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Ventilation is crucial to resisting a third wave



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# Rape culture website stops naming schools

- Schools taking 'disproportionate amount of blame', campaign says
- 50 state and 400 private schools feature in sex abuse allegations
- Heads can't take action over claims, and urge victims to come forward
- DfE strengthening 'low level' abuse rules so repeated cases not missed



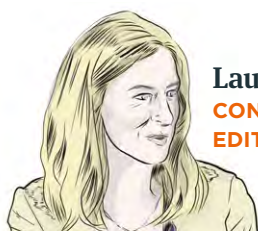
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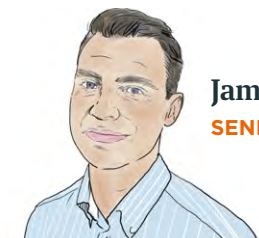
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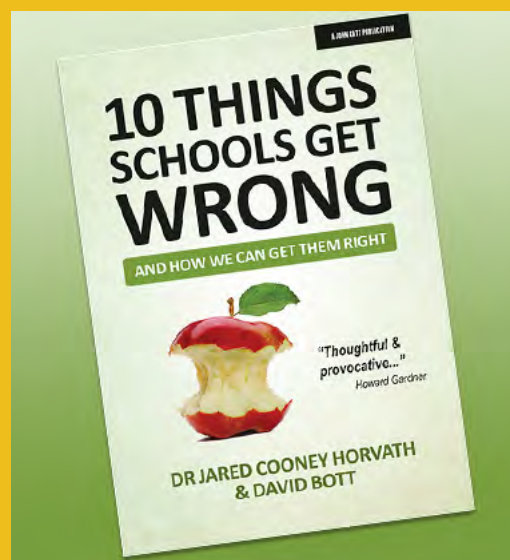
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# Gibb's schools £130k worse off under his pupil premium change

TOM BELGER

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EXCLUSIVE

Schools in Nick Gibb's own constituency face being £130,000 worse off under his department's controversial change to how it calculates pupil premium funding.

Rising deprivation amid the pandemic has fuelled a 6.2 per cent jump in pupils who would typically receive top-up funding in Gibb's Bognor Regis and Littlehampton seat.

But controversial reforms to use census data from October – rather than the usual January – to allocate pupil premium cash mean his local schools will collectively be left an estimated £129,845 worse off.

The average secondary is expected to forgo £6,144, and the average primary £5,645, in the school standards minister's seat in West Sussex, south-east England.

Meanwhile, in neighbouring Chichester, represented by skills minister Gillian Keegan, schools face a £125,000 shortfall on typical funding to cover a 5.8 per cent leap in deprived pupil numbers.

The West Sussex county council figures, released under the freedom of information act, suggest that more than 1,000 pupils across the region have become eligible for pupil premium funding between last autumn and this January.

A survey by the National Association of Head Teachers last week suggested England's primary schools alone could face a £180 million funding gap.

Campaigner Andy Jolley, who first highlighted the issue after the change was published without fanfare on the last day of autumn term, has estimated the full shortfall could amount to £250 million.

## DfE 'conscious' of funding gap

But the reform's full impact on schools across England is not yet known. Gibb finally responded to an education select committee request for more data last week, almost five weeks after being asked. However, Gibb said figures were not yet available, and were usually published only in June.

DfE permanent secretary Susan Acland-Hood was quizzed over the changes by MPs on the public accounts committee on



Nick Gibb

Thursday.

Labour chair Meg Hillier asked if schools had any prospect of extra cash to reflect the "dramatic increase in children who are now much poorer".

Acland-Hood said the department was "conscious" of pupils' changing circumstances, but using October data would give schools "earlier certainty" over funds.

"Schools are accustomed to having some lag in funding," she said, adding that pupil premium cash would rise by around £2.4 billion this year.

## Pupil premium minister's constituents miss out

The change has been overseen by Gibb, the minister responsible for the pupil premium.

*Schools Week* calculated likely losses in his own constituency by looking at the impact of the 104 extra deprived pupils reported between October and January.

Primary-age pupils receive £1,345 pupil premium funding and secondary pupils £955.

No breakdown by school age was available for his seat alone, but the estimated shortfalls assume the same ratio as in West Sussex, where three-quarters of newly entitled pupils were at primary level.

It leaves a £24,571 gap for the four secondaries in his seat, and a £105,273 gap

for the 19 primaries. West Sussex as a whole faces a £1.3 million shortfall.

## Pressure for a U-turn

The findings come as school and charity leaders in another region wrote to education secretary Gavin Williamson urging a U-turn this week.

Their analysis of pupil numbers in north-east England points to a hit of up to £7.3 million in the region, with 5,400 extra pupils in need.

Amanda Bailey, director of the North East Child Poverty Commission, one of the letter's signatories, accused the government of "providing additional funding with one hand, whilst taking it away with the other."

Sarah Price, assistant principal at Kenton School in Newcastle, said pupil premium cash had helped deliver weekly food parcels and provide internet access to pupils.

Fifteen London councils also wrote to Williamson earlier this month, calling the plans "ill thought through and discriminatory".

Gibb, in his response to the education select committee, said data on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals since October 2 is "being collected as part of the spring school census and is not yet available".

"This is particularly uncertain in 2021 in the context of Covid," he added.



# Oxbridge cuts offers in face of potential grade inflation

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Oxbridge colleges have been forced to reduce the number of offers made this year by as much as 15 per cent in anticipation of expected grade inflation following the cancellation of A-level exams.

Ministers are bracing for another year of higher grades after opting to cancel exams for the second year in a row following partial school closures between January and this month.

Last year's decision to abandon the computer algorithm used to moderate centre-assessment grades resulted in an increase in the proportion of top A-level grades from around a quarter to almost 40 per cent.

This in turn created pressure on universities, with more pupils achieving the grades they needed to progress.

At Oxford and Cambridge, colleges have been forced to adjust so-called "cover ratios" – the proportion of offers made for each place available.

Universities typically make more offers than they have places, on the assumption that a proportion of applicants will fail to make the grade.

The universities already have high requirements that limit the scope to raise the entry bar and accommodation constraints prevent big rises in place numbers.

Richard Partington, a senior admissions tutor at Churchill College Cambridge, told *Schools Week* the university usually made 1.3 offers for every place, but had reduced this to 1.1 this year to avoid another "bulge" in numbers.

"The main problem we had from last year is we ended up with more students," said Partington. "What we can't afford to do is have another bulge next year."

"We've had to make some fewer offers to reflect the fact more students get the grades," he added, saying his college had seen a "drop of somewhere in the region of 15 per cent".

Both of the high-ranking universities saw more students accept places in 2020.

According to its website, Cambridge had 3,866 acceptances of undergraduate offers in 2020, up from 3,528 in 2019. Oxford had 3,440 acceptances in 2020, having only admitted 3,280 undergraduates in 2019.



*Schools Week* understands offer rates vary between different colleges. Overall, Oxford has reported making just over 3,500 offers this year, down from almost 3,900 last year, a drop of around 9 per cent.

A spokesperson for St Anne's College, Oxford, said the college had accepted the need for a big cohort in 2020. But the college had made "slightly fewer offers than usual in certain subjects" this year, in an attempt "not to have a second huge cohort". They said they couldn't confirm couldn't confirm exact figures, and that ratios varied depending on subject.

The college also discouraged deferrals from last year, which meant the ratio "has not decreased as dramatically as it might have done if we had already half-filled the year with 2020 entrants deferring".

Mary Curnock Cook, the former head of admissions service UCAS, said universities had not been able to use the "statistical norms" that usually allow them to "gauge the numbers of students likely to meet the conditions of their offers".

"Given the uncertainties about how many students will get which grades, it is inevitable that some universities, particularly for more selective courses, will deploy a more cautious offer-making strategy to ensure that they don't recruit beyond their capacity."

Courses that demand the highest grades "cannot resort to using tougher conditions

to their offers because there is no A\*\* grade available", she warned. "Their fallback approach is likely to be making slightly fewer offers."

One Oxford insider said another problem was the "limited number of bedrooms". Both Oxford and Cambridge house first-year students in college accommodation.

The news follows reports that private schools which traditionally boast the highest number of Oxbridge offers saw a slump in numbers this year.

A study in 2018 found that eight private schools between them had as many pupils accepted to Oxbridge colleges as three-quarters of all schools.

But research by the *Sunday Times* found that most of the schools, including St Paul's Girls' School, King's College School, Wimbledon (KCS) and Eton College, had seen a decrease in offers this year.

Conversely, Brampton Manor Academy, a London state school, received 55 Oxbridge offers, more than the 48 received by Eton pupils.

It follows pledges by both universities to take more students from state schools and disadvantaged backgrounds. Cambridge's state school intake rose from 62.3 per cent in 2015 to 70 per cent last year, while Oxford's increased from 55.4 per cent to 68.7 per cent over the same period.

A spokesperson for Cambridge declined to give exact figures for its overall reduction in offers. Oxford declined to comment.

# Surge in 'devastating' ransomware attacks cripple schools

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INVESTIGATES

Schools were forced to delay pupils' return to the classroom, suspend Covid testing and cancel parents evening after hackers struck in a series of targeted ransomware attacks.

A Schools Week investigation can reveal the devastating aftershocks of the cyber attacks, as the government's security centre warned this week of the "growing threat" facing schools.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) published an alert on Tuesday after an "increased number" of attacks since February.

It warned that schools lost financial records, students' coursework and Covid-19 testing data during the attacks.

Ruth Schofield, of cyber security experts Heimdal Security, told Schools Week the "rapid switch to remote learning" has made schools more dependent on their IT systems. But security has become less of a priority "in the rush to get pupils online".

"At a time when businesses have been strengthening their defences, schools have become soft targets for criminals," she added.

Ransomware is a type of malware that prevents you from accessing your system or the data held there, the NCSC explains.

The data is usually encrypted and may be deleted or stolen. Following the initial attack those responsible will "usually send a ransom note demanding payment to recover the data". Payment is usually requested in the form of cryptocurrency.

