. They weren't shut because there was a specific risk in that setting."

Investigation



A new fiasco in the making? The flaws with Ofqual's exams plan



SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

The government has finally published its consultation revealing the plan to replace exams this year. In some quarters it has done little to quell the fear that we're heading for another fiasco – but this time, with teachers left to cop the blame. *Schools Week* investigates ...

Move over mutant algorithm, we have a new scapegoat...

A key concern is that teachers are being primed to be the fall guy – in place of the so-called "mutant" algorithm which politicians blamed for last year's fiasco. Teachers will be tasked with coming

up with a grade for each pupil based on evidence including coursework and mini-exams.

While teachers have been promised support and guidance from exam boards, there are big concerns about how any sort of consistency across grades can be ensured.

There is also anger that this plan B hadn't been enacted earlier in the year, rather than cobbled together this month.

Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary at the National Education Union, said collecting evidence across the country will prove "much harder now" than if schools had been supported to do it from the start of the academic year.

Ofqual's interim chief regulator, Simon Lebus, admitted teachers have a "heavier responsibility" under the plan.

He said the quality assurance arrangements – whereby exam boards

sample the approaches and grades set by schools – alongside support from the boards would be "so important" to help teachers in "what is undoubtedly quite a burdensome task".

But Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, said the risk is that the "hardworking teaching profession is fed to the lions".

'Pandora's box' of appeals

Students can appeal to their school, but grades would only be changed if the original judgment was "not legitimate".

The appeal should be considered by a "competent" person not involved in the assessment, which could include someone from another school.

If a student is still not happy, they can appeal to exam boards – but only if the

Continued on next page

Investigation



school has “not acted in line with the exam board’s procedural requirements”, not to challenge the merits of the teacher assessment.

Mary Curnock Cook, former chief executive of university admissions service UCAS, said the “sheer volume of appeals might overwhelm the system.”

Tom Middlehurst, curriculum and inspection specialist at heads’ union ASCL, said it could put schools in an “extremely difficult situation” of having to organise an appeals system against “the grades they awarded, when common sense would suggest that this should be done by another body”.

Boustead said a “pandora’s box of appeals” could cause “great anguish and workload for seemingly very little benefit”, but suggested exam boards could instead run the process.

Lebus himself, in an interview with *Schools Week*, admitted there are concerns over the extra workload, adding an “adversarial appeals process” would put schools in an “invidious position because it can be corrosive of trust and good relations”.

Meanwhile professor Barnaby Lenon, dean of education at the University of Buckingham, who sits on Ofqual’s standards advisory group, warned the timescales to achieve all this could be too tight. Ofqual is proposing to bring results day forward, possibly to early July, so that appeals could be submitted immediately.

‘Huge task for exams boards’

Under the proposals, exam boards would set papers for pupils, marked by teachers, to feed into the grading process. Ofqual is mulling over whether to make them compulsory, too.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of heads union ASCL, said the papers would need to be “exceptionally well designed”, adding: “All of this adds up to a huge and complex task for the exam boards.”

The consultation suggested a combination of questions from past papers and new questions could be used.

Past papers have their advantages because exam boards already have the data on how children performed, to use as



a comparison to how children perform this year. But they are complete papers and may not evenly cover all the topics students have studied.

It is also understood that the Joint Council for Qualifications has set up a working group to find commonalities between the exam boards to help create guidance.

But Middlehurst highlighted a conflicting issue in the plans. “On one hand, having common assessments would ensure greater consistency in how grades are awarded,” he said. “But on the other hand, it may be more difficult to take into account the differing extents to which students have lost out on learning during the pandemic.”

Lebus reckons the more widely mini-exams are taken the “easier, I think, the task becomes of ensuring fairness across the piece and that students are being held to a consistent standard whatever school or college they are studying in”.

What about learning loss?

There has been little news on who will make up the DfE expert group, announced before Christmas, to help come up with plans on differential learning loss.

Sam Freedman, a former government advisor, said Ofqual has

acknowledged a key reason exams had to be cancelled was the “huge and differential loss of learning suffered over the course of the past year”.

In last year’s centre-assessed grades, teachers were asked to come up with a grade they thought a student would have achieved had they sat their exams.

This year, Ofqual wants the grade to be based on the teachers’ assessment of how they are performing now.

But Freedman sums it up like this: “In other words, it’s not possible to assess the course but the only way of providing a grade is to assess the course.”

Instead, Freedman says the government should – for A-level students – work with universities to ensure that offers are not conditional on precise grades, “but are much more flexible”.

Universities UK said universities will be actively considering any additional support needed for students to transition, with some universities already announcing they were going to lower A-level requirements.

On the issue of fairness, Lebus said exam boards would be key in providing quality assurance. He also signalled that the ambition is to keep outcomes broadly in line with 2020 and confirmed a final plan will be announced in the week of February 22.



Mary Curnock Cook



Sam Freedman

News

EXCLUSIVE



'Ridiculous': exam boards slammed for raising fees at a time of crisis

SAMANTHA BOOTH
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Schools will pay millions of pounds more in exam fees this year after prices were increased – despite exams not going ahead and teachers being expected to mark any assessments that might be set.

However, boards have said fees had to be published now so that schools could set budgets. They pledged to return any savings once exact plans for their involvement for producing grades this year are known.

AQA, the UK's largest provider of academic qualifications, has increased fees for some of its popular subjects across GCSE and A-level by about five per cent. GCSE English Literature has seen an 11 per cent rise.

It means an average size secondary, with 200 year-11s taking nine GCSEs, faces paying an extra £3,870.

Meanwhile, Pearson has increased fees by about two per cent.

Geoff Barton, general secretary at the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "It is very debatable about whether exam boards should be charging upfront full fees this year at all, given that they won't be doing any marking, but the notion of an increase in fees at such a time is ridiculous.

"School and college leaders are furious about this issue and we would urge the exam boards to rethink this matter urgently."

Ofqual is consulting on how teachers will provide grades for pupils this year. It has proposed that exam boards will produce papers for pupils to sit. However, these would be marked by teachers. Exam boards will also provide guidance and training to teachers.

But Pearson and AQA have published their exam fees this week.

With AQA, a mathematics GCSE has risen from £36.50 last summer to £38.35 – an increase of £1.85.

Across nine popular subjects at GCSE, schools could face an additional £19.35 per pupil.

Schools Week analysis shows that if the entry numbers for 16-year-olds are the same as last year's, from these nine subjects alone, AQA – a not-for-profit organisation – could rake in an extra £4.17 million.

At A-level, the entry fee for mathematics has risen from £116.45 to £122.30 – an increase of £5.85.

Mark Bedlow, AQA's chief operating officer, said: "We work hard to keep any increases to a minimum. Setting fees for this year was difficult as we don't yet know the arrangements and what they'll cost – but schools need to get their entries in and need to know fees in order to do that."

Bedlow said the "simplest option was to set fees at the level we would have if exams had gone ahead. As an education charity, we have no wish to profit from the pandemic so, as with last summer's fees, where we refunded £42 million to schools and colleges, we'll return any money we don't need."

However, as revealed by *Schools Week* – exams boards returned to schools just 25 per cent of fees for last year's cancelled exams.

At Pearson, a mathematics GCSE entry fee has risen from £41.50 to £42.40 – an increase of 90p.

Across nine GCSE subjects, this could cost an extra £7 per pupil. If entry numbers are the same as last summer, these subjects could bring in an extra £569,571 for the board.

A Pearson spokesperson said: "We have no wish to benefit financially from the cancellation of exams this year and will be passing any net savings back to schools.

"We know schools continue to face extraordinary challenges and have kept our prices as competitive as possible."

The boards said they published their fees as it is a regulator requirement for exam boards to give schools and colleges notice in support of their planning.

But Stephen Morales, chief executive at the Institute of School Business Leadership, said an increase feels "poorly timed and poor judgment".

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An extra year could 'solve lost learning'

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An extra year at university or college could solve pupils' lost learning, a social mobility champion has suggested.

Sammy Wright, the social mobility commissioner for schools and higher education, said calculating grades under this year's plans to replace exams without looking at learning loss and catch-up "leaves young people at risk of catastrophic unfairness".

Writing in a blog published on the government's website, Wright suggests a fully funded extra year in education such as "expanding and covering tuition fees for the foundation year that many universities already offer and adding a year of free post-16 provision".

"Alternatively, we could provide an extra term on all post-16 and higher education (HE) courses. This could be made possible by increasing the funding of post-16 providers to enable them to provide more hours of teaching per week, and by adjusting course completion dates for HE."

He said this could be optional and that much of the needed infrastructure was already in place.

He plans to approach the Department for Education within the next week. The Social Mobility Commission has also suggested funding schools so pupils could resit a year.

Mary Curnock Cook, a former UCAS chief, said universities and colleges needed to know quickly if they were to offer more year zero or foundation year places so they could plan resources and programmes.

She believed many providers would be keen.

But Diana Beech, the chief executive at London Higher, which represents 40 higher education institutes in the capital, said the idea was "too simplistic".

"While this added time may allow more disadvantaged students to catch up with their peers academically, it inevitably delays them from graduating 'on time' and establishing themselves in valuable careers."

Bill Watkin, the chief executive of the Sixth Form College Association, said providers would also need a way to identify students most in need of support.

'Groundhog Day': DfE to get tough on Baker Clause (again)

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools will face "tougher formal action" if they refuse other providers access to talk to pupils about study options.

The government's skills white paper, published yesterday, also reveals careers education will be extended to year 7s to make sure it is "embedded in the life of every school and college".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the ASCL school leaders' union, said the sector seemed caught "in an educational version of Groundhog Day over the Baker Clause", and said the white paper was "heavy on the language of enforcement and light on the language of solutions".

A "three-point-plan" will enforce the Baker clause, with "tougher formal action against non-compliance".

However, the white paper has few further details apart from a pledge to publish new statutory guidance.

Named after Lord Baker, a former education secretary, the clause (which became law in 2018) forces schools to let colleges, apprenticeship providers and university technical colleges talk to pupils about potential study routes. It also requires them to have a plan to arrange visits at "important transition points" in the school year.

The paper says that a new minimum requirement will be introduced "about who is



to be given access to which pupils and when". Financial support for careers guidance will also be conditional on compliance with the clause.

Other than warning letters from ministers, little action has been taken against schools that flout the rules - although one school faced Ofsted's wrath in May last year.

The government also plans to introduce careers advice earlier, lowering the age range to year 7 pupils. Currently, it must be offered from year 8.

It will also ask Ofsted to undertake a "thematic review to provide an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and colleges and provide recommendations to improve practice".

The government will also work with education and business "to develop a shared approach to careers education that will support young people to understand the modern workplace and develop the career management skills and

attributes they need to compete in today's labour market".

There is also a pledge to "equip the teaching profession to support a whole-school or college approach to careers education by building careers awareness into every stage of their professional development, from initial training to education leadership".

However, the white paper acknowledges that the careers landscape is "confusing", with "no single place you can go to get government-backed, comprehensive careers information".

Advice young people received from family and friends was "often outdated" and varied according to their socio-economic background.

The National Careers Service (NCS) website will be updated to "become a single source of government-assured careers information for young people and adults".

The government's Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) will encourage use of the site, which will include interactive careers maps to show the options that "technical or higher technical education can open the door to".

To improve local and national alignment between the CEC and the NCS, Professor Sir John Holman has been appointed as an independent strategic adviser on careers guidance, working closely with both organisations.

The government has also pledged to continue to extend coverage of its careers hubs programme, and to invest in "more high-quality training" for careers leaders.

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

New university admission plans revealed

Exams could be "compressed" or sat earlier in the year to allow more time to process university applications under new proposals for post-qualification admissions (PQA).

The Department for Education opened its consultation into the proposed changes yesterday.

One option would allow pupils to apply to university after receiving their A-level results, while a second would allow them to make "pre-qualification" applications. However, they would not receive offers after results were announced.

The first model would need a longer application window created by moving A-level results day forward to the end of July and pushing back university term start dates to "no earlier than the first week of October".

This would allow "at least six weeks" for applications to be processed and offers made.

The DfE said it was exploring options to move results day earlier with the preferred route being "to compress the exam timetable, the marking period and the requirement for UCAS to receive results data

well in advance of results day".

Exams could also be held earlier in the year, but the support needed for students to choose courses and to complete applications could affect teachers' terms and conditions.

Under the second model, applications would be made during term-time, as now, but offers would come after results' day.

Students would need "significantly less support" over the summer with their applications, therefore impacting teachers less.

The consultation closes on May 13.

Results are in: schools 50x more likely for praise

JAMES CARR

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EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted has received 50 times more emails from parents praising schools' remote education than from those complaining about it.

Figures obtained by *Schools Week* show that since Gavin Williamson's call two weeks ago for parents to flag any concerns, Ofsted has received 13,000 bouquets – and about 260 brickbats.

The flood of positive reports followed a social media campaign that turned the tables on the under-fire secretary of state and encouraged parents to use the process to praise teachers instead.

On January 6 Williamson told the House of Commons that the duty of schools to provide remote education would be "enforced by Ofsted". His announcement came two days after schools partially closed in the latest lockdown.

He said while issues should be raised with a teacher and then headteacher, if they remained unresolved the parent should report the matter to Ofsted.

The watchdog was last week forced to pull in extra staff to help sort through the influx of emails, which some said increased "the chance of a genuine safeguarding risk taking longer to be resolved".

The 260 or so complaints will now be considered.

Ofsted may contact the school and reserves the right to inspect, but it is hoped that follow-up inspections will not be necessary in most cases.

Meanwhile, Ofsted this week released new guidelines for how its remote monitoring inspections will take place this term, including inspectors joining online lessons to "understand how education is being provided by the school".

Inspectors may also have discussions with staff and pupils – remotely or in person – about their work and experiences.

However, the guidance also said: "Cameras will normally be used in



remote meetings. When observing remote education, inspectors will ask the school whether cameras should be used. Inspectors will not record calls and will ask that the school, and individual staff and pupils, do not do so either."

Inspections will last for two days and will involve two HMI. Ofsted will confirm before the February half-term what inspections after the break will look like.

It had originally planned to conduct the inspections in person, starting from this week but changed its plans "in light of a change in emphasis from the government and clear advice to 'act as if you have the virus' over the next few weeks".

Inspectors who are members of the FDA union "voted overwhelmingly" to call on Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector, to suspend routine on-site visits "as a matter of urgency".

The watchdog said inspections could only be deferred in "exceptional circumstances". That included if a school had experienced a major incident – such as a pupil or staff



Gavin Williamson

death – or it was due to merge.

"The current public health emergency poses a unique set of challenges for all providers," the watchdog said. "However, our responsibilities towards children and young people remain.

"These responsibilities include providing reassurance to parents and carers, the government and the public, that children and young people are being looked after and safeguarded, and that providers are continuing to support their education."

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News

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Fact check: Are school staff at greater risk from Covid?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

There have been conflicting statements this week on whether teachers are more likely to catch coronavirus.

Dr Jenny Harries, the government's deputy chief medical officer, told MPs there was "no evidenced increased risk" for education staff, but admitted there was still "uncertainty" about the role schools played in transmission of the virus.

However, a National Education Union (NEU) analysis of government attendance figures found infection rates among school staff were "much higher" than in the general population.

Who is right? Schools Week investigates...

How the NEU's analysis works and what it found

The Department for Education's weekly figures show the proportion of teachers and school leaders absent with a confirmed case of Covid reached about 1 per cent on December 17. For teaching assistants and other staff, it was about 1.1 per cent, with higher rates in special schools.

So how do you compare this to the cases per 100,000 figure that the government uses to show the infection rate among the public?

The NEU took the proportion of staff absences due to a confirmed Covid diagnosis and divided it by two. This was to reflect that until mid-December, confirmed cases had to self-isolate for two weeks.

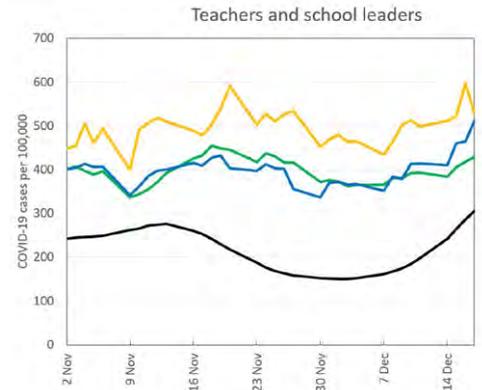
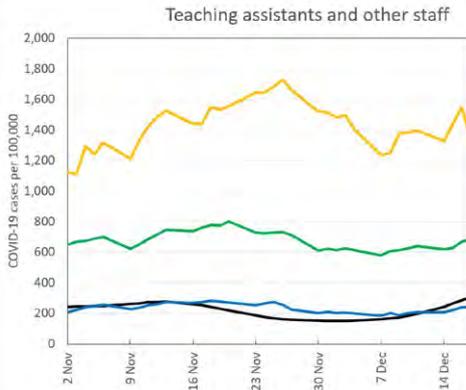
It then multiplied that figure by 1,000 to generate a rate per 100,000 people, enabling a comparison between teacher Covid rates and national infection rates.

The analysis estimated that on average, between October 12 (when staff absence data started to be collected) and the end of term on December 17, the rate of Covid infection was 1.9 times higher among primary and secondary teachers than the general population.

It was two times higher among special school teachers.

For teaching assistants and other staff, rates were three times higher in primary schools and almost seven times higher in special schools.

Dr Mary Bousted, the union's joint general secretary, said the "shocking figures" raised "further very serious questions" about the government's handling of coronavirus in schools.



Graphs showing estimated school staff infections compared to national rates, based on analysis by the NEU.

Rate in England Primary Secondary Special



Researchers urge caution, but figures suggest more risk

Do the figures stack up?

Luke Sibieta, a research fellow at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Education Policy Institute, said he would "urge a bit of caution".

"They are comparing two different sources of data: a survey of schools and national testing data amongst the population. These aren't fully comparable."

However, he said that "on any given day last term", between 0.5 and 1 per cent of teachers and other staff were absent because of confirmed coronavirus.

"That is very clearly on the high side. By way of comparison, only about 0.1 per cent of primary school pupils and 0.2 to 0.3 per cent of secondary school pupils were off school due to a confirmed case."

Dave Thomson, from FFT Education Datalab, said it would have been better to compare the data to rates among the working-age population.

For example, his analysis of case data by age shows the rate among 20 to 64-year-olds stood at 385.8 per 100,000 on December 17, compared

to 306.2 among all age groups.

However, even compared to the working-age population, the NEU estimated rates are still higher, apart from secondary teaching assistants and other staff (see graphs).

Calls for further investigations

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said on Thursday that the NEU was "not comparing like with like".

The government's conclusion of no further risk is based on data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that showed "no evidence of difference in the rates of teachers/education workers testing positive...compared to key workers and other professions".

But the most recent report from the government's children's task and finish group on December 17 points to ONS data between September 2 and October 16 - before the more contagious variant of the virus.

Government attendance figures show that on December 17, the proportion of teachers isolating due to potential contact with a confirmed case in school was twice that of the proportion of teachers isolating due to contact outside school, 2.1 per cent compared with 1 per cent.

Bousted wants to know what investigations the DfE has done. She also questions why ministers "repeatedly" told school staff there was "no reason for concern" and why it took so long to release staff absence data.

A DfE spokesperson said SAGE's independent scientific advisers have "repeatedly said there is no evidence that teachers are at higher risk of infection than those working in other sectors".

News

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Laptop roll-out is vital, but kids need pen and paper too!

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Schools are turning minibuses into mobile stationery vans to deliver basic equipment such as pens and paper to poorer pupils during lockdown.

Hundreds of families have accessed the services as school leaders move to extend their pandemic provision and "replicate normal school at home".

Research from The Sutton Trust into learning during lockdown found 31 per cent of families on the lowest incomes had not been able to spend anything on equipment to support their child's home-learning since September.

In contrast, 29 per cent of those on the highest income had spent more than £100. Nineteen per cent had spent more than £200.

At Westthoughton High School, in Bolton, staff use the school's minibus twice a week to deliver paper, pens, art supplies, calculators and exercise books.

More than 100 families have collected supplies so far - with staff keeping a log so they can plan future provision.

Patrick Ottley-O'Connor, the school's head, said that while the school had worked hard to supply more than 200 laptops to pupils, some parents said they were also struggling to access essentials.

"It's a very challenging time for many people financially... I don't care about having to spend additional money if it's allowing students to continue with their learning.

"A lot of students will be able to access it themselves, but I want everyone to - there's no excuse why everyone can't."

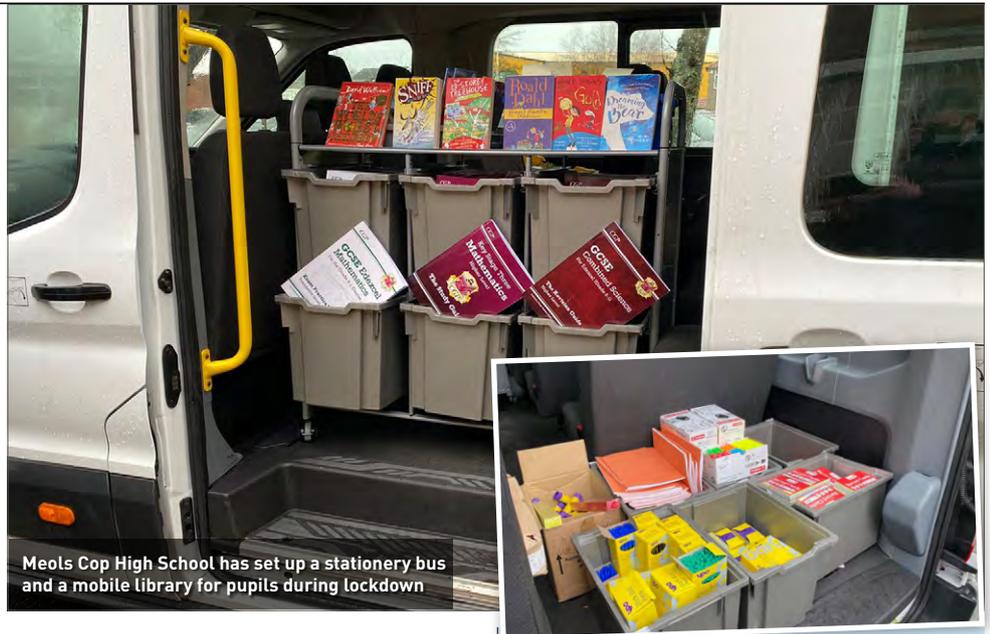
Schools have used supplies already on site, but say they would purchase extra equipment if they needed to.

Drop-off points are advertised through social media and text messages to parents.

At Fleetwood High School, in Lancashire, a stationery bus makes three stops once a week at locations such as supermarket carparks. About 100 families benefited in the first week alone

Nigel Whittle, head of school improvement, said the school was in an area of high "socio-economic disadvantage" and a bus was a way to "creatively support students".