## March madness

All 17 schools in Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) faced disruption when ransomware was identified within its network on March 12.

Schools' communications, such as emails and phone lines, were down for around three days as the trust's IT team "worked around the clock" to keep disruption to a minimum.

At Ely College, Covid testing was suspended for 24 hours on March 15 while systems were down, and the school was also forced to reschedule parents' evenings and push back its deadline for Year 8 options.

Swavesey Village College continued its Covid testing on March 15, but alerted parents "you will not be automatically notified of their result until later this week" but would be contacted



immediately in instances of a positive result.

A CMAT spokesperson said all schools remained open throughout and all systems were back online "within a couple of days".

It is not believed any sensitive or personal information was accessed during the attack and no coursework was lost.

A small number of IT suites across the trust still require repairs which will be conducted over the Easter holidays.

On March 3, Nova Education Trust in Nottingham was struck by an attack which saw it shut down IT systems for each of its 15 schools as a "safety precaution".

In the initial aftermath the trust was unable to provide remote teaching or upload new learning resources for students.

The trust's recovery forced several of its secondary schools to push back the return of on-site lessons from March 8 to March 11 as staff were left without devices while they were being made secure.

Secondary age pupils at the trust still began testing on March 8. However, they were asked to return home once they had completed the tests instead of attending normal lessons as planned.

## 'No reason to suspect same criminal'

The NCSC said it could not release exact figures for the number of attacks conducted due to operational reasons, but stated "there is no reason to suspect the same criminal" is behind each attack.

Meanwhile, on the morning of March 16, 24 schools across South Gloucestershire, including all seven at Castle School Education Trust (CSET), were hit by a "highly sophisticated ransomware attack".

A CSET spokesperson said it has "caused significant disruption to our schools" and both the trust and South Gloucestershire Council are still working with external partners and agencies to investigate the attack and ensure "systems are restored safely and securely".

A council spokesperson warned there "will be continued disruption over the coming weeks" varying from school to school. While some systems have been restored, others remain offline.

Remote learning for pupils is still being impacted by the attack, with schools hoping to provide "more interactive content for pupils" after Easter.

The NCSC said the attacks can have a "devastating impact on organisations" and may require a significant amount of recovery time to reinstate critical services.

## What schools can do

The Department for Education wrote to school leaders this week stating it is "vital that you urgently review your existing defences and take the necessary steps to protect your networks from cyber attacks".

Schools should confirm with their IT team or provider that they are backing up the right data, that back-ups are held offline and that their restore services have been tested.

The DfE supported NCSC recommendations that schools don't encourage, endorse or condone the payment of ransom demands as this will "likely result in repeat incidents to educational settings".

Other advice included using effective vulnerability management, installing antivirus software and implementing mechanisms to prevent phishing attacks.



# News

## School backs down on face masks refusal



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EXCLUSIVE

A school whose headteacher vowed to defy official advice on facemasks in secondary classrooms has quietly reversed its stance following pressure from the government.

David Perks of East London Science School (ELSS) made headlines at the end of February when he claimed he would not ask pupils to wear face coverings.

In guidance published that month the Department for Education recommended coverings "should be worn in classrooms or during activities unless social distancing can be maintained".

However, the policy's ambiguous wording confused schools and sparked clashes with parents.

But, despite not making its advice mandatory, correspondence seen by *Schools Week* shows the government is intervening where the rules might not be followed.

Sue Baldwin, the regional schools commissioner for the East of England and North East London, asked a department official to email ELSS to check whether the guidance would be followed.

Emails sent to the school on March 4 said Baldwin was "concerned about the stance" following "worrying articles".

At the end of February, Perks appeared in articles published by the blog *UnHerd* and *The Telegraph* in which he said he would not follow the guidance. To do so, he said, would put a "psychological and physical barrier between staff and children that is just destructive".

Perks, described as the first headteacher to "break ranks" and defy the government, said the guidance was confusing as it only recommended masks. He said that if he were instructed to enforce masks, he would.

But he requested clarity on what

consequences the school would face if it flouted the advice.

However, in another response from Adam Atashzai, the school's chair of governors, the DfE was told that "despite his personal views" Perks would follow the guidance.

Atashzai also said the school had sent guidance to all parents to "make them aware" and would hold an assembly to show students how to wear masks properly.

A letter to parents on the school's website advising masks would not be enforced would be replaced, he said.

The original letter has been removed, *Schools Week* could not locate an updated version.

It is not clear from the emails whether contact from the DfE prompted the decision, or if it had already been made

The DfE said it was not unusual for it to contact individual schools when guidance was ignored.

But Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "It says the guidance is not mandatory, but that it must be implemented. This lack of precision is not helpful in navigating a difficult situation."

Masks were "problematic educationally because they impede communication between pupil and teacher".

But a survey by the union Unison found 63 per cent of school staff said face coverings made them feel safer at work.

The poll also found 84 per cent of staff said pupils were wearing masks in secondary classrooms. Three quarters of those surveyed said their schools had also introduced face coverings for staff in classrooms.

The DfE guidance on masks in the classroom will be reviewed at Easter.

But the National Education Union said this week it was not safe to make the decision now over whether to change the guidance.

ELSS did not respond to a request for comment.

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

## Education settings dominate outbreaks

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Almost half of all suspected outbreaks of Covid recorded last week occurred in education settings, a Public Health England report shows.

The organisation's latest flu and Covid-19 report shows that of 197 new acute respiratory infection (ARI) "incidents" involving Covid reported in the week ending March 21, 83, or 43 per cent, were reported by education settings.

In comparison, 42 incidents were reported in workplaces and 34 in care homes.

The latest NHS Test and Trace data showed 1,805, or just 0.046 per cent of the nearly four million rapid result Covid tests taken by secondary school pupils between March 11 and 17 returned a positive result.

However, further doubt was cast on the testing efforts this week after an independent review found rapid lateral flow tests, the kind used in schools, were less effective in identifying the virus in asymptomatic people.

The review, published by the Cochrane Library, found the tests correctly identify on average 72 per cent of symptomatic people with the virus, but this dropped to 58 per cent in those with no symptoms.

It comes after the Department for Education told schools that it was "vital" that staff and secondary pupils continue to test themselves at home throughout the Easter holidays.

They should "continue to test twice weekly" over the break, and report test results online, the DfE said.

Staff, pupils and parents at secondary schools and colleges must also take a Covid test before returning for the summer term.

School attendance data released on Tuesday shows the number of secondary school pupils self-isolating due to a potential contact with a Covid case in school increased by 461 per cent.

Last Thursday, 58,400 secondary pupils were self-isolating due to potential in-school contact, compared with 10,400 the week before.

Overall, 201,000 pupils across England's state schools were off because of Covid on March 18, up from 78,000 the previous week.

The DfE said that the pupil absence rate due to confirmed cases and self-isolation "may be impacted by levels of testing".

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## Investigation

# Rape culture website stops naming schools after claims spark scandals

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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INVESTIGATES

A campaign urging young sexual abuse survivors to share their stories on its website has stopped publishing the names of schools over fears they are taking a “disproportionate amount of blame”.

The number of testimonies on Everyone's Invited, a website and Instagram account aiming to eradicate rape culture, has soared following the death of Sarah Everard this month. Her disappearance while walking home at 9pm in Clapham, south London, sparked a renewed conversation about violence against women and their safety.

The fresh sex abuse allegations have led to national media coverage, focusing mostly on prestigious private schools. One headline, for instance, read: “Dulwich College is a ‘breeding ground for sexual predators’, former pupil claims”.

An analysis by Schools Week found that about 50 state schools are mentioned among the more than 5,000 testimonies.

Approximately eight times more private schools have been named in the allegations, ranging from reports of rapes to “slut shaming”.

But the campaign has this week halted publishing the names of institutions amid concerns about “implicating certain schools” that are taking a “disproportionate amount of blame”.

Headteachers of state schools implicated in the sex abuse reports have told Schools Week they are unable to investigate the anonymous claims.

Ofsted has also said it will not look into individual allegations. But the Department for Education has vowed to strengthen guidance around the issues.

## Hard to take specific action against anonymous claims, say heads

Bradley Stoke Community School, part of the Olympus Academy Trust, was named in an account of a 14-year-old being groomed by an older boy who was “emotionally abusive and manipulative”.

The now 19-year-old said they were pressured into sending nude photos and was “slut shamed” when people in the school later found out.

The testimony adds: “Schools need to be much more helpful with this. Their strategies are always ‘don’t send nudes, it’s illegal’, which is correct, but



they should also state we won’t be in trouble if we report grooming and harassment instances.”

Dave Baker, the trust’s chief executive, told Schools Week it was “tragic” the person didn’t feel able to come forward as the school has a “really strong culture” around welfare.

Ofsted rated the school ‘outstanding’ in 2018 for personal development, behaviour and welfare, adding that “pupils are tolerant, respectful and appreciative of differences”.

Baker said it would be “really hard” to do anything with the specific case as it was anonymous, but he added: “Obviously, if a former student wanted to share thoughts about what the school could have done differently, we’d want to hear, of course we would.”

Twyford Church of England High School, in west London, is named by a year 11 who said she got “particularly drunk” with a friend and kissed two boys. But then a different boy put his fingers up her dress and assaulted her.

“Two years after this I still had disgusting boys from his school walking over to me filming me and asking me about it,” she wrote.

Dame Alice Hudson, executive headteacher of the school, said the incident was not reported to the school. The post appears to imply the boys mentioned “were from another school”.

Many of the posts refer to incidents that happened outside of school grounds, and it is not always clear if the victim or perpetrator attended the named school.

Hudson added it was “good that the issue of sexual misconduct is elevated”, but “the website does not enable schools to take specific action and

in this sense it is not especially helpful”.

Richard Langton, headmaster at Queen Mary’s Grammar School, said allegations being anonymous and not specifying any details “make it very difficult to substantiate any events and follow them up”. He added: “The school is therefore in a difficult position by being named on there.”

The school, in Walsall, is named by a girl alleging she was raped by her boyfriend.

Both heads said if they had been made aware of the cases they would have fully investigated.

## ‘Schools want to be part of the conversation’

But Charlie Cahill, deputy head at Orleans Park in Twickenham – also named on the website – said the anonymous posts are “playing an important role in ensuring that this issue is discussed both inside and outside of schools”.

“As a school, we want to be part of this conversation and empower all young people to be able to come forward and report all incidents of sexual violence, harassment and misogyny.”

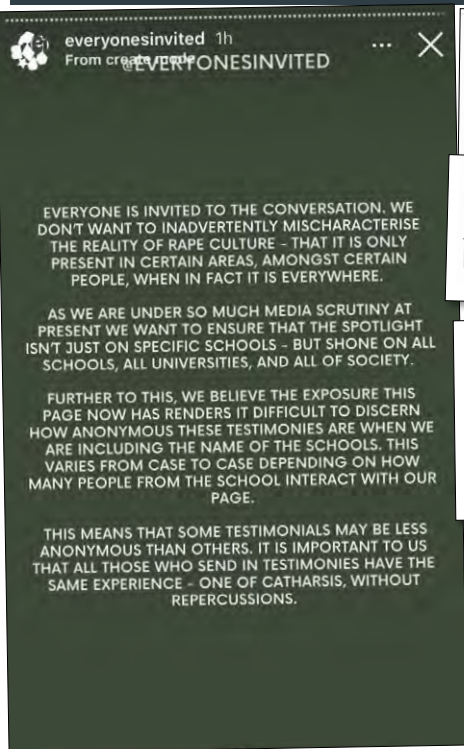
West London Free School is named six times on the website. One of the testimonies described how a boy would deliberately drop pens and look up a girl’s skirt in every lesson they had together. The school did not respond to requests for comment.

Helen Tucker, head of the independent schools team at Stone King, said “there is insufficient evidence” in most testimonies for a school to investigate.

But she said schools should consider whether pupils and alumni know where to go to report

Continued on next page

# Investigation



## Report boys to the police for sexual abuse, top schools told

## Claims of school sexual harassment may become national scandal, warns senior MP

## Top £20,000-a-year London private school has a 'rape culture', say pupils amid online claims of 'predatory' boys harassing girls

Separate statutory guidance on relationships and sex education in schools states that schools should make

clear sexual violence and sexual harassment "are not acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up".

Rosamund McNeil, the National Education Union's assistant general secretary, told the Guardian that while the guidance is a movement in the right direction, further investment is needed to

integrate the issue into the curriculum as a whole.

## Ofsted won't investigate individual allegations

Ofsted was challenged over the findings on private schools by Robert Halfon at an education select committee this week.

The Conservative MP asked Victor Shafiee, Ofsted's deputy director of unregistered and independent schools, whether the inspectorate should inspect all private and public schools.

Currently, Ofsted inspects 1,100 out of 2,350 independent schools in England at the request of the DfE. The rest are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Shafiee told MPs that Ofsted "stands ready" to support the government "in any way that we can do" to strengthen safeguarding across the independent school sector.

Ofsted told Schools Week the allegations were "deeply troubling", but said it does not investigate individual allegations.

A decision to inspect based on safeguarding concerns would depend on the individual circumstances of the school and the intelligence they hold, Ofsted added.

The DfE said it could instruct Ofsted to inspect a school that is usually inspected by the ISI, although it is rare to do so.

A government spokesperson added "any abuse toward a child, whatever form it takes, is unacceptable. School should be a place where all children feel safe and are protected from harm. Our statutory safeguarding guidance sets out that all staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that could put children at risk."

**If you've been affected by any of the issues raised in this article please take a look at Everyone's Invited 'Find Help' page here: <https://www.everyonesinvited.uk/help>**

Everyone's Invited will still collect school names, for "data collection purposes", and testimonies published before Tuesday won't have names taken off.

EI did not respond to Schools Week's request for comment.

But the site's founder, 22-year-old Soma Sara, told the BBC this month: "If we start pointing fingers at certain demographics, or singling out individuals or institutions, we risk making these cases seem like anomalies... when really this problem is pervasive, it exists everywhere."

A report by the National Education Union and UK Feminista in 2017 found that 37 per cent of girls at mixed-sex schools have been sexually harassed while at school.

Soma told ITV they have "had huge amounts of people messaging us saying how incredible and important it was for them to be able to share this trauma and normalise speaking about rape and rape culture and shedding light and awareness on it".

## DfE proposing new 'low-level' harm guidance

The Department for Education said its consultation on updating its Keeping Children Safe in Education has recently closed.

This includes changes to "further strengthen guidance for schools to protect children from peer-on-peer sexual violence and sexual harassment".

Previous guidance does not give advice on how to handle concerns about staff that do not meet the "harm" threshold. So they are considering bringing in advice around "low-level" concerns, where an allegation doesn't quite meet the level for an investigation. But repeated instances of such issues "may trigger greater concern and warrant more detailed enquiries of action".

The revised Keeping Children Safe guidance is due to come into force in September, the DfE said.

concerns and how they monitor whether pupils feel safe.

Tucker added, more generally, that schools may also want to reflect on what is taught in the curriculum on issues such as healthy relationships and consent.

Schools Week found over 400 testimonies in which private schools were named. Latymer Upper School, one of the most cited schools, has reported the allegations to the local authority and the police.

Barnaby Lenon, chair of the Independent Schools Council, said the accounts on the websites were "truly shocking" and encouraged anyone affected to report it so that "steps can be taken to address the issue".

## Campaign concerned about 'implicating certain schools'

But on Tuesday, Everyone's Invited halted publishing the names of schools alongside the testimonies. They were concerned about "implicating certain schools" in testimonies that are "not wholly representative, but rather a result of who was seeing and interacting with the Instagram page".

Everyone's Invited said this could lead to a "disproportionate amount of blame that does not reflect reality".

The statement posted on the campaign's 32,000-follower Instagram page added that they want to make sure the spotlight is shone on all schools, alongside the whole of society. Naming schools could also lead to victims being identified.



## News

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## Covid-fuelled exodus of heads yet to emerge

TOM BELGER

@TOM\_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

Fears of a Covid-fuelled mass exodus of headteachers this summer may be wide of the mark, although new figures suggest more leaders have left their jobs during the pandemic.

The government was warned about a "post-Covid exodus" of headteachers after a poll last year found nearly half were less than likely to remain in the role.

But figures obtained by *Schools Week* show there could be lighter turnover than feared.

Heads typically give notice in the autumn, with replacements recruited by April for the next school year. But far from a rise in vacancies this January and February, figures from the jobs site TeachVac show a 28 per cent decline. The number of ads in GuardianJobs has also not significantly risen this year.

"We expected a big surge, but we've not seen one," said John Howson, the chair of TeachVac.

A poll by survey app Teacher Tapp in December found only 9 per cent of heads were considering new jobs and 16 per cent retirement, although both were sharp increases on 2019.

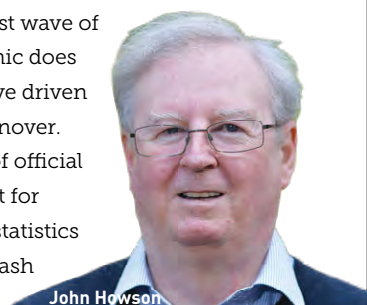
Meanwhile, just 4 per cent of teachers it polled last week said their head planned to leave by September.

"These figures are definitely not high, and might actually be lower than normal," said Becky Allen, Teacher Tapp's chief analyst.

The scale of departures over the past year also appears limited. TeachVac found headteacher adverts were down 3 per cent across 2020, while education data service SchoolDash found new headteacher appointments fell 2.2 per cent.

But the first wave of the pandemic does seem to have driven a rise in turnover.

Analysis of official Department for Education statistics by SchoolDash



John Howson

found 774 new headteachers were appointed this January and February, up 86 per cent on 2020 and 122 per cent on 2019.

Most changes are in September, but the figures indicate some heads may have given notice in the pandemic's first wave to leave at the end of the calendar year.

It tallies with data from Indeed, the jobs site, which charted a jump in vacancies between April and May last year, after declines in the same period in previous years.

### 'There's a very good case for staying put'

The school leaders' union NAHT this week issued a fresh warning of an "exodus" of heads after the pandemic.

A report published by the union today showed that almost half of leaders worked every weekday and weekend in the past academic year.

More than two thirds said leadership had impacted their sleep and relationships with family and friends. A further poll raised concerns over recruiting new headteachers

(see box out).

NAHT argued the government's "chaotic" handling of the pandemic and a lack of support exacerbated the challenges and stress leaders faced.

Experts agree that the pandemic could have delayed any exodus.

"You could understand if someone intended to move or retire, but didn't want to leave the school in the lurch," said Timo Hannay, the founder of SchoolDash.

But any heads hoping for summer exits may also have had to rethink personal plans.

"They can't take a job with an international schools chain easily," Allen said. "The market for doing training for schools and talks has been severely disrupted. Given they have a stable income there is a very good case for just staying in post."

Howson added: "The tsunami's not evident yet, but we might be in the bit where the wave falls back before it crashes in."



Timo Hannay

## BUT LEADERSHIP PIPELINE 'COLLAPSE' FEARS

**47%** of leaders recommend it as a career goal

**46%** of assistant and deputy heads do not aspire to headship (was 40% in 2016)

**72%** of leaders say ever-changing Covid guidance is their biggest management challenge

**'Challenging, exhausting, stressful'**

- most common words used to describe the past year



Source: NAHT survey of school leaders in 2020

# Heads told to keep a record of parent pressure on grades

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Headteachers should keep records whenever their teachers come under pressure from students and parents to boost exam grades as such pressure may amount to malpractice, Ofqual has said.

The exams regulator is trying to clamp down on external pressure on teachers to influence the grades they award students this summer, after exams were cancelled due to the pandemic.

This comes as education select committee MPs warned the government's exams replacement proposals risk delivering a "Wild West" grading system. They have demanded concessions over the plan to ensure a "level playing field" for pupils.