He said providing equipment such as pens,



Meols Cop High School has set up a stationery bus and a mobile library for pupils during lockdown

pencils and notebooks meant pupils could "almost replicate normal school at home" and ensured they got the most out of live learning.

The Sutton Trust found that the increased costs of home-learning were in "a context of increased economic inequalities due to the pandemic".

Yet a teacher survey from the National Education Union and Child Poverty Action Group in 2018 highlighted how limited access to stationery impacted low-income families.

More than half of respondents (53 per cent) said they personally supplied school equipment, such as books and stationery, each term for pupils whose family could not afford them. Nearly a third provided items at least once a week.

Ian Parry, the headteacher of Meols Cop High School in Southport, Merseyside, said some families did not have access to equipment "we take for granted in school and can supply on a daily basis".

His school takes two minibuses to six locations once a week - one bus is packed with stationery, the other acts as a mobile library to ensure pupils have access to books.

While the service has provided "well over 1,000 pens", specialist equipment such as overlay sheets and worksheets in enlarged fonts were also available for pupils with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

"We are finding more and more that there are families who just don't have the access to the resources they need as opposed to it being due to disadvantage," he said.



Twitter post by Patrick Ottley-O'Connor (@ottleyoconnor) celebrating the success of Westthoughton High School's mobile stationery service, mentioning 100+ families accessed the service and additional resources were provided.

Staff at Westthoughton High School have been distributing essential equipment to pupils in need

Twitter post by Nigel Whittle (@nigel_whittle) thanking @ottleyoconnor for the idea of a mobile stationery bus, stating it helped provide extra equipment for those in need with remote learning.

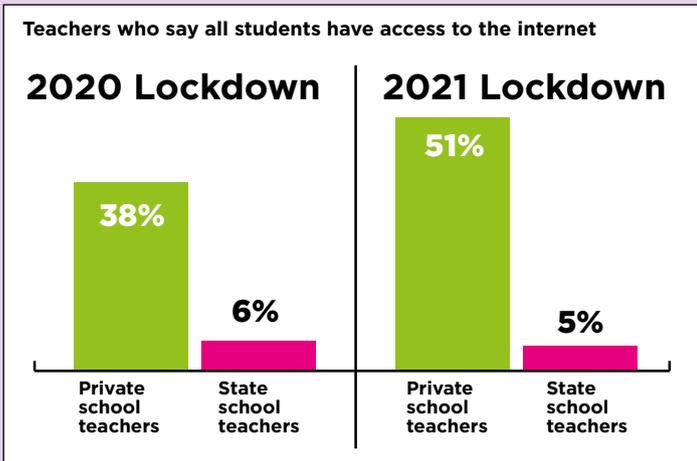
Fleetwood High School has repurposed the school minibus to support pupils

Key findings

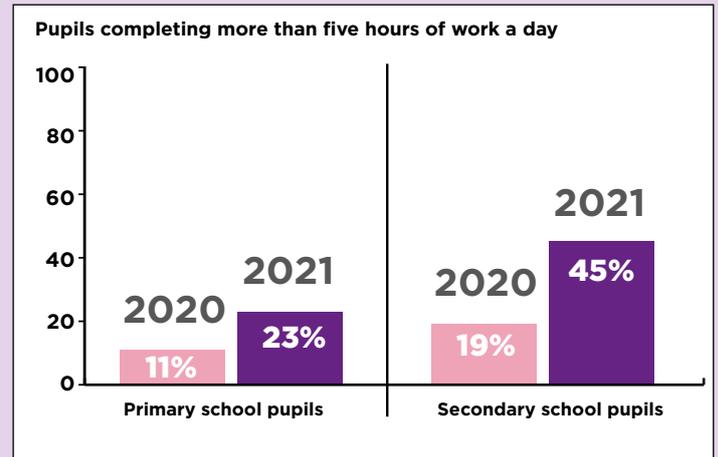
Lockdown 3: the inequality gap is back

The widening inequality gap caused by another lockdown has been exposed in a new report by the Sutton Trust. *Schools Week* has the key findings...

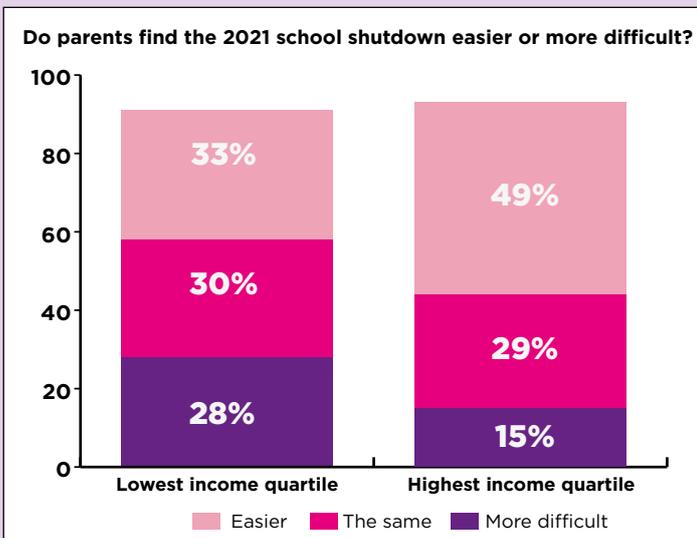
1. THE DIGITAL DIVIDE HAS WORSENERD



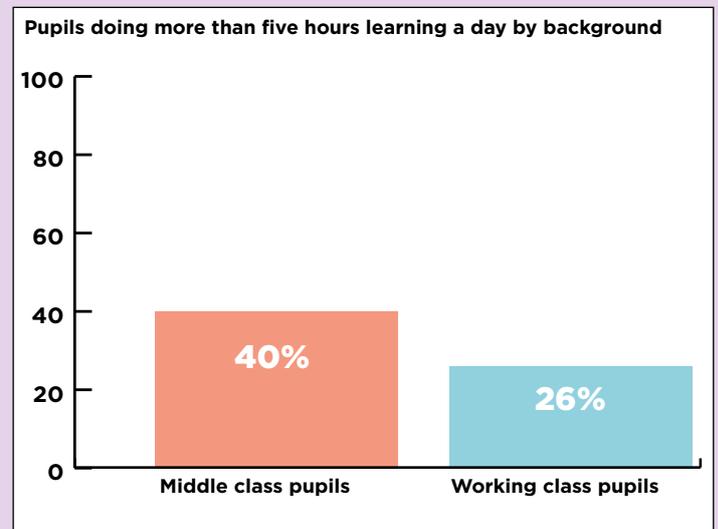
4. PUPILS ARE DOING MORE WORK ...



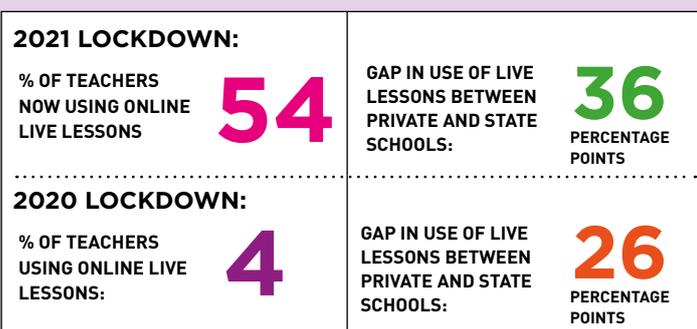
2. POORER PARENTS ARE STRUGGLING MORE



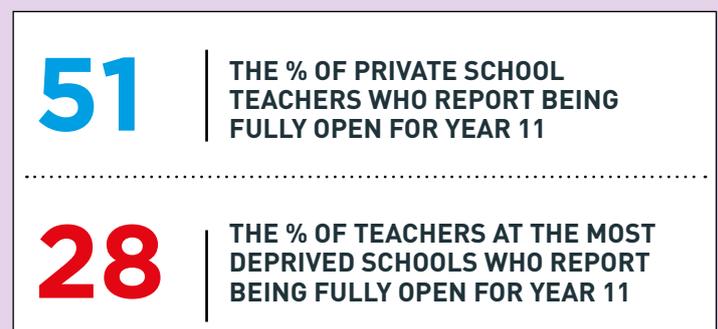
5. ... BUT MORE AFFLUENT PULLING AHEAD



3. HUGE INCREASE IN LIVE LESSONS, BUT GAP GROWS TOO



6. STATE SCHOOL YEAR 11s WORST HIT



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I'm focused on the job, says Williamson

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

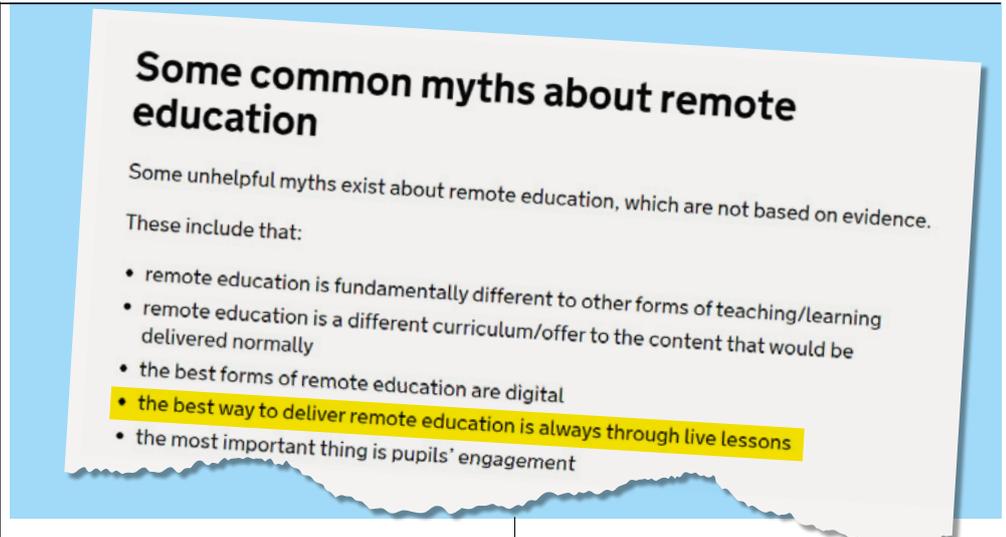
Gavin Williamson has faced a barrage of calls to resign this week for his handling of the Covid pandemic - which wasn't helped when he repeated "an unhelpful myth" at a select committee meeting.

Asked to address criticism of the government and its u-turns over the reopening of schools, the education secretary said that his department was "dealing with a global pandemic".

He refused to answer repeated questions in TV interviews yesterday morning about whether he should resign, saying: "My one focus is making sure we deliver the best for our children."

Asked what grade he would give his own leadership, he said: "My focus is just getting out there and doing the job. I'll let other people do the grading"

Labour called for his resignation on Tuesday. "Gavin Williamson's record throughout this pandemic has been shambolic," said Kate Green, the shadow education secretary. "He has bounced from one crisis to another without learning from his mistakes or listening to the parents, pupils and hard-working education staff who have been left to deal with the fallout."



A source close to Williamson said the education secretary was "focused on the job".

Labour's call came as the beleaguered education secretary was again criticised for causing confusion.

During the education select committee on Tuesday, he said the government wanted to encourage "as much live teaching as possible" as it had been "shown to be the best way in terms of delivering teaching".

This conflicted with Ofsted guidance, published last week, which said the claim that live lessons

were always the "best way" to deliver remote education was one of several "unhelpful myths".

Government guidance says that schools should provide "both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently".