Meanwhile, schools are awaiting exam boards' guidance on how to award grades, which was promised to be published by the end of March. Schools Week understands it will be published today (Friday).

Julie McCulloch, head of policy at heads' union ASCL, said it was "incredibly frustrating" that schools do not have these documents yet, with concerns that heads and teachers will have to look at them over the Easter holidays.

This week, Ofqual published its guidance on submitting grades. It outlined that schools should be "careful" to avoid teachers being "put under pressure from students, parents or carers to submit grades that are higher than the evidence supports".

Heads of centres should "keep records of such cases", the guidance adds, as they might be required to report to exam boards "any cases where they believe inappropriate pressure is being put on teachers".

Exam boards may treat such cases as "potential malpractice", Ofqual said.

It comes after heads raised fears that the switch to teacher assessment would lead to pressure from parents with "pointy elbows and lawyer friends".

The guidance, which was consulted on this month, also says heads will have to



declare that judgments "have not been influenced by pressure from students, parents or carers". This was not in the draft guidance.

Yesterday, the education select committee warned Gavin Williamson his exams replacement plan risks being "too inconsistent".

Robert Halfon, the committee's chair, said this was down to a lack of standardised assessments and "impartial assessors to provide the checks and balances to guarantee fairness".

The eight-page letter also demands the Department for Education sets out any reductions in cash that schools should expect on their exam fees. Schools Week revealed earlier this year that boards had increased entry fees, despite exams not going ahead.

The intervention from the committee comes after schools minister Nick Gibb and Ofqual officials were grilled by MPs earlier this month.

Williamson has been asked to respond by April 12 so MPs can consider the response "once we return from the Easter recess".

As schools await the grading guidance, McCulloch said some are already beginning to set assessments to give themselves a "head start" and will then tweak their

approach when the guidance comes through.

"Schools and colleges are taking different approaches, and I can really understand that, not least because they haven't got the guidance yet," she added.

"It's incredibly frustrating that we are at this point and schools don't know what they are expected to do in any detail to assess students."

Meanwhile, Tim Oates, research director at Cambridge Assessment, which runs exam board OCR, has signalled future changes for exams. The approach of sitting the same questions on the same day "undoubtedly will change", he said.

Oates believes "adaptive online assessments" could be used and that the "whole system" could be "flooded" with high-quality questions.

Speaking at the ASCL conference yesterday, Oates said the questions could be integrated into learning to have "some accumulation of evidence" of attainment and could use that to "increase the resilience of the assessments systems".

The DfE said it has put "fairness at the heart" of its plans. "Schools, colleges and exam boards will undertake internal and external checks on the consistency of teachers' judgments, to help maximise fairness for all pupils no matter their background or where they live," they added.



Tim Oates



# Flagship tutoring scheme set for new owners

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

A former Ofsted chief inspector will head a new charity that hopes to take over running the government's flagship National Tutoring Programme.

The National Tutoring Foundation has been set up by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), one of the five charities running the programme.

Professor Becky Francis, EEF's chief executive, will be a trustee of the new charity, which will be led by Christine Gilbert, a former head of Ofsted.

Gilbert will oversee its bid to run the NTP next year. A £130 million contract to run year two is currently out for tender.

Jonathan Simons, a director at policy and PR consultancy firm Public First, told *Schools Week* that the move seemed a "very sensible" way to evolve and made the organisations' roles "much clearer".

He said the EEF "incubated" the NTP in its first year, but "in the longer term it is not a delivery organisation". It made sense to keep it "focused on creating evidence".

The EEF has traditionally been a research charity, funding trials of school interventions.

The move to set up a dedicated organisation to run the NTP comes as the government's £350 million scheme faces continued criticism over its performance.

Last week, the National Audit Office revealed



that as of February, only one third of 125,200 children enrolled for tutoring had started courses.

EEF, which ran the tuition partners' arm of the programme, said the five founding charities were "committed to ensuring the NTP has a legacy in the English school system".

"The best way to do this is through the creation of an independent charity dedicated to widening access to tutoring. Its set up is being led by the EEF, with support from the founding partners."

It is expected the successful bidder to run the programme next year will be notified at the end of next month. If the NTF bid is unsuccessful, the charity will be dissolved.

Gilbert said the NTP had the "potential to help level the educational playing field between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates.

"I'm delighted to be coming on board to support this endeavour and the new charity in their bid."

The other founding trustees include Sonia Thompson, head of St Matthew's Primary School in Birmingham, and Graham Elton, a partner at the consultancy company Bain.

More trustees will be appointed if the bid

succeeds.

The EEF said it would not be able to provide any further information about the bid or the new organisation until the competitive tender process was completed.

Meanwhile, the Tutors' Association, which criticised the programme for including only three of its members in the 33 tuition providers, has called for a public inquiry.

It follows an investigation in *The Guardian* that revealed Third Space Learning, one of the programme's tuition partners, had employed tutors in Sri Lanka as young as 17 with a guaranteed minimum pay of £1.57 an hour.

John Nichols, the association's president, questioned the impartiality of the programme given that Nesta, one of the NTP's founding charities, has invested millions of pounds in Third Space Learning.

Nesta said that it had invested £2.6 million over five funding rounds since 2015. The most recent was £400,000 at the end of 2020. Nesta said it had seen zero returns on the investment.

Nichols demanded an inquiry "into the whole selection and implementation process" of phase one.

But the NTP said Nesta was "not involved in the assessment of any of the bids to become a tuition partner".

Nesta said any returns from the investments were reinvested in work that delivered public benefit. Staff did not receive any incentive or any proportion of the returns.

## NATIONAL TUTORING FOUNDATION: WHO'S WHO

### Christine Gilbert

Gilbert was the chief inspector of Ofsted between 2006 and 2011, following stints as a headteacher and director of education in two London boroughs. She is a visiting professor at UCL Institute of Education.



### Graham Elton

Elton is a partner at the management consultancy Bain, which has provided pro bono support to the NTP, including analysis to help identify where it should target support. He is a board member of Now Teach and the National Youth Theatre.



### Professor Becky Francis

Francis has been EEF's chief executive since January last year. She was the director of the UCL Institute of Education and an adviser to the parliamentary education select committee.



### Sonia Thompson

Thompson is head of St Matthew's Primary School in Birmingham. She was a member of the steering group for the NTP, providing advice on its set up.



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## Investigation

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## Big MATs able to ride out Covid finance hit

TOM BELGER

@TOM\_BELGER

INVESTIGATES

Some of the biggest multi-academy trusts have managed to ride out Covid's toll on their finances – using savings, donations and reserves to pump millions into catch-up schemes and laptops.

Analysis by Schools Week revealed trusts with cleaning bills of £1m, IT costs doubled and catering income that had plunged by 98 per cent as the pandemic rocked school finances.

But lockdown has also cut some schools' operating costs, with one trust saving £760,000 on educational supplies, freeing up cash to reinvest in schools.

"Undoubtedly, working in a MAT has shown itself to be the most resilient," said Leora Cruddas, chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts. She highlighted not only financial management but also external support with challenges such as shifting learning online.

She said there was some "limited evidence" the pandemic could encourage more standalone and small trusts to join larger ones, but it was "too soon to tell" Covid's economic legacy for schools.

## Covid finance hit revealed

New analysis of England's ten largest multi-academy trusts' most recent accounts by Schools Week shows how hard the first nationwide lockdown hit trading income.

On average the trusts saw a £979,000, or 30 per cent, year-on-year fall in self-generated revenues, such as facility hire, catering, nurseries, trips and clubs, in the financial year to August 31. The government does not reimburse such losses under its exceptional costs scheme.

Oasis Community Learning's trading income more than halved to £3.1 million last year. Catering revenues nosedived from £2.5 million to just £45,000.

At Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), income from trips slid by £1.6 million, a 63 per cent decline, and receipts from hiring out facilities fell by £740,000, a 43 per cent drop.

Some cash owed to schools even went unpaid. Delta Academies Trust's total trading income rose, but it missed out on £12,000 in lettings income after a company collapsed.



Julie Cordiner



## Reserves used to cushion the blow

Trust accounts also lay bare the costs of remote learning and making schools safe.

Oasis halted sinking fund contributions to lease iPads for students, costing almost £10 million over three years. It predicted an eventual £1 million hit to its reserves.

Delta Academies Trust said extra staffing, masks, hand sanitiser and other costs would drain reserves if government support proved insufficient.

"There's an assumption schools can absorb this, but it's wrong," said Julie Cordiner, who runs the School Financial Success advice website.

## More cash for catch-up from savings

But the impact on school finances has not been entirely negative. Some trusts have also been more able to absorb costs than others.

Oasis accounts show lockdown pushed down utility and exam costs. Using Microsoft Teams cut travel expenses.

Reach2 accounts showed lower predicted energy consumption, and the cost of printing, security, educational supplies and visits declined.

"We only hear about schools that have extra costs, but some actually made savings," added Cordiner.

A United Learning spokesperson noted lower income and extra costs, but added: "We managed our costs properly and so we also made substantial savings which meant we have stayed in financial surplus through Covid."

As a result, they've spent £2 million on buying Chromebooks – distributing over 20,000, so every student could access remote lessons.

"We will also now be able to put an extra £3

million into catch-up for the next year on top of government funding, so that young people can catch up fully," the spokesperson added.

AET spent £2 million on remote learning, taking its stock of Chromebooks and other devices to 16,500. Another £4.1 million was earmarked for catch-up support, including mentoring for 8,000 children who needed extra help.

"Covid-19 has been challenging for the sector financially, but strong academy trusts have managed it well," said a spokesperson for the trust.

## Harris donations double

A small number of trusts could even tap wealthy donors.

Reach2 used a commercial partner to apply for £318,000 in grants, though it had only secured £34,000 when its accounts were filed.

The Harris Federation fundraised £3.3 million, more than doubling its 2019 tally. It included a £1.6 million "hardship fund", bankrolling two-week summer schools, laptops, supermarket vouchers and craft materials for pupils in need. Families facing hardship were encouraged to "ask for what they needed."

The other cash helped fund tutoring, university bursaries, Mandarin lessons and smaller class sizes.

"There's a big divide between the likes of Harris who have contacts with rich and prominent people, and your average little primary school," said Cordiner. "It's the haves and the have-nots."

## Big MATs also take taxpayer support

Some large MATs still secured government support, such as £795,000 in exceptional costs grants at Harris and £282,000 furlough grants at United Learning.

But Jenna Julius, senior economist at the National Foundation for Education Research, noted academies were less likely to have sought exceptional cost funding from the government than maintained schools.

She said it could reflect their stronger finances going into the pandemic, with schools only eligible if the alternative was draining reserves unsustainably.

A survey earlier this year found the average multi-academy trust ended their financial year with reserves £25,000 higher, not lower.

Education Policy Institute research in 2019 also found the average academy was less likely to be in deficit than the average maintained school or standalone trust.

# Autumn start for delayed mental health lead training

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Training for a designated senior mental health lead in every school by 2025 could begin in autumn, with the funding handed directly to schools.

Government officials were this week pressed to answer why the training was yet to get up and running, more than 18 months since a procurement exercise was launched.

The Department for Education blamed the delay on the 2019 election and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2017, it said it would support all state schools and colleges to identify and train a senior lead for mental health by 2025.

Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision, a mental health green paper introduced by Jeremy Hunt, a former health secretary, also pledged to roll out mental health support teams and to reduce waiting times for services in at least a fifth to a quarter of the country by the



end of 2022-23.

The initial procurement notice published in July 2019 sought a supplier, or consortium of suppliers, to deliver a "national senior mental health leads training programme" across all state schools and colleges.

It was due to conclude in December, but the DfE said it was paused due to the rules around new business in an election period.

The £30 million contract was due to start in January last year and run up to July

2024, subject to contract extensions.

But in a new early engagement notice, which closed this month, the DfE said schools and colleges would get funding to pay training providers directly. The cash would be for "high-quality" courses that met specified senior mental health lead "learning outcomes".

The government said it was aiming for a "phased approach" to training senior leads from autumn this year.

Hunt said he was concerned to hear at a health and social care select committee that the progress on training stopped last January, before the pandemic.

But a DfE spokesperson told *Schools Week* it was on track to meet the 2025 target. Schools would get the details on the value of the grant and how it could be used at a later date.

The spokesperson added: "We are now working with key stakeholders, including training providers, to take forward training for senior leads in the next academic year."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Opportunity area schemes set for wider roll out

Ministers are considering rolling out schemes trialled in their 12 "opportunity areas", including a programme offering eye tests to reception pupils.

Michelle Donelan (pictured), the universities minister, who is also responsible for the opportunity areas programme, has written to education committee chair Robert Halfon with an update on the policy.

It comes after a 2019 report by the committee questioned the effectiveness of the programme, highlighting concerns over its independence, value for money and a lack of joined-up working.

The 12 social mobility "cold spots" that make up the programme have so far split £100 million in funding. The areas are West Somerset, Norwich, Blackpool, North Yorkshire Coast, Derby, Oldham, Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich and Stoke-on-Trent.

Each area uses the funding to pay for initiatives to improve the quality of teaching, support for the early years

and improved engagement with education. The aim is they then share learning from various projects with areas facing similar challenges.

One such project is the "glasses in classes" scheme, which is being trialled across 100 schools in Bradford in a £1 million scheme run by the Education Endowment Foundation.

Under the scheme, all reception pupils receive an eye test, the results of which are then shared with parents.

Donelan said the DfE's data found that 2,500 children in Bradford "do not get the glasses they need, and that schools are unaware of their uncorrected eyesight issues."

"In many cases, children were perceived to have problems with reading – provoking the wrong, expensive, educational response – rather than a problem with eyesight."

The DfE is still waiting for the externally verified results from the trial, but Donelan

said the department already knew there had been year-on-year progress, and said she hoped to expand the programme to five more areas in the "coming months", reaching 1,000 more pupils.

If successful, it will be rolled out "more widely".

Another scheme tipped for wider rollout is University College London's Supporting Wellbeing and Emotional Resilience through Learning, or SWERL programme. The DfE is currently supporting 36 schools in Ipswich to implement the programme, and is now rolling it out to schools in neighbouring Felixstowe with "an eye to wider roll-out".

Ministers are also considering a national roll-out of work going on in Bradford to use early years results to "support swift identification across neurodevelopmental areas, including autistic spectrum disorders".

"Again, as we become increasingly confident in helping local areas to adopt effective operational implementation, we have national roll-out in view," said Donelan.





# Labour: How did DfE decide who got £100m?

TOM BELGER

@TOM\_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

Ministers have "serious questions to answer" over school funding bailouts for five councils, Labour has said, with calls for transparency over funding deals and other authorities demanding cash.

Last week the Department for Education revealed that deals totalling almost £100 million had been struck with Bury, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kingston upon Thames, Richmond upon Thames and Stoke on Trent councils.

It said the bailouts targeted councils with the highest dedicated school grant deficits. Other "safety valve agreements" would follow.

The cash would help plug funding gaps in special educational needs and disability provision, although it was dependent on councils making savings.

## 'Ministers need to come clean'

Tulip Siddiq, Labour's shadow children and early years minister, said: "Ministers need to come clean about the criteria that was used to determine which councils should get this extra funding and how much each would get."

Funding ranged from £27 million for Kingston upon Thames to £10 million for Stoke, but the published agreements offer few details on how such sums were reached. Government guidance last year said it would only approach a 'fairly small' number of authorities so detailed talks would be 'manageable'.

A spokesman for the Conservative-run Surrey county council, which estimates its high needs funding deficit is one of the largest in England, said it had not been approached.

Surrey officials believe they have not met the DfE's threshold, but the spokesman added: "The council has, however, been proactively contacting the DfE to engage with them and to understand what additional support may be



available."

He said the council's planned SEND reforms included similar measures to those the DfE had asked of the five authorities that received funds.

Surrey has previously blamed funding shortfalls for its plans to slash £1 million a year in SEND support for 69 mainstream schools.

Richard Wilson, a Lib Dem county council candidate who has campaigned against the "harsh" cuts, asked why Surrey was not in line for a bailout. "Is the government taking the Conservative-controlled council for granted?"

Another Conservative county council with a large deficit, Cambridgeshire, confirmed it had held talks with the DfE, but would be "going back with a plan for further discussion, including making a potential case for further funding".

National Audit Office figures show 49 councils reported school funding deficits in 2018, with 32 ordered to submit "recovery plans" to the DfE.

## Some authorities 'penalised'

Professor Adam Boddison, the chief executive of special needs charity Nasen, welcomed extra funding, but questioned the focus on just a few "hand-picked" councils.

"There should be clear criteria setting out who's eligible and why. It's an issue of equity.

"I hope we won't be relying on individual deals, negotiating authority by authority...

Authorities operating within

their means, perhaps not providing the same level of service, are effectively penalised."

The Local Government Association (LGA) has said the individual agreements addressed "a symptom and not the cause of these deficits", warning of growing demand for education health and care plans and inadequate council powers to manage it.

New LGA research argues the pandemic has widened learning gaps between pupils with SEND and their peers, which were "unlikely to be solved by a quick 'catch-up' initiative". Council leaders also report wider "strained" relations with government and a lack of genuine partnership working and trust.

Meanwhile a cross-party group of MPs claimed this week that support for children with SEND during Covid had been an "afterthought" for the government, and demanded the publication of the SEND review.

## Doing more with less

There are also concerns over the conditions attached to bailouts.

Three councils agreed to meet needs in a "more cost-effective way within mainstream settings" without compromising quality. Some agreed to review services to find savings. Stoke received the smallest bailout, but faces the sharpest cuts to its overspend, agreeing to wipe £16.4 million off its cumulative deficit by 2024.

Campaigners fear some authorities may have to cut support. "The conditions threaten to make circumstances worse," said a spokesperson for SEND Action. "Schools simply cannot do more with less money."

Siddiq added: "The government has serious questions to answer about these bailouts and why they are insisting on further cuts to SEND spending after a decade where children have seen their provision cut back."

But a DfE spokesperson said conditions would drive reforms and improvement in high-needs systems that would "make them more sustainable long term and stop deficits growing". Extra funding would be subject to "strict monitoring" of progress.



Tulip Siddiq

# EDITORIAL

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

## Everyone's Invited poses tricky questions for schools

The Everyone's Invited campaign is incredibly important. The harrowing sex abuse survivor testimony, which has surged since the death of Sarah Everard, is a sobering reminder of just how dangerous our society is for women.

The naming of schools alongside allegations has, in addition to sparking high-profile news coverage, prompted police being called in. It has had a wider impact too, with others saying it has sparked a #MeToo movement within schools.

But it has also posed some thornier issues. Some schools are named solely because the victim was a pupil there, with the testimony making clear the abuse happened elsewhere and by people outside of the school.

What should a school do in this case? It's difficult to investigate the case, as testimony is anonymous, and details omitted.

The campaign's huge impact on encouraging abuse victims to come forward clearly outweighs some schools being collateral damage.

But it's a welcome decision by the campaign to no longer include the name of the school alongside allegations.

They were concerned the resulting media coverage was "implicating certain schools" who were taking a "disproportionate amount of blame that does not reflect reality".

This will ensure the spotlight "isn't just on specific schools - but shone on all schools, all universities and all of society".

Moves by the government to strengthen guidance around these issues are also welcome, and show that they are listening.

While headteachers of some of the schools mentioned said they were unable to investigate the cases, they appreciated the importance of the campaign as allowing them to "play an important role in ensuring that this issue is discussed both inside and outside of schools".

Tackling such issues is what schools do best, and you can be sure they will be at the heart of a culture change.