Williamson did add during the committee hearing that there was "a whole spectrum of resources" that could be offered. "It's really important to work with schools, and parents supporting those schools, to make sure we get the best solutions for all of our children."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Traditionalist Gibb switches on to technology

The government is exploring options to "create a more resilient education system" based on "firm digital and technological foundations", the schools minister has said.

Nick Gibb (pictured) told BettFest this week that he wanted a system that used technology to improve outcomes "for all children and adults in education".

His comments represent a massive about-turn for a politician who has always been sceptical about the role of technology in education. The minister is known for his ultra-traditionalist approach to schooling, resisting attempts to bring more tech into the classroom.

He is a proponent of banning smartphones in schools and has called for a move back to paper textbooks.

But he told delegates at the education technology virtual event that he hoped

lessons learned from the pandemic "will open the door to new opportunities for children to leave school shaped by a truly excellent education".

"We need to make sure schools and colleges have the digital infrastructure in place to make the best use of technology, but it's not about using technology for the sake of it. It's about delivering a consistently high-quality education and looking at where technology can support and enhance that.

"For this reason, we are exploring options for a strategy to create a more resilient education system, built on firm digital and technological foundations, which improves outcomes for all children and adults in education."

However, Gibb said the government "can't do this alone", and that it wanted to "continue collaborating" with education

technologists as it developed its strategy.

"I am hopeful that when schools and colleges open again, and when the effects of the pandemic are eventually a distant memory, the lessons that we have learnt will open the door to new opportunities for children to leave school shaped by a truly excellent education. I want to thank teachers and heads and principals for embracing these changes and opportunities.

"While I know that we are all still navigating the almost totally virtual world we find ourselves in, I am confident that this period of time will support teachers to permanently adopt the relevant skills and confidence to use technology in a way that continues to enhance their practice."

His comments follow criticism of the government's efforts to address the digital divide.



News



Catch-up scheme set for expansion

SAMANTHA BOOTH

[@SAMANTHAJBOTH](#)

The government is aiming to nearly double the number of children who will next year receive tuition under its flagship catch-up scheme.

In a presentation to organisations interested in running the scheme's £130 million second phase, the Department for Education said it was aiming to provide 15 hours subsidised tutoring to about 450,000 disadvantaged pupils, up from 250,000 this year.

It also hopes that 2,000 academic mentors will provide tutoring in the most disadvantaged schools by the end of next year, 500 more than this year.

As *Schools Week* revealed last week, the DfE is intending to extend its national tutoring programme (NTP) for two more years.

Funding has been agreed for the 2021-22 academic year, but an earlier information document said any additional years would be subject to a spending review.

The government wants an individual or a consortium to run the scheme next year, providing tutors and academic mentors. *Schools Week* understands that either or both could be subcontracted out in a similar set-up to this year.

The programme has been developed by five charities, with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) running the tuition partners and Teach First managing the academic mentors.

This week, Teach First said it would wait

to see what the tender documents outlined before "deciding what role we'd want to play in its future". The documents are expected to be published in February.

A spokesperson added: "The whole programme, including the academic mentors, is making a big difference to those most in need, and has great potential to be valuable over the longer term."

The EEF said last week that it was "keen to ensure" the NTP had a positive legacy and was considering how it could best support this.

The new delivery partner is expected to sign a contract in mid-April, according to the presentation seen by *Schools Week*.

The programme will also move to open access for tuition providers. It is expected that this would allow any tuition providers that meet the DfE's and delivery partner's standards to be added to a panel of qualifying providers.

But the delivery partner ultimately will make any contracting decisions.

The Tutors' Association (TTA), which represents more than 30,000 tutors, has welcomed the move, hoping it offered "more flexibility" for tuition companies, compared with the grant funding awarded to 33 tuition partners this year.

John Nichols, the association's president, said: "TTA is keen to work with other interested parties as a consortium partner in phase two for the purposes of sourcing quality tutors and tutoring companies, and to handle the evaluation and monitoring procedures – as we already do for our members."

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AET boss off after ridding trust of 'bane of sector' tag

JAMES CARR

[@JAMESCARR_93](#)

The chief executive of one of the country's largest academy trusts is to step down at the end of the academic year.

Julian Drinkall (pictured), of Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), will join Aga Khan Schools (AKS) as general manager after four years in charge of the trust.

AKS is the educational arm of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which works to improve the welfare and prospects of people in the developing world, particularly across Asia and Africa.

David Hall, the chair of AET, said the trust was "simply unrecognisable from the organisation that was the bane of the sector back in 2016".

In 2013, AET was banned from expanding after it was deemed to have grown too quickly and was not running its schools adequately.

Since taking over, Drinkall has improved the number of academies rated 'good' or 'outstanding' from 29 to 72 per cent.

He has also stabilised AET's finances, allowing an investment of more than £2 million to provide 14,500 laptops and wifi access to all its disadvantaged pupils.

Drinkall said he was "incredibly proud of what the whole team has achieved over the past four years". The trust now had a "clear roadmap for the next five years".

But it has not been all plain sailing.

Last year the trust received a minded to terminate letter regarding Four Dwellings Primary Academy in Birmingham, raising questions of its turnaround.

In 2018, AET also agreed to give up two of its schools – Felixstowe Academy and Langer Primary in Felixstowe – after 'inadequate' Ofsted ratings.

The following year the trust received two separate school improvement warnings for separate schools within a matter of weeks.



EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Engage with school leaders to ensure same mistakes aren't made again

With schools' daily contact-testing hopes dashed, unlocking a path for a safe return to the classroom has become that bit harder.

Ministers are right to resist calls to put a definite date on reopenings while we're still learning about the new Covid strain.

But they now need to engage in an open dialogue with school leaders about how the next few months will be managed.

Something that is already being discussed is a staggered return of pupils. But it is key that a repeat of last summer, when the sector was left out of deliberations over the plans to reopen schools in June, is avoided.

For plans to be successful, the government needs to get school leaders on board.

There can be no more chaotic reversals either, such as last year's unachievable aim of getting all primary pupils back before the holidays

which was quickly abandoned, but caused longer lasting stress and upset.

The system of controls must be revisited to see if it is enough to deal with the new variant, and leaders need as long a run-in time as is practicably possible. The promise of two-weeks' notice is a good starting point.

The government must also publish more scientific evidence to back up its thinking. Data on the risk to school staff, in particular, is woefully out of date.

But most critically, once the plan is finalised, leaders must be trusted to make decisions in the interests of their communities.

Every school faces different challenges, and if a headteacher feels they need more time before reopening, they should not be hung out to dry by the government, as some were in December.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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Story on page 15

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Ministers urged to rule on governance board conflict issue as trustees resign in protest

Mark Watson

This is not a “trustee issue”, it’s a “member issue”. The trustees of an academy trust are not responsible for, and have no power in, the adoption of new articles of association. According to the DfE website, the Denmark Road High School board has three members – Andrew Haigh and Andy Collyer (since July 15, 2020) and David Goddard (since February 5, 2020). If those three members want to update the articles of association for the trust they can do so, with or without the consent or approval of any individual trustee (such as the headteacher) or indeed the board of trustees as a whole.

So, saying that “the headteacher refused to step down from the board” is not helpful. The headteacher can make their case why they should continue as a trustee, and one would expect them to do so, but they have no power whatsoever to force their continuing presence on the board of trustees. If the members don’t want the head as a trustee they can ensure that’s the case.

The DfE’s latest model articles are clearer and easier to understand, but there is no real difference in principle. The constitution of an academy trust, and who can be appointed (or removed) as a trustee, is a matter for the members.

Christopher Stark

The other possible issue here is that boards lack the competence and coherence to a) understand what the real issues are and b) how to challenge the chief executive’s role in addressing these. Irrespective of whether a chief executive is a board member or not, if trustees expect to issue diktats to affect the direction taken by the executive or are too supine to stand up and address underperformance in any area, the answer isn’t whether a CEO is a trustee or not.

Effective boards work because the flows of information are clear and transparent – around decision-making, school improvement etc. The composition of the board membership and the shared cultural alignment with what the organisation is trying to achieve is what is key – chief executive in or out is window-dressing, frankly.

In conversation with ... virtual heads

Brian Roberts

I am an experienced foster carer and was one of the virtual school heads (VSH) on the national pilot some years ago. It is quite true that the role of VSH is often confused and ignored.

REPLY OF THE WEEK Peter Haynes

Fact check: what the guidance on key worker children attendance actually says

I am a lawyer. I do not have children of school age, but a number of my colleagues do and it is plain to me that the key workers’ schooling system is subjected to widespread overuse, if not abuse. Most lawyers with school age children, it seems to me, are sending them to school as a matter of course, out of convenience, whilst working at home. In my view, the definition of those who are “essential to the running of the justice system” needs clearer definition. It cannot apply to everybody who works in a lawyer’s office. Alternatively, everybody, key workers included, needs to understand that it is the rule, not guidance, that if you work from home, you do not send your child to school. There seems little point in stopping two people from taking a walk together when our schools are at 50-60 per cent capacity. I know my teacher friends feel the same.



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

Very often when offering advice to schools and carers I will ask whether they have discussed issues with the VSH or virtual school, only to be met with blank looks. This shows how much work there is still to do.

The expertise of this specialist group of professionals is vital for improving the outcomes not only of looked-after students, but also those with care experience. Their impact could have far reaching positive implications for more students in the schools that they are working with.

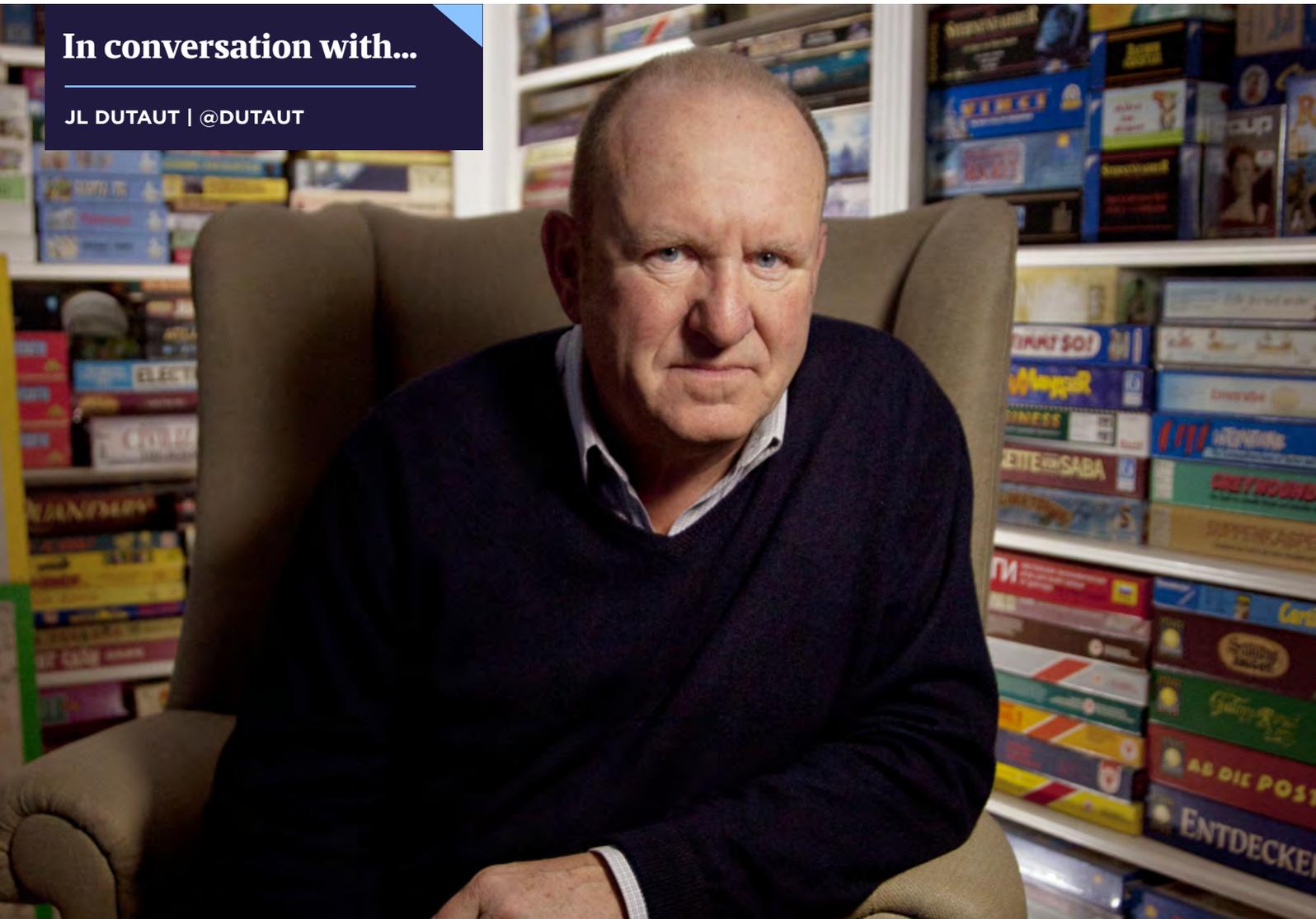
What Ofsted says works well on remote learning

T Joris

I am a secondary music teacher. I feel completely frazzled by a full timetable of online lessons in which I am interacting with students and solving technical issues every minute of every lesson. I also had six hours of parents’ evening appointments just this week, plus a line management meeting and I have had to respond to countless parent emails following letters I sent home. Further to this, much of my planned material cannot be delivered in the same way, so planning is up as well. I also have two children under 5, so I’m parenting every spare minute. I feel stretched, to say the least.

In conversation with...

JL DUTAUT | @DUTAUT



'A lot of learning is not applied in a way that games allow'

Ian Livingstone's unique outlook as a best-selling gaming pioneer will be the vision for an unconventional new school this September. By JL Dutaut

The pressure to give education a 21st-century make-over has been relentless for decades. Driving this pressure are self-styled 'disruptors' – successful technologists with an eye on shaking up schools.

So far, education has been remarkably impermeable to their advances. Witness, for example, Bill and Melinda Gates' fruitless seven-year, \$1 billion investment to raise student outcomes by improving teacher effectiveness. The best they could say for their billion dollars in the end was that it had engendered some 'critical conversations'.

But the flow of history seems to be in their favour. Think of Google and Microsoft,

algorithmic progression models like 'flight paths', curriculum reforms, Sunday morning emails from Becky at Twinkl, teachers sharing resources on Twitter and Facebook, school WhatsApp groups.

And then came the greatest disruptor of all. Covid has forced school online and already, the 'snow day' is widely considered a thing of the past. Schools split between Teams and Classroom. Teachers are developing new pedagogies and schools are adapting policies. Oak National Academy follows in the footsteps of Khan Academy, led by many for whom that model has previously been the very antithesis of their educational stance.

Education, disrupted.

Into this fray steps Ian Livingstone, CBE, not a household name like Gates or fellow disruptor Richard Branson perhaps, but he has made a career of disruption. Chances are his creations have found their way into your home, and he is about to do something few self-styled disruptors have had the temerity to do: open a school.

The brand-new, purpose-built, all-through school is due to open its doors in September. Sponsored by Aspirations Academies Trust, Livingstone Academy Bournemouth promises to focus on students' "knowledge and know-how to be creative technologists" and offer "an authentic education for the 21st

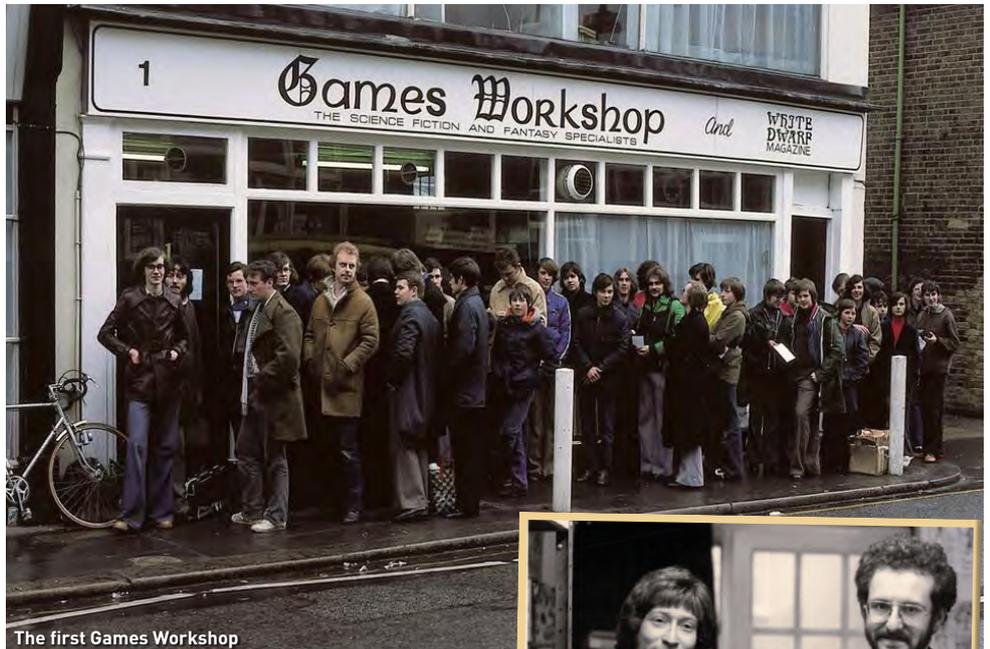
In conversation with... Ian Livingstone



Livingstone signing new Fighting Fantasy book



Reunion with Dungeons & Dragons creator Gary Gygax, 1996



The first Games Workshop



The Warlock of Firetop Mountain 1982: Games Workshop 1976 (with Steve Jackson, left)

“If you start with Shakespeare, you’re going to put them off reading for life”

century”. In essence, it exists to deliver his vision.

Livingstone shares some of the typical traits of the education disruptor. He is an entrepreneur, for starters. And like Branson, for example, he has a dim view of his own educational experience.

Raised in modest conditions in Rusholme, Manchester, in what he describes as “a Coronation Street terrace”, his family moved to Altrincham where, having passed the 11 plus, Livingstone attended the local grammar school. After a positive start, he eventually “scraped” five O-levels and ended school with one A-level at grade E. Seeing all his friends go to university and with limited choices, Livingstone signed up for a Higher National Diploma in business at Stockport College.

It served him well. Like Branson too, it all began with publishing a paper. Livingstone’s popular effort was about his hobby and passion, board games. One day, he received an unexpected parcel. His paper had found its way on to the Lake Geneva, Wisconsin desk of Gary Gygax, and the parcel contained Gygax’s first edition of a

new game he’d just designed: *Dungeons and Dragons*.

Opportunity knocked, and Livingstone was ready. The year was 1975, and that partnership kickstarted Games Workshop, a FTSE-listed company with a 2019 revenue of £250 million.

But Livingstone was far from finished shaking things up. From game books was spawned the *Fighting Fantasy* series, which went on to sell 20 million copies. “They got a whole generation of children to read in the 1980s. And yet they were never considered real books.” Why? They were ‘choose-you-own-adventure’ books. For all the denigration, at one point Livingstone had the top three-selling books in the UK. And for all the consternation, the reason for their success was evident.

“If you start with Shakespeare, you’re going to put them off reading for life. But if you get them to do something that they enjoy, give them agency and choice, then they’re

going to love to learn to read. Surely that has to be the objective.” In this too, Livingstone is like other disruptors. He has a propensity to view education through the prism of his experience.

And like other disruptors, his educational views are heavily informed by the advent of digital technologies. For Livingstone specifically, that’s video games, an industry he joined in its relative infancy and to which he still contributes. The titles he’s been involved with have shaken up the entertainment industry and become cultural phenomena: among them *Tomb Raider*, *Hitman*, *Final Fantasy* and *Championship Manager*.

“A lot of learning for me is too abstract and is not applied in a way that games allow. [With games] everyone can be a winner. No one’s judged a loser. And when you’re next able to fly,” he adds, “would you prefer that the pilot learned it by reading a book or by practising in a simulation?”

I suspect the answer is really both, and The Livingstone Academy Bournemouth is about to marry the two. With the help of Aspirations, Livingstone’s values and vision for curriculum and pedagogy will meet the

In conversation with... Ian Livingstone



Livingstone Academy Bournemouth



Former court rooms



Livingston, 2016

“He’ll be held accountable in a way Bill and Melinda have never been”

real world of the classroom this year after a long journey.

Here the similarities with other disruptors end. When he freely admits that “I’m a games maker, not an educationalist”, that’s already a significant departure from the zeitgeist.

As the school’s co-creator he will play an important consultative role as a member of the Aspirations board of trustees. He will be holding the school to account and in turn be held accountable for its results in a way Bill and Melinda have never been. The school, after all, carries his name.

It all started typically enough. His career marked him out to be selected by government to lead a review and in 2010, then-minister for culture and the digital economy Ed Vaizey did just that. Published in 2011, the co-authored *Next Gen* report was deeply influential on Michael Gove’s curriculum review and the replacement of ICT with computer science.

“Then someone said, ‘Well, that’s all very well, but you really need a flagship school to be able to put into practice the stuff you’ve been whinging on about for all these years’. Being a northern boy, that was kind of a red rag to a bull.” And so the journey began, but like the games he’s spent his career developing and promoting, it’s been a question of ‘failing upwards’. “Quite early on, I understood that I wasn’t really cut out to run schools, that I needed to partner.”

Along, eventually, came Steve and Paula

Kenning, Aspirations’ co-founders and trustees, tempering his vision with practical know-how. “I’ve got no business operating schools,” he insists, “and we can leverage their expertise and resources to run the school.”

The result of the partnership is a school that’s all about disrupting the curriculum and pedagogy. Its published exemplar timetable is an extended school day from year 7 onwards, from 8.30 to 16.30, with ‘prep time’ built in at the end of each day. Key stages 2 and 3 timetables boast ‘applied transdiscipline learning’, which will see computer science taught through other subjects. Key stage 4 will have six weekly hours of project-based learning. Key stage 5 will take part in an Aspirations Employability Diploma.

All geared towards creative careers. With colleges reporting a 40 per cent increase in enrolment on gaming courses according to new research published this week by Newcastle College, Livingstone and Aspirations may be onto something. Parents seem to think so too. The school is already over-subscribed.

More than that, the Kennings explained to me that its very operational structures are developed to reinforce Livingstone’s values and vision. The school’s principal will be known as its Executive Director of

Learning (EDL) and focus on students and their learning. The EDL will be supported in managing the premises, finance and other organisational pressures, and two heads of school – one primary and one secondary – will complement this distributed leadership team, overseeing the operational and organisational aspects of the student experience. The aim is that the EDL will be “freed up from some of the typical bureaucratic and operational burdens” of headship.

That’s the kind of shaking things up more than a few heads will be interested to see road-tested.