**SCHOOLS  
WEEK**



**Get in  
touch.**

See page 26



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## Advance sight of exam board questions might be 'good learning experience' for pupils, says Ofqual chair

Angela Edlin

I don't understand why the Department for Education's deputy director thinks it would be unhealthy to cram for the specific questions over the Easter holidays, rather than cram the whole course over the Easter holidays for assessments that are a month earlier than would usually be expected?

Normally, if students want good grades they start studying early (at Easter, Christmas or even September of the previous year) and put in an hour or three per day so they cover all the work several times and have time left for practice questions. They have been told exams are cancelled but really they have been brought forward so there is less time to secure the knowledge they need. I have a child in year 11 and one in year 13; I work with children in another school. I just want them to get the grades that they would in a normal year so they can get on the courses that they want next year.

Huy Duong

While advance sight of exam board questions might be good learning experience for pupils, that misses the point. In normal years, pupils don't need the "good learning experience" that comes from the pre-publication of assessment materials. In normal years, and this year, they can already get this "good learning experience" from past papers and specimen papers. This year, what they need in particular is a solution that mitigates the differences in loss of learning, and that is what the government is asking Ofqual to deliver, not something as vague as "might be good learning experience".

## Ministers 'abandoning' poorest children as £180m pupil premium loss revealed

Ian Mearns MP, @IanMearnsMP

And despite commitment to clarify how and why – still answer came their none!

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

Kevan Naughton

## Will shorter summer holidays become a 2021 reality?

Until there is 'clear and distinct' academic justification for shortening the summer holidays then any decisions become both 'faith based' and unproven. This, unfortunately, leaves the door ajar for criticism of this decision, as being more to reassure worried parents than academically sound. The obvious danger of this is that it could legitimately be seen as politically charged.

If holidays were moved to extend the winter break and build natural circuit breaks into the spring and autumn half-terms, then teachers and the general public maybe much more inclined to support change.

Finally, you cannot forget that teachers have worked long and hard during the pandemic, often already through designated holiday periods and in many cases seven days in a week in reporting positive cases.

The out-of-sight, out-of-mind danger is that, under immense pressure, we now push school leaders and staff to breaking point.

Change can sometimes be for the better but only if it meets tight and rigorous thresholds, which currently have not been met. The response is in danger of appearing knee jerk, rushed and haphazard and an attempt to justify contractual changes. We all should place children at the heart of decision making but avoid the temptation to rush down an unproven path that stores up huge problems further down the line. Sickness and absence in the longer term does little to promote long term improvement.



## Geoff Barton to serve second term as ASCL leader

Ian Hart, @SchoolHart

A very assured hand during the Covid debacle. Headteacher unions seem to have very strong leadership these days.

John Kasino, @johnnykasino

Sorry, disagree. Complete lack of opposition to the hopeless Williamson, and that easy ride at the ASCL conference. Left ASCL in disgust.

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# Feature

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



## Wanted: a landscape architect for the careers service

The skills white paper sets the lofty ambition of a “clear, all-age careers system”. Will a former academic be the man to deliver it? Jess Staufenberg reports

In 2013 Michael Gove had something of an outburst in an education select committee hearing. He’d just axed Connexions, the national careers advice service for young people aged 13 to 19, and retorted in the face of criticism there was “a lot of garbage talked about careers”.

Poor career opportunities for students, the then education secretary thundered, “comes down to our failure to ensure that they are literate, numerate and confident in subjects like science

– not that we have had an insufficient number of well-paid careers advisers.”

Wind forward to 2021 and it would be tempting to say the government is now eating those words. In the recent Skills for Jobs white paper, the Department for Education admits “there is no single place you can go to get government-backed, comprehensive careers information”, adding the careers landscape can be “confusing, fragmented and unclear”.

It would seem to suggest the National Careers Service, set up by Gove the year he axed Connexions, might not be working as a single source of support as intended, and that perhaps the DfE’s careers strategy, published after much delay in 2017 as an “ambitious plan”, is struggling too.

It’s all something of a vindication for Robert Halfon, the education select committee chair, who has claimed “careers support is still far too

## Feature

Sir John Holman

A portrait of Sir John Holman, a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a purple shirt and a grey tweed jacket. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred stone wall.

**“They’re trying to line up two things that are completely separate”**

fragmented” with a “confused mish-mash of offerings” and “wasteful spending and duplication” of services.

Now the skills paper sets the lofty ambition of a “clear, all-age careers system”. A sentence outlines the main strategy towards this: “We will improve both local and national alignment between The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the National Careers Service (NCS)”.

Set up by Nicky Morgan in 2014, and with a new chief executive Oli de Botton at the helm since October, the CEC deploys volunteer “enterprise coordinators” (often local employers) and helps “careers hubs” of schools and colleges support each other. On the other hand, the National Careers Service (NCS) works through subcontractors, who target specific cohorts of adults that worry the government – such as the long-term unemployed – while providing only phone and web services to those aged 13 to 19. Matching the two up sounds a daunting task.

The man appointed to crack it is Professor

Sir John Holman, a chemist at the University of York and now an “independent strategic adviser on careers guidance” to Gavin Williamson.

Holman himself came up with the eight Gatsby benchmarks for good careers guidance that the Careers & Enterprise Company encourages schools and colleges to meet. But can he do it?

“They’re trying to line up two things that are completely separate and different,” says Jan Ellis, the chief executive of the Career Development Institute, a professional body for careers educators. “The Careers & Enterprise Company is an arms-length company of the government, there to help manage careers guidance. The National Careers Service is completely different, it’s a contracted-out organisation. Managing contractors is expensive, so it’s really difficult to say how you would join these up.”

Her words are echoed by Janet Colledge, a careers education consultant on the Quality in Careers Standards Board. “It’s going to be interesting to see how Holman sees the CEC and

NCS working together, because until now the NCS has basically been trying to get people into jobs. It has a very limited remit with young people”.

Holman does give some hints as to what might be in store, expanding on the white paper’s mysterious claim that the DfE has developed “four principles for increasing alignment”. Schools Week can reveal these are completing the national rollout of the careers infrastructure; developing an enhanced national careers service website; better collaboration at an area level; and complementary personal guidance for young people.

His first hint relates to the almost 50 career hubs in the country, which are meant to share best practice and develop local careers strategy. About half of FE colleges (155) and 45 per cent of secondary schools (2,090) are in a careers hub, according to the CEC. “The NCS has area contractors, and the CEC has a growing network of careers hubs, and I’m quite sure we can look at how we can get collaboration happening systematically between those two,” Holman says.



## Feature



Clare Marchant

## “If you’re starting off, you really need that one-to-one support”

It’s not absolutely clear what this means, but it looks like career hub leads in schools and colleges might play a part in linking up with the National Careers Service.

Data should also be shared, he says. “Labour market information, which is all those statistics about different jobs, vacancy rates, opportunities – if we could use that consistently across the two organisations, that would be a big win.” It sounds sensible, but can the DfE easily gather that data from its NCS subcontractors? When *Schools Week* asked the DfE for the numbers of young people who use the NCS each year, it responded that such information was not published and was not something the department could easily access or provide. More worryingly, the same response was given when asked how much funding the NCS has had since it was formed. Aligning data across both bodies sounds an easier task than finding it in the first place.

Holman would also like a “single source of government-assured information used consistently across schools and colleges [...] so schools, colleges and the NCS are all speaking the same language”. If the NCS website proves highly inspiring to students, that sounds sensible too. Given there’s no available data on whether young people find it useful or not, it might be a good idea to get feedback on its design first. A schools expert has previously called the site “as dull as dishwater”. It has to be said, the civil service-format homepage isn’t exactly engaging.

But as Halfon says, it’s a start. “This is a step

forward and it’s a pretty big nod.” Yet he adds that “we need to radically reform careers advice”. He’s with the experts on that.

Olly Newton, the executive director at the education research charity the Edge Foundation, similarly welcomes the “alignment”, but is clear the current ambition is too limited. “My worry about the connection between the services is making sure it focuses enough on face-to-face guidance. Lots of evidence suggests that telephones, the internet and self-help are OK for adults changing jobs. But if you’re starting off or thinking about a future career, you really need that one-to-one support”.

Here we arrive back at Gove’s original distaste for careers advisers. Deirdre Hughes, a careers policy adviser, points out that although Gatsby benchmark 8 says schools and colleges must make sure every student has “guidance interviews with a qualified careers adviser”, they have to buy this in themselves as qualified careers professionals have not been funded for schools since 2012. One helpful alignment would be for the NCS to offer its qualified advisers to students via schools and colleges, she says. At present “the model is to expect teachers to do more”.

It all puts the DfE under pressure to deliver. Worrying statistics are lining up: this week a survey of 10,000 primary school pupils by Education and Employers, a UK-based charity that “connects volunteers from the world of work with schools”, found the career aspirations of seven year-olds were “relatively unchanged” by



Jan Ellis



Deirdre Hughes

age 18. UCAS has similarly found that 20 per cent of students said they couldn’t take the course that interested them because they didn’t have the relevant A-levels.

Clare Marchant, the chief executive at UCAS, says “the more we can do, earlier on, the better”, including year 6. Yet primary schools, and special needs schools and colleges, are not mentioned in the white paper.

All the while, select committees will keep their eagle eyes on the funding spent on the current model: £29 million for CEC last year, up from £19 million the year before (despite Morgan pledging it would be self-funding long term) and undisclosed sums on the NCS. It’s less than the £230 million spent on Connexions, Hughes says, but it’s creeping up – while funded, professional careers advisers in schools and colleges remain nowhere in sight.

In a last sentence, the skills white paper almost seems to guess a more wholesale approach might be needed. The “alignment” will take place over the next 18 months, it says – “as we work towards a longer-term review of the delivery system”. Will that “insufficient number of well-paid careers advisers” come to matter after all?



# Opinion

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**LEORA CRUDDAS**  
CEO, Confederation of School Trusts

## MAT growth: five lessons from staff to get everyone on board

**Staff buy-in is an important part of increasing the scope of MATs. A new survey reveals encouraging trends and work to be done, writes Leora Cruddas**

The secretary of state has recently set an ambition for many more schools to benefit from being part of a strong family – in other words, a trust. He also said: “Multi-academy trusts are powerful vehicles for improving schools by sharing expertise, working collaboratively and driving improvements. It is living proof of the old adage, a problem shared is a problem halved.”