Marking him out further from his disruptor peers, Livingstone won’t be drawn much on wider education policy. But we discuss the idea of ‘gamification’ through league tables and performance incentives, and his reply is telling: “That’s anything but gamification. That seems like a nuclear arms race in homework and extra tuition.”

Rethinking that might well be the most positively disruptive thing the education system could hope for, but it isn’t in Livingstone’s sights.

For all its disruptive vision, Livingstone Academy Bournemouth will be judged by those standards.

Come September, vision meets reality. ‘Critical conversations’ will no doubt follow.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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After months of dithering and conflicting messages, the government's latest noises on grading look likely to put teachers in the firing line, writes Alison Peacock

When the secretary of state announced exams would be cancelled this year, he said he wanted to place his trust in teachers. In September 2020, The Chartered College, with Sir John Dunford and the CIEA, argued for a year of teacher assessment supported by trained "lead assessors". The proposal offered a fighting chance to ensure the grading process would be reliably informed by teachers, working in close harness with exam boards to create centre-based outcomes. The offer was ignored.

Now, having insisted throughout the autumn that exams would not be affected by the pandemic, politicians faced with exam cancellation can see the spectre of last summer's debacle appearing again. Their solution? Soundbites of "trust teachers, not algorithms" and a sudden keenness to hand the process over to the profession. But is this 'trust' anything more than a smokescreen?

Teachers want to be 'trusted', and the government rhetoric sounds persuasive. The difficulty comes when trying to bridge the gap between the reality of how well students are doing now and Ofqual's suggestion that teachers should not "decide the grade a student might have achieved had the pandemic not occurred". This is hugely problematic.

While at first glance the consultation appears to be handing trust to teachers, what emerges is a preference for test materials over teacher assessment.



DAME ALISON PEACOCK

Chief executive,
Chartered College of Teaching

A sudden desire to trust teachers hints at a poisoned chalice

And while the consultation proposes that final assessments take place as late as possible to mitigate learning loss and ensure as much curriculum coverage as possible, the final assessment, grade allocation and

While there may be advantages to using these papers as tools within an indicative process alongside a review of other work, this allows for a multitude of interpretations and a lack of national consistency.

“Government can't duck responsibility in August

appeals processes are work-heavy and time-poor.

Worse, the risk is that our hardworking teaching profession is fed to the lions over this very contentious issue. Our political masters, with one eye on the calendar, know there is a real risk of a qualifications solution that pleases no one. The answer? A keenness to 'trust teachers', pushing the profession on to the front line to defend a best-fit grading system frustrated parents will seek to overturn.

Details matter. The offer from Ofqual to provide training and a suite of assessment papers written by examination boards is helpful. However, how can we ensure that allegations of cheating do not follow, removing all credibility in this hastily-assembled contingency plan?

The administration of these so-called "non-exam assessments" needs to be rigorous. Do we have any choice other than to elevate them to the status of examinations, administered, marked and moderated uniformly? Individual teacher assessments will still have to be norm-referenced and fit with standardisation. Wouldn't greater direction and control from exam boards reduce the likelihood of parental complaint and a subsequent deluge of appeals to teachers?

Ofqual's consultation is about ensuring students and their families feel justly proud of their qualifications this summer, knowing everything possible has been done to ensure they accurately reflect each student's true ability. It is important that our profession engages with it and helps reduce the margin of error.



Regardless, whatever is decided will not be perfect, and may in fact be far from it. How can it be otherwise when we are already into the spring term? A key issue at stake is therefore ensuring not only that this year's terminal assessment is fair but that everyone – colleagues, students, parents and politicians – understands it to be transparent and clear.

The issue of allocating grades to cohorts of students who have had a hugely variable experience of schooling over the past two years is regrettable and challenging. But months of dithering and conflicting messages have only made things worse. Government cannot duck responsibility for what happens in August by pointing the finger at our profession.

If we are truly in this together, we must offer teachers the protection of a nationally robust process.

Trust our teachers yes, but also support and stand by them.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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TOM RICHMOND

Founder and director, EDSK



Ofqual's assessment consultation doesn't make the grade

Ofqual's intentions are reasonable, but their proposals so far will only make teachers vulnerable to the anger and disappointment of students and parents, writes Tom Richmond

I am afraid your grades were almost derailed by a mutant algorithm," said Prime Minister Boris Johnson last August following the exams fiasco of the preceding weeks.

Five months later, the unenviable (and arguably impossible) task of finding another way to award GCSE and A-level grades in 2021 without mentioning the 'a-word' has fallen to the exam regulator, Ofqual. Even so, it is teachers who will probably be the biggest losers this summer.

Ofqual's new consultation, which opened this week, gets off to a bad start by proposing that "the grades awarded to students in 2021 should reflect the standard at which they are performing". This may sound sensible, but it is meaningless.

An exam grade is a judgment of each student's performance relative to their cohort. There is no such thing as an A- or C-grade piece of work without a national set of grade-specific benchmarks in every subject at every level. These do not exist. Furthermore, the scale

of 'learning loss' means that many students will be performing poorly in absolute terms through no fault of their own, but the consultation does little to account for this.

To try and bring some consistency to proceedings, Ofqual goes on to propose that exam boards provide "papers which teachers could use to assess their students", only to

add that "teachers should also have some choice of the topics on which their students could answer questions".

Ofqual's intentions are reasonable, but the notion of fairness and consistency evaporates if teachers can pick and choose which parts of a syllabus their students will be tested on. The fact that these exam board papers (which may or may not be compulsory) will almost certainly be sat at different times by different students undermines the whole exercise in any case, as the papers could easily be circulated online.

Remarkably, Ofqual also opens the door for teachers to devise their own assessment materials so long as they are "comparable in demand

to the papers provided by the exam boards". The damage this proposal could do through poor practice (or even malpractice) is plain for all to see. The lack of clarity about what will happen if schools and colleges are still closed in the summer is another serious cause for concern.

Moreover, Ofqual's consultation

and a student's final grade. Without such a buffer in place, there will be nothing to shield teachers from upset and disappointed students and their parents.

In short, there is little chance of ensuring fairness and consistency if we proceed down the path envisaged in Ofqual's consultation. If the class of 2021 are truly judged on current 'performance' and exam boards keep every school and college in line, results will surely plummet. The placards seen in last summer's student protests demanded that the government "trust our teachers", yet I wonder how many will agree with that sentiment if they don't get the grades they want this time.

On the other hand, politicians might be keener on waving through more grade inflation than facing another angry mob on social media. Turning a blind eye to rampant grade inflation would certainly placate parents and students on results day, but will inevitably store up even more problems for 2022 and beyond – making a 'return to normal' an even more distant prospect.

There are no easy answers, but Ofqual's proposals simply do not make the grade.

“Last summer was a communications disaster”

does not address the fact that last summer was a communications disaster as much as a policy disaster. Many students and parents struggled to understand the difference between UCAS predicted grades (which are almost invariably too optimistic) and centre-assessed grades. We could be heading for a repeat of the "You predicted me a B just a few months ago, but now you've given me a C?" saga on Twitter and elsewhere. This time though, it will be teachers in the firing line, not an algorithm.

Recalling last summer's chaos, it is easily forgotten that the algorithm was designed to protect teachers, not undermine them. It was meant to provide a firewall between them

Opinion

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SIOBHAN BAILLIE

Conservative MP
for Stroud



Let's make school streets safer for good

The creation of car-free zones outside schools during pick-up and drop-off times will be a huge help in combating the high levels of air pollution children experience, writes Siobhan Baillie

For all the immeasurable disruption lockdown is causing to children's lives, there is a silver lining for their health. With school attendance substantially reduced, children are less exposed to the high levels of air pollution that characterise the school run.

In normal times, levels of pollution can be as much as five times higher when travelling to school than while at school. It is not just a big town or city problem either. In rural constituencies like mine, the volume of traffic can be even greater as children are driven in from a wider geographical area to converge near the school gates. Most people who drive do so because public transport alternatives are not always available.

Children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution. They face unequal exposure since many of their vital organs, including the heart, lungs and brain, are still developing. They breathe faster, have narrower airways and are more physically active.

As a result, levels of pollution that would cause only mild irritation in a healthy adult can cause considerable and even long-term harm for young children. If I think about my new baby daughter's tiny lungs, it seems obvious that children need more protection. Sadly, air pollution is, however, responsible for up to 30 per cent of all new cases of asthma in children.

“ Children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution

It's clear we all have a responsibility to clean up our air. This is even more apparent when we are reminded of the death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah.

Ella suffered a fatal asthma attack in 2013 after three years of seizures and breathing problems. The two-week inquest into the circumstances of her death ruled that air pollution made a material contribution to Ella's death. Air pollution will now be listed on her death certification as the cause of her death. This landmark conclusion has rightly raised awareness about the impact dirty air can have on our children's health.

Solutions are available to make it easier for our children in towns

and cities to breathe fresher air, especially when they travel to and from school. One option is to roll out school streets.

This simple idea restricts traffic on roads outside schools at opening and closing times to improve road safety, reduce air pollution and encourage children to cycle and walk to school. Traffic restrictions

are enforced by access signs, temporary bollards and sometimes automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

A new report has revealed that school streets are increasingly feasible. Its assessment shows that half of all schools in UK towns and cities could readily roll out school streets to improve local air pollution and road safety. The proportion could potentially increase to two-thirds, and the benefits magnified, if the school street was coupled with wider measures.

School streets are popular too. A YouGov poll found that 64 per cent of the public support the creation of car-free zones outside schools during pick-up and drop-off times,

even if this makes it less convenient for some parents.

School streets can be an effective tool to promote active travel and encourage families to cycle, scooter or walk more. Half of school-run car trips are currently for journeys under two miles.

Importantly, previous research has shown that school streets don't displace traffic but reduce it overall.

Our schools and streets are quieter at the moment, but out of sight should not mean out of mind. We should take steps now to improve air pollution around schools for when attendance restrictions are lifted. The roll-out of school streets up and down our country, not just in London, is the perfect first step to achieving this and could be a lasting positive legacy of our pandemic response.

I receive letters from children about the environment all the time. They want politicians to act. Where better to show them that we are listening than by improving the air around their schools?

The government has the opportunity to unlock this potential by providing not just additional funding, but also powers to local authorities so that measures to support school streets can be implemented.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Lockdown Diary - Hope amid despair



GERRY ROBINSON

Executive headteacher, Haringey Learning Partnership

“Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”

Shelley’s ‘Ozymandias’ has been the soundtrack to the week in our AP schools as our Year 10 students embarked on their poetry unit for GCSE English Literature. Our ever-insightful students immediately drew parallels with Trump and the US Capitol riots. They analysed the poem in depth, before taking on the challenge of learning it by heart. No mean feat for anyone and, with the pervasive perception of low expectations in AP, one that many would dismiss as impossible.

There’s relevance closer to home, too. The majority of our students are on site because they are identified as ‘vulnerable’ and, at the end of yet another week of chaos, confusion and “cold command” from the DfE, Shelley’s warning about arrogant, incompetent leadership resonates loudly with their teachers.

Having recently made the move from head of a mainstream school to the executive head of a network of AP schools and services, the absence of AP from so many discussions has been eye-opening. Given all the hand-wringing about

the educational performance of vulnerable students throughout the pandemic, the lack of consideration for the AP sector in decision-making is deeply ironic. Worse, it reinforces the idea that these young people’s lives don’t matter as much as their mainstream peers.

Truly, low expectations start at the very top. As a sector, we had to lobby the DfE for specific guidance about what lockdown meant for our provisions. In the end, guidance was not provided until after the term had started and has changed three times since.

In spite of that, with excellent support from the local authority, we’ve navigated our way through and set up on-site testing centres. Students desperately hope for a negative result each time so that they can continue attending. Some would struggle to access remote learning. For those who are particularly socially vulnerable, not being in school each day poses myriad risks. For some, self-isolation could be hugely damaging, even if they are asymptomatic.

Unsurprisingly given the rate



of transmission locally, we had a positive test result this week. Luckily, this was on Monday, and the student, who is asymptomatic, only came into contact with one adult. DfE guidance is that the staff member can continue to attend, taking a daily lateral flow test, but it was last Friday that Schools Week reported serious questions about the strategy. We decided that the risk was too high. We’re educators, not virologists, but in the absence of clear guidance from government, we have to make decisions that we hope are right for our communities.

Speaking of our community, Shelley’s phrase “the hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed” sprung to mind as images of pitiful food parcels emerged on Tuesday. It turns out they were suggested by the DfE after lobbying from catering companies. In contrast, we spent the week preparing nutritious hot meals, delivering supermarket vouchers and restocking our foodbank. We’ve been overwhelmed by the generous donations from local charities and faith groups. One

parent I spoke to, who has no recourse to public funds, expressed gratitude for this support, not just for having enough to ensure her family doesn’t go hungry, but for being spared the humiliation of not being trusted to choose the food herself.

So vouchers are back, and there are no conditions on schools using local providers. Good, but we won’t begin to make sense of the latest guidance around public exams until next week at least. You won’t blame us for being reluctant to put too much in place at this ‘early’ stage, given the government’s track record of U-turns. For the moment, we’ll continue to focus on nurturing and inspiring our incredible young people and making the decisions that are right for them.

And if Ofsted decides to get in touch in the midst of all this, great. They can listen in on our students proudly reciting Shelley’s words and demonstrating just how much their education really means to them, and us.

Look upon our works, ye Mighty, and hope!

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Secondary Curriculum Transformed: Enabling All to Achieve

Author: Meena Kumari Wood and Nick Haddon

Publisher: Routledge

Reviewer: Zoe Enser, specialist adviser, The Education People

Secondary Curriculum Transformed begins with the premise that secondary schools in England are currently getting their curriculum wrong. Our system of a “knowledge-rich” national curriculum leading to a “gold-standard Ebacc”, they argue, limits “human skills” of creativity and critical and conceptual thinking, potentially disadvantaging, marginalising and excluding students from their learning.

This is not my understanding or experience of a knowledge-rich curriculum, so I approached this text with some trepidation. However, I was equally interested to discover how the authors’ international perspective would frame the issue and what solutions they would offer.

The book is divided into seven core sections for ease of navigation. They range from student voice and careers to “mandatory key skills” and “redefining disadvantage”. These are weighty issues for a book fewer than 250 pages in length.

The text is filled with examples from a range of different contexts, providing insights into how schools have approached these themes with their cohorts. These are always interesting and do make you reflect on why and how you might make changes in your setting. However, some of these approaches are not as radical as suggested. For example, using word-processing and voice recognition with dyslexic students has been pretty standard as far back as 1997.

The drive towards tech is a persistent theme. Regrettably, it is framed in a way

that feels like an effort to return to the fruitless mantras of the early Noughties. For example, the World Economic Forum’s oft-repeated 2008 suggestion that “65 per cent of children entering primary school today will ultimately end up working in completely new job types that don’t yet exist” makes an early, disheartening appearance.

Nevertheless, there is still a lot to agree with in terms of curriculum. The desire for all students to achieve regardless of background is unarguable. The idea that the secondary curriculum is a five-year journey with a clear route and room for some student agency is a strong one. The authors’ concern about a narrow curriculum is widely shared and their consistent emphasis on pupil voice is commendable.

It is on the practicalities of delivering these sometimes conflicting priorities that the book is sadly lacking. The topics are so far-reaching that coverage is at times rather superficial, as opposed to anything that might bring about meaningful change. Metacognition is decoupled from subjects, becoming a generic “learning to learn” tool. The authors do state that knowledge and skills rarely if ever work in isolation, but I was left wondering what it is we want students to think critically and creatively about if we don’t arm them with the knowledge needed to do so. And meanwhile, the

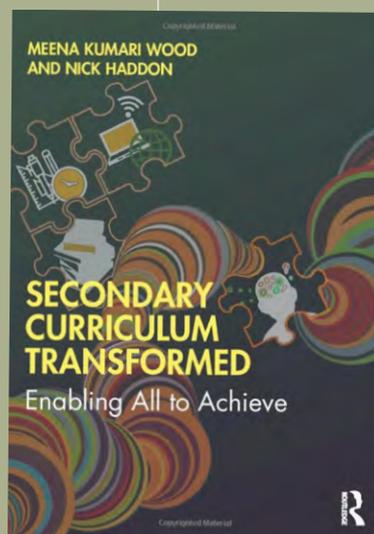
teaching of reading and vocabulary – fundamental to everything else – is awarded only a few pages.

Most interesting perhaps is the idea we could be using a different range of assessment tools to support intervention. I was particularly taken with the suggestion that resources like GL Assessment’s *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School* could guide the provision of appropriate mentoring and lead to improved educational outcomes.

There are some practical tools in the text that could allow schools to explore putting some of its ideas into practice. The best are focused on the Gatsby benchmarks for careers guidance and effective transition. However, I was again left questioning how useful and effective these could really be, given the lack of depth on offer. A narrower focus on transition or aspirations may have made this a more practical read.

The authors’ basic premise is that the purpose of schools is to enable students to have the skills to enter a post-Brexit global marketplace.

If you agree, then you may find this book helpful to consolidate some of your thinking. If, like me, you are not convinced this tells the whole story, you’ll only be left with more questions. Either way, it’s hardly a transformative experience.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Sonia Thompson, Headteacher, St Matthew's C of E teaching and research school, Birmingham**

@son1bun

Time is short – time for short stories: enriching reading & writing with perfectly formed tales

@HertsEnglish

Herts for English are consistent in their high-quality blogging about English. This one is no different, as the wonderful Martin Galway tunes us into short stories as a time-saving reading solution. It's a joyous journey through short, medium and longer reads and the more Galway effuses, the more his extensive knowledge of these texts radiates, deftly taking us through a profusion of stories and authors to tantalise even the most seasoned book lover. As well as some newer titles, he shares a who's who of classics with storytelling, discussion, thoughtfulness and priceless images acting as enticements.

Galway also proposes the types of encounters with these short texts and writers that we can and should offer children. As he states, "Done well, short stories are a highly effective form, just like poetry. They have a major, sometimes underdeveloped, part to play." He concludes with a timely reminder about the interconnectedness of writing, reading and oracy and a promise that this is only the first of a series of such literary journeys he



will take us on. My ticket is already booked for the next one!

Four books for teaching social and emotional learning

@ShottonResearch

Whenever anyone writes about quality texts, it always piques my interest. As a huge advocate and supporter of EmpathyLab, I was eager to read how Shotton Hall Research School was harnessing the power of books to teach Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). In the first of a three-part blog, they unpick some salient elements of the EEF Guidance Report and espouse a process that can be a powerful tool to teach SEL.

The blog begins by cautioning us not to rely on children's 'crisis moments'. Instead, we can exploit crisis points raised in our texts to develop children's ability to solve problems, make decisions, evaluate relationships and be more socially aware. Stella Jones then goes on to discuss four texts that offer opportunities for the same. The blog is simple in its mission and powerful in its conclusion. If ever it was needed, it most certainly is now.

An approach to remote learning resources

@Eng_MrB

This is an impressive and very personal debut blog from secondary English teacher

Daniel Blackburn, which leaves you in no doubt that he is a shining example of a reflective practitioner. He takes us through how he has had to come to terms with remote teaching and learning with honesty, and how he has begun to make it successful for his students. In setting out the problems, he locates them firmly at his own door, not the students' or resources', and then details how he overcomes them with a transferable template and student-empowering process of his own design. As he states, "remote learning is stressful enough for both students and staff. The simpler we can make resources for students to use, the more likely they are to complete the work to a good standard".

What I appreciate in this blog is its tentative confidence. Blackburn positively embraces the fact that it took many iterations to find the sweet spot. I am definitely here for that and I eagerly await blog number two. What a start.

The Golden Ratio: getting our students cognitively active

@MissTBegum

With students on mute and cameras off, we find ourselves transported from bustling classrooms to the depressing silence of Google Meet/Teams/Zoom. As we all search for the 'thing' that will get our children to actively participate in our remote lessons, Thahmina Begum offers us eight strategies she is using, refining and finding success with. Interleaving her strategies with examples and tweets from fellow teachers, she skilfully poses questions to practitioners and offers excellent insights about how to check for understanding with links to video demonstrations.

It is another personal account of how teachers are navigating this new and demanding situation. You may disagree with her pedagogy, but Begum is one of the stealthiest teachers on the ground and this is yet another testament to our profession's amazing collaborative approach at this uniquely challenging time.

Research

The NFER will review a research development each half term. Contact @TheNFER if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

Will the current lockdown ease financial pressures on schools?

Jenna Julius, senior economist, NFER

Since the beginning of the pandemic, schools have been taking additional safety measures to protect pupils and staff, mitigate the spread of infection and provide support to pupils learning remotely. This has had a significant impact on many schools' finances, but to date, the government has only provided limited support to meet these additional costs. The current lockdown (with mainstream schools once again solely open to vulnerable pupils and the children of keyworkers) will only exacerbate this situation.

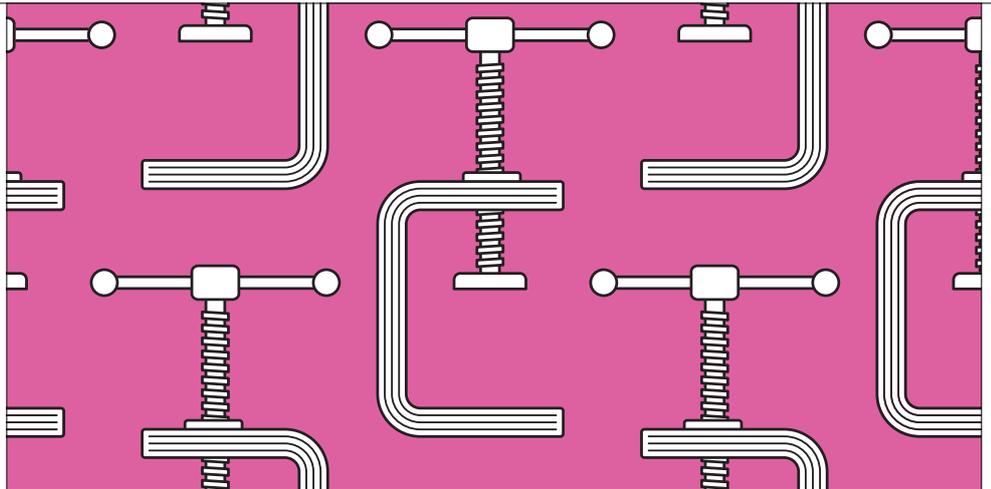
The pandemic has created significant financial pressures

Our recent NFER report found schools have incurred substantial additional expenditures to meet the costs arising from Covid. Evidence shows that the pandemic has also impeded schools' ability to generate their own income. This is significant as before the pandemic, schools' self-generated income from facilities and services, voluntary donations and catering, accounted for around four per cent of their total income on average, a small but important share of their available revenue.