Yesterday Edurio published a report on school staff perceptions of multi-academy trusts. The report is based on their Staff Well-being and Working Conditions survey, which captures over 10,000 school staff views from before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among the report’s findings are five key lessons about what staff think of MATs and how to increase buy-in.

### 1. School staff are more confident that being part of a trust is beneficial

It is great to see a positive trend in the proportion of staff who feel

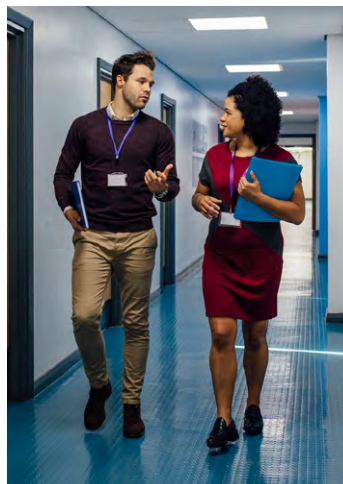
confident about the benefits of being part of a trust. This trend has increased during the pandemic with respondents to the survey saying they really appreciated their trusts’ efforts during the Covid disruption. And it’s not surprising! Groups of

schools working together in trusts have greater strategic capacity than standalone schools. There is a range of ways in which trusts have supported their schools, including safeguarding, interpreting Covid guidelines, developing remote education and integrating this with the curriculum.

### 2. Most school staff agree with their trust’s vision and values

Seven in ten school staff are clear on — and, crucially, agree with — their trusts’ visions and values. A slightly lower proportion, but still a majority of school staff, see the vision and values of their trust embedded into the culture of their school. There is important success to be measured in seeing that proportion grown further.

Dixons Academies Trust provides



an excellent example for those looking to codify their values into their organisational culture. Their approach, the result of vast amounts of work, instils strong learning

**“To follow the government’s direction, it is important we learn continuously**

habits, ultimately helping students become better qualified, more successful and happier.

### 3. Communication is really important

Almost half of school staff surveyed think the information their trust shares with them is useful. Three-quarters approve of the frequency of communication. Staff were particularly positive where information provided by the trust is directly relevant to their responsibilities.

Communication is vital, yet often incredibly difficult to get right. That so many staff value their trusts’ communication throughout the pandemic is testament to the fact that their statutory responsibilities are being carried out very well indeed.

### 4. Trusts need to work harder to reach beyond the school leadership team

The report shows that confidence in the value of trusts was highest among school senior leaders. This too is unsurprising and reflects similar recent findings by Ofsted.

However, just under half of middle leaders, administrative and support staff – and only around one-third of teachers – felt confident that being part of a trust is beneficial. A key lesson is therefore that trusts must work harder to reach beyond school leadership and ensure staff at all levels feel confident the trust adds value.

### 5. Staff need to feel listened to, their feedback sought and acted upon

As with communication, school staff in the survey point out that the needs of some roles are addressed more effectively than others. They highlight the importance of following up with any queries or suggestions to make sure that staff know what is being done as a result of feedback.

If we are to follow the government’s direction of travel, it is important that we learn continuously. Sir David Carter says in his concluding remarks to the report: “Can you identify three elements of the research that you want to develop within your culture over the next year? If you use the report in this way, it is hard to see that the relevance will not add significant value to the conversations you will lead in your trust.”

It is in this way, by learning from reports like this, that we can become the best system at getting better.

# Opinion

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RUTH  
DAVIES

President, NAHT

## Recovery? School leaders need it as much as their students

**Leaders have a chance to rest and reflect over Easter. Ministers should do the same and come up with a plan to support them better, writes Ruth Davies**

Challenging. Exhausting. Stressful. The *School Leadership Supply Crisis* report published today reveals these are the top three words school leaders use to describe their experience of the past year.

The churn of the pandemic has left many leaders contemplating an earlier finish to their careers than they first thought. And SLT members looking at the toll it has taken on leaders are thinking twice about whether running a school is really what they want to do after all.

This is a critical moment. There is a real risk that the school leadership supply pipeline is going to run dry. We need government action to safeguard the wellbeing of leaders across the sector.

Of course, we can take some responsibility for ourselves too. We have been in crisis mode for 12 months and we have now entered recovery mode. We should not move from one to the other without taking a proper chance to take stock of all that we've done

this year.

Hopefully, the Easter break will provide that necessary reflection time for most of us. Because the truth is that the very serious situations we've been battling all year have masked phenomenal achievements.

Challenging. Exhausting. Stressful. Yes, but we have found

“ There is a real risk the school leadership supply pipeline is going to run dry

a solution for every challenge. We have had the resilience to keep going through the daily sense of exhaustion. And we have been equal to every stressful situation. We didn't go under.

It's natural as a leader to look back and focus on what you got wrong. We are a self-critical bunch. But we mustn't let imposter syndrome get the better of us. We must be honest enough to recognise that we've got a lot right during this annus horribilis.

Sure, sometimes it has felt like constantly bailing out water from our boats. But our boats are still afloat. We can point to land on the horizon, giving hope to the staff and young people we work with.



With that in mind, coming through Covid should encourage leaders to feel more confident in their abilities. You're justified in thinking that way. So take a moment to chalk it all up. Chances are, you've done six impossible things before breakfast every day. Probably without even realising it,

making from government. Leadership by diktat is their style. It doesn't seem to matter to them that their guidance has been so consistently poor and of so little use to us during the pandemic. We see the irony even if they don't.

In fact, among the most striking findings of the *School Leadership Supply Crisis* report is that almost three-quarters of school leaders say the government's constantly changing guidance was their biggest challenge of the pandemic. Just think what the system could have achieved for young people if we had had the backing of ministers and the funding to match.

So yes, the coming year will be full of more challenges, exhaustion and stress. But the positive message is that schools have demonstrated time and time again that they are quicker and better at finding solutions to knotty conundrums than Whitehall. Or Cardiff, or Stormont, for that matter.

As you pause over Easter, please reflect on that. You've come so far, and when you start again in April it should be with the full confidence that you can go further still for the young people in your care.

# Opinion

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AZEEM  
MAJEED

Head of Department of Primary  
Care and Public Health, Imperial  
College London

## Now is the time to act on school ventilation

**We can't allow complacency to set in as we battle Covid. Ventilation remains a major issue for schools and now is the time to act, writes Azeem Majeed**

Unless the limitations of current social distancing and infection control measures in schools is properly dealt with, the prime minister's wish to see schools reopen for good could easily be dashed by a third wave.

We understand why keeping schools open is a global priority. We know that school closures have a major impact on the educational and social development of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We know school closures also have economic impacts, and that they disproportionately affect parents in less well-paid jobs.

We are also alive to the concerns of school staff, especially those with underlying medical conditions, those who are older and those with vulnerable household members. Most may now have received their first vaccine dose, but now is not the time for complacency.

The key is ventilation. Until recently, our chief suspect as the primary means of Covid transmission has been larger virus-

containing respiratory particles (droplets). These droplets generally fall to the ground within two metres of their source after a short time, so physical distancing and masks combine to reduce exposure and the risk of infection from them.

However, there is now good evidence that Covid-19 can also be transmitted through aerosols,

particles smaller than droplets that remain in the air over time and distance. Traditional physical distancing measures and standard face masks are less effective in preventing the spread of infection through aerosols, but ventilation can help reduce this risk.

The risk of infection is substantial in poorly ventilated rooms, particularly if there are activities taking place such as singing or talking loudly. Halving the number of these small droplets in the air with no ventilation takes five minutes; but with mechanical ventilation alone, that time is cut to around 1.4 minutes. In a room where a door and window are open, it falls to 30 seconds. Hence, good



ventilation substantially reduces the amount of exposure for a room's occupants and thereby reduces their risk of infection.

Increasing ventilation lowers the concentrations of any viruses that may be in the air. To achieve this and keep a comfortable ambient temperature, more modern buildings commonly use heating and ventilation systems that create

circulation is second to removing them altogether from the ambient air. In more modern schools fitted with ventilation systems, it may be possible at relatively low cost to add air filtration and cleaning devices. The use of additional measures such as HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters can further reduce the risk of infection. Portable HEPA filtration devices are available for schools with no existing infrastructure, but the cost (considering the number of classrooms) will be high.

In short, keeping schools open safely requires urgent action to implement more effective on-site mitigation strategies – with particular attention to ventilation. Failure to implement adequate control measures could result in Covid-19 outbreaks that (even if the spread to staff and community is eventually limited by vaccination) will continue to see children receive unequal levels of teaching and learning.

Combined with other preventive techniques such as testing and the vaccination of teachers and other school staff, as well as novel testing methods such as the regular testing of sewage samples from schools, ventilation can help us take a big step forward in making our schools safer environments for children and staff.

**“ If a third wave is on its way, then we must plan for a better solution now ”**

a mixture of fresh and re-circulated air. Sadly, such systems are often not present in England's schools.

As a result, most schools kept windows and doors open and the heating on for many weeks before the latest closures. If a third (or fourth) wave is likely to be with us by next autumn, then we must surely begin to plan for a better solution for pupils, teachers, school budgets and the environment. For now, every increase in air circulation helps. Switching on a fan blowing air outside when rooms are empty, for example, can help to dilute viral concentration before the next group take their seats.

But diluting concentrations of respiratory particles through



# Opinion

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ANDREW FAUX

Barrister and director,  
Lawyers for Teachers

## Is teacher regulation a sledgehammer to crack a nut?

**The regulator may be 'stronger and clearer', but if it's leaving teachers feeling like empty husks then the balance is still wrong, writes Andrew Faux**

Sometime in 2019, James Morley made a mistake. He joked about his sex life on social media. His pupils found the jokes. One referred to a student's comment during a sex education lesson with a lewd allusion to his own sex life. They told on him. He was sacked. Then he was referred to the Teaching Regulation Agency. Earlier this month, as one of their Professional Conduct Panels sat to decide his professional fate, they noted his stance towards their procedures and their very existence:

"Ban me from teaching, don't ban me from teaching, whatever. I just don't care any more. I worked hard, showed passion and drive, always did the best for my students, but that matters so little to any of the people who make these decisions that I have no interest in ever being professionally involved with them again.