Some have argued that closures during last year's summer term will have allowed schools to make savings because they had fewer pupils attending, which they can offset against these additional costs. However, any savings were likely to be limited as schools still needed to pay staff, which is by far their largest cost. Further, as most schools remained open during lockdown, any reduction in their costs, such as utility bills, was likely to be relatively small.

Not all schools will be able to meet the increased costs of Covid

Drawing on the existing evidence base, our latest research found that current existing and additional funding is insufficient to cover the additional costs of Covid, at least



for a number of schools who are at risk from the financial impact of the pandemic. Our research identified around 1,500 particularly at-risk schools which had either a deficit or a small surplus before the pandemic, whose notional increases in funding in the 2020/21 academic year will not cover their usual school cost increases (e.g. teacher pay increases) and Covid costs.

Pandemic costs put deprived schools disproportionately at risk

Not all schools have benefited equally from recent government funding increases. In particular, National Funding Formula allocations show that deprived schools stand to receive the smallest average budget increases due to the government's 'levelling-up' policy – which is focused on raising the minimum level of funding received per pupil. As more deprived schools already receive higher levels of funding per pupil than other schools to reflect the increased challenges they face, they are set to experience the smallest increases in funding due to 'levelling-up'.

Not only are more deprived schools less able to meet the financial pressures of the pandemic from recent funding increases, but they face the biggest challenge in

supporting their pupils to catch-up - as highlighted in our previous Covid research. Even before the latest lockdown, the scale of additional catch-up support provided by the government seemed unlikely to go far towards meeting the scale of support needed for pupils in deprived schools.

The current lockdown will only exacerbate financial pressures

While schools are once again closed to the majority of their pupils, many will continue to face ongoing additional financial pressures due to Covid. For example, schools may require increased staffing to support pupils learning remotely and in-school. School closures will also continue to impact schools' ability to generate their own income from activities including hiring their facilities, after-school clubs and fundraising by parent-teacher associations. Further, current school closures are only likely to increase the need for catch-up support when schools open more widely.

Without additional support now, there is a risk that some schools will need to divert resources that could be used for teaching and catch-up, or place additional pressures on their workforce to meet these needs.

Emergency support is needed now to help these schools meet these ongoing costs of the pandemic.



WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

TUESDAY:

"2021 grade plans – a bigger disaster than last year?" is the sort of headline you'd expect to see in *Schools Week* – not dropping in your inbox via the government's own email alerts.

The headline was on a post from the government's social mobility commission warning of the pitfalls ahead for the exams replacement plan.

The fact the government's own web pages can't stem the bad news does not bode well.

Meanwhile, the flagship Oak National Academy was dealing with its own problems, with errors in the subtitles of its English lessons. One screenshot posted on Twitter showed the word "pirates" had become "perverts"! (see image)



WEDNESDAY:

Instead of assuring the sector it was on top of things as another key plank of the return to schools plan fell through,

the DfE launched a "fake news" push.

As most media reported, daily contact testing for Covid has been paused. This is the bit that Gavin Williamson said would be the game-changer to keep kids in school.

Instead of close contacts of cases having to isolate, they could take a rapid test each day and stay in the classroom if it was negative. But the regulator, worried about the tests missing more cases than they picked up, warned against the plan – which was eventually paused today.

The DfE tweeted that "stories saying mass testing of pupils & staff is paused are completely untrue".

The government is now claiming the "main" bit of the rollout is the regular testing of staff (and pupils on their return to school) to find Covid cases among those who do not have symptoms. This will still go ahead.

This flirtation with the truth is quite ironic given that when *The Guardian* broke the story last Friday about the regulator not approving the tests, the DfE said it wasn't true and insisted it would be business as usual (before U-turning a few days later).

THURSDAY:

Quite the entertainment this morning when Gav met Piers. The education secretary, interviewed on *Good Morning Britain*, got the full treatment from presenter Piers Morgan.

In one exchange, Morgan kept asking if catastrophe-prone Williamson had offered his resignation. Instead of providing an answer, Gav – like a stuck CD – kept regurgitating some nonsense about how his "focus is making sure we deliver the best for our children".

Spare a thought for Ofqual. After only a few hours' notice before everyone else found out that exams were cancelled this year, it's been scrambling around to come up with some sort of plan.

An update today to its complaints page gave a good indication of how those plans were going down.

"If you are contacting us about the arrangements for exams this year we're not able to respond further at this time," it reads.

Instead, anyone with a grievance was told to respond to the ongoing consultation. Translated into normal speak: "Listen, we know this is a sh*tshow. But there's not much we can do, so go and shout into the consultation void instead."



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If you are interested in this post please contact Peter Evans, CEO to arrange a discussion
Peter.Evans@learnmat.uk

Due to safeguarding requirements we are not able to accept CVs. Application packs are available on our website: <https://www.learnmat.uk/page/?title=Join+our+teams&pid=41>

Completed application forms should be sent to **info@learnmat.uk** by 3rd February 2021

Closing date:
3rd February 2021

Interviews:
11th or 12th February 2021

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Visits: Week commencing 25th Jan 2021

Closing date - Monday 1st February 2021 at 12pm

Interview date: 8th or 9th Feb 2021

Please contact Beverley Walker on 01604 434600 / admin@inmat.org.uk to book a visit or obtain an application pack.

For more information see our website www.inmat.org.uk



WHAT REALLY MATTERS TO YOU?



Here's what matters to us:

BEING POSITIVE - We value positivity, no matter what the circumstances. It is our intention to stay constructive, optimistic and confident both for and with our young people and their families.

HAVING EMPATHY - We are kind, we have empathy. We consider the consequences of our decisions, large and small on those around us.

SHOWING RESPECT - We conduct ourselves in ways that earn the trust of those around us. We respect each other and those we work with.

WORKING AS ONE TEAM - We depend on teamwork and the relationships we have. When we work together we are stronger. Together we will achieve more.

BEING INCLUSIVE - That everybody is treated fairly and equally; no-one is marginalised or left behind. We are inclusive, we embrace the human spirit. We value diversity of people and thought.

We are committed to progressing the social, emotional and academic outcomes for all of our students to enable them to achieve their true potential. Our Vision is to significantly change pupil lives for the better. Our values, as a Trust, empower our young people to succeed, these values are at the core of everything we do, and embody what we are looking for when we seek new colleagues.

If you are up to it, come join us

Wave Multi Academy Trust comprises eleven AP academies and two special schools in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Our regional APs provide education for mainstream pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion or on an intervention basis. All of our schools have been consistently judged to be good or outstanding.

We are looking for two inspirational leaders to join our team in Cornwall

As a result of internal promotions, we are looking to appoint two outstanding and enthusiastic Principals whose purpose will be to provide professional leadership and management within these academies. Both schools are currently judged to be Good. The successful candidates will work alongside the Executive Principal to lead a successful education team, providing vision, leadership and direction for the continuing development and improvement of their academies.

So, who are we looking for?

As well as someone who embodies our values, we are looking for someone who:

- has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of our cohort, including pupils who may be coping with trauma and attachment issues.
- has thorough understanding around teaching and learning and is committed to further developing the quality of teaching in the school.
- has the skills to lead, improve and inspire both pupils and staff
- is an excellent communicator, and able to build effective partnerships with families, staff, partner schools, outside agencies and the wider community

We are a values based trust that cares passionately for our pupils their families and our colleagues. Wave Trust is in a strategic partnership with Cornwall Council, that is enabling us to think long term about how to continue to innovate to meet the needs of the pupils and schools in Cornwall.

Cornwall is a beautiful place to live and work and the Wave family are a great group to work with. Wave MAT is dedicated to the safeguarding of children and Safer Recruitment Procedures will be followed. The position requires a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.

For an informal discussion please contact Lianne Ward (Executive Principal) on lward@waveedu.org. To request an application pack please use the link on www.wavemat.org

Start date: 01/04/2021
Salary: up to £66,031.00





IMMANUEL COLLEGE

HEADTEACHER

Over 1600 children require an exceptional Headteacher to lead their school from September 2021. Could you be their perfect candidate?

FULL TIME, PERMANENT, REQUIRED FOR SEPTEMBER 2021

SALARY L36 - L42 | £99,681 - £115,483

We are looking for an inspirational Headteacher to join our vibrant and bustling school filled with incredible children. We would like a strong leader and team player who will build on the existing strengths of the school and support us on the next steps of our journey. If you think you can be our exceptional candidate, we can't wait to meet you.

We need from you

- ✓ A love of teaching and learning
- ✓ A passion for developing your team
- ✓ Strong, innovative and strategic leadership and management
- ✓ A firm commitment to achieving success through partnership and teamwork
- ✓ Commitment to the Christian values of the school and the Trust
- ✓ Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- ✓ Drive, ambition and high expectations
- ✓ A commitment to ensuring our children achieve their biggest and bravest ambitions

We can offer you

- ✓ Engaged, happy, well-behaved and well-motivated children
- ✓ A dedicated, enthusiastic staff team committed to our school and our children and who will support you every step of the way
- ✓ High levels of Trust and Governor support – you won't be in this alone when you join the BDAT family of schools
- ✓ A welcoming, friendly and vibrant school
- ✓ A career in a forward thinking Trust

Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged but are by appointment only. We are proud of our academy, we want you to have the chance to visit and see it for yourself, it will convince you so much more than any advert can.

Please contact Emma Williamson (PA to the Director of Secondary Education) to arrange your visit via email: emma.williamson@bdac-academies.org

Closing date	Monday 25th January 2021 12 noon	Tour dates	Thursday 14th January 8.30am
Shortlisting	Wednesday 27th January 2021		Tuesday 19th January 3.30pm
Interview day 1	Wednesday 3rd February 2021		Thursday 21st January 8.30am
Interview day 2	Thursday 4th February 2021		

For the Full Job Description and Application Form please visit <https://www.bdat-academies.org/employer-of-choice/vacancies/>

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children and we require all our staff to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced criminal records check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on the BDAT website www.bdat-academies.org/bdat-business/bdat-policies/

Perseverance

Character

Hope

Executive Director of Learning (Principal)

Hours: Full time role

Start date: Easter 2021 or September 2021

Salary: Negotiable, circa L25-L31 dependent on experience, plus performance bonus

Office base: Livingstone Academy Bournemouth



LIVINGSTONE ACADEMY BOURNEMOUTH
an Aspirations Academy

The Executive Director of Learning (EDoL) will lead this new school. This person would be performing the role of the Principal but without the full range of responsibilities, enabling a full focus on learning. This role would focus primarily on the provision of high-quality teaching and learning, overseeing the work of the Director of Digital Curriculum and Innovation (responsibility for the curriculum) and the Head of Secondary and Head of Primary (both would be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school). The regional CEO and Aspirations central team will support the EDoL with the finance, premises and IT management of the school.

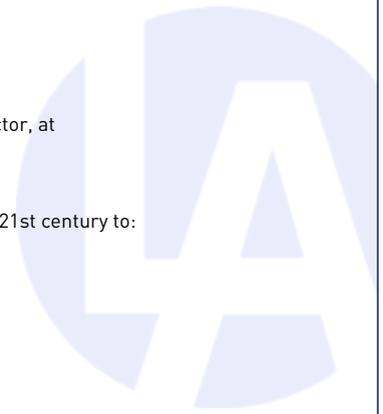
Learn more about Livingstone Academy at www.livingstone-aspirations.org

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.

Please complete the online application form and your supporting statement, setting out your vision for education in the 21st century to: jobs@aspirationsacademies.org

Closing date for applications is **4pm on Monday 25th January 2021**.

Interviews due to take place on **Thursday 4th February 2021**.



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SCHOOLS WEEK

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EXTENDED

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£4000

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FULL PAGE

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