"Have your meeting, make your decision, let me know the outcome and then leave me to live my life that the pathetic idiocy of middle management tried to destroy.

"Best of luck with your pointless endeavour of keeping people who make silly jokes in their own time out of a profession they worked hard to enter. Hope the pay cheque is worth it."

I've worked in teacher regulation since 2005 and can't imagine a stance more likely to get up the nose of those who go about the task

**"I am all too familiar with professionals worn down to a soulless shell"**

of regulating the profession.

The panel heard the case in his absence. A witness was called from the college and a lawyer presented the case against the teacher. Unsurprisingly, the case was proved. The panel went on to say that, despite the teacher's eloquence, he had not "demonstrated any remorse or insight into the gravity of the situation and the inappropriateness of his conduct", and recommended prohibition. Of course, the secretary of state for education agreed and prohibited him from teaching.

At one level there is nothing at all surprising about the outcome. Sticking two fingers up at your regulator is likely to provoke. Yet I have huge sympathy for this



teacher. While it is unusual to read such a heartfelt and anguished summation of the impact of the process of professional regulation on the accused individual, those

of us who work in the sector are all too familiar with professionals "worn down to a soulless shell" by the unwieldy and arcane procedures followed.

The irritation expressed is so close to the irritation I hear from teacher after teacher who find themselves embroiled in the system. That's fine I, I say. Vent your anger. Scream at me. Scream at the wall. But please don't scream at the TRA. Bide your time, remember at the end of the process are three rational individuals – an independent panel – and once we get there we can argue and reason. Don't lose hope. And don't tell them they are only in it for the pay cheque.

There is much wrong with this

system. It was originally set up to provide 'stronger and clearer' regulation and to focus only on the most serious cases. Cases take too long to reach a conclusion and are often prepared with an eye to procedure and process rather than serious substance. But even an improved system has the potential to leave an accused professional devastated.

Such processes should be inflicted only when the public interest truly demands it. I wonder if the profession itself – or indeed the 'ordinary intelligent citizen' that the High Court tells us is the presumed audience for these decisions – would agree with what happened to this teacher. Or has a good teacher been lost from the classroom in circumstances that didn't warrant that outcome, essentially because they cheeked the organisation rather than proffering the expected apology?

The courts have always directed regulators to avoid using "a sledgehammer to crack a nut". I suspect many people will view what has happened here as precisely that.

# Opinion

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SHIVAN  
DAVIS

English teacher, St Joan of Arc  
Catholic School

## Is it time to ditch Accelerated Reader?

**The ubiquitous algorithm to improve children's reading is a blunt tool that could be doing more harm than good, writes Shivan Davis**

Allow me to lay my cards on the table: I don't like Accelerated Reader. I don't trust the accuracy of its Star Reader test. I don't think their quizzes prove a student has actually read a book. I don't like withdrawing my students from lessons every half-term to track their literacy rates. I resent having to trudge through endless sheets of figures. And I am convinced the money thrown at the programme could be better spent.

Of course, I am all in favour of encouraging independent reading and cultivating a culture in which the school library is seen as the beating heart of a school. But I question our blind trust in programmes like AR to recommend texts, track student progress and guide us in setting homework.

At my previous school, AR became a cornerstone of the English department. Almost immediately after its introduction, one lesson a week was given over to independent reading in the library and a policy of setting fortnightly reading

homework was instituted.

Unsurprisingly, library lessons were an instant hit with students. Even more unsurprisingly, it was often not for the right reasons. Students used the lessons as an opportunity to have discrete conversations, play games under the tables or simply stare into space.

“For every minute spent on it, a minute of curriculum time is lost

While AR probably benefitted a minority who already read fluently and for pleasure, it did nothing for the vast majority who didn't.

AR is a blunt tool. Like all blunt tools, connecting it to sanctions only leads to perverse incentives. If students are expected to read a book a fortnight and take a test to prove they have read it, what happens? Students desperately take quizzes on books they haven't read. And teachers, believing in the columns of data output by AR, go on to shrug off the continuing appeal of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Gangsta Granny*. After all, the algorithm has determined these books to be within the students' zone of proximal development.



So over time, behaviour in reading 'lessons' improved. But the quality of the literature did not. Year 9s still read the works of Jeff Kinney and David Walliams and, lo and behold, their reading levels remained relatively low. Given how much curriculum time we allocate to independent reading, is it not incumbent upon us to search for a

better solution?

Interviewed in these pages, the new president of the School Library Association, Richard Gerver, worried that a consequence of budget restraints could be that “one of the first things to go might be the trained librarian”. It is a grim prediction, and one all too likely to come to fruition in a sector that invariably looks to the latest digital product for solutions.

As a profession, we need to think more deeply about trade-offs and opportunity cost. In the case of reading programmes like AR, the opportunity cost is huge. For every minute spent on it, a minute of curriculum time spent on a challenging text with a subject

specialist teacher is lost. So too is the whole-school influence of a passionate librarian.

The personalisation on offer from such data-driven systems is a sham. Not only can an algorithm not replace qualified professionals, but reading can't be reduced to an individual practice. We should read more books as a whole class, guide our students in grappling with complicated narrative structures, idiosyncratic narrative perspectives, enigmatic plots and multi-faceted characters.

David Didau argues schools would be better off spending their budget on a collection of set texts for each year group – “books we decide all our students have an entitlement to”. To narrow the reading gap, he encourages us to model reading aloud instead of opting for independent reading. My experience of AR convinces me he is right.

Many schools halt any effort to foster reading at key stage 4, in part because of the dent AR leaves in their budgets. But what improvement might we see across the curriculum if we truly valued collective reading over data harvesting?

When it comes to teaching, knowledge is power, but data is not intelligence.

## Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



## Book: 10 Things Schools Get Wrong (And How We Can Get Them Right)

**Author:** Jared Cooney Horvath and David Bott

**Publisher:** John Catt Educational

**Reviewer:** Stephen Lockyer, primary teacher

### 10 THINGS THIS BOOK GETS WRONG. (NUMBER 7 WILL SHOCK YOU!)

**1** Now I've used this book's strategy of a clickbait title, let's dig a little further beyond the cover.

**2** The book is clearly a cathartic exercise for its authors, who analyse ten aspects of schooling they evidently find frustrating as researchers. They would perhaps have done better to look at ten things most detrimental to progress and achievement and work back from there. Because, ultimately, taking weak pot-shots at minor peeves like Daylight Savings Time (no, seriously!) seems a little trite given the yawning chasm of inequality exposed by the pandemic.

**3** Announcing that teachers, not researchers, are best placed to say what works makes for a strong start, which is quickly followed by these researchers aiming an irony shotgun to the foot. No teachers are consulted for the remainder of the chapters of this research-led book. It isn't even clear the problems it deals with were even identified in schools.

**4** In a further volley from the irony blunderbuss, *10 Things Schools Get Wrong* adheres to the truism that no 2021 educational research book can be printed without giving 'growth mindsets' a good kicking. Horvath and Bott's has to be one of the strongest, carefully dissecting how complex findings within narrow contexts can be diced into tweet-worthy soundbites and citing Carol Dweck's own tweets as contributing to the hyperbole. For those keen on attacking how research can be wrecked, this chapter is a goldmine.

**5** Both authors are from Australia but make many references to the UK and US education systems. And aside from their extended rant on 'purpose' in Chapter Ten, many of their examples derive from comparisons to other fields. But while there is a strong argument for comparative studies of and in education, some appreciation for the importance of context might have been nice. Without it, this book should come with some sort of warning.

**6** The References and Further Reading section is one page – a link to their online bibliography. This is a brilliantly simple publishing innovation, especially for avid readers

who discover four-fifths of the way through a book that it suddenly concludes. If this catches on, I'll no longer start non-fiction books by appending a post-it note where the book actually ends.

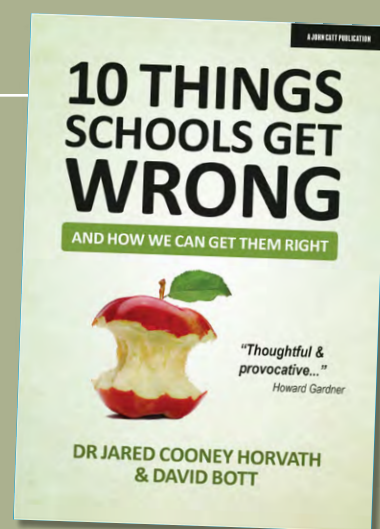
**7** That being said, readers will need a lot of faith in the authors' reference points. One statistic in particular punctured mine.

The writers state that the average UK school spends £400,000 a year on IT. "That seems generous," I thought. So I dug down, only to find the figure comes from a website for... you guessed it, an edtech company.

**8** References aside, many of the book's arguments are convincing. But my sage nodding along was rudely and regularly interrupted by heartfelt but pointless end-of-chapter summaries. "This is wrong! We know it's wrong, but the education juggernaut is driving too fast for us to slow it down," these sections scream. Homework is the perfect example. The authors demonstrate that it is completely ineffective, but their concluding paragraph amounts to 300 words in lieu of a shrug emoticon. \\_ (°) \_/

**9** If you are really keen to scream into the abyss, I'd recommend the chapter on school organisation - the number of days, the start time of school, how long lessons are... The arguments against each are laid out well, with the solution being "but it's so ingrained, we can't really change anything about it". It felt like the equivalent of a medical questionnaire that confirms your condition is terminal. We might not be able to change anything but give us some hope, please!

**10** *10 Things Schools Get Wrong* made me want to make changes. But it also left me feeling like the tiniest of cogs in the most enormous of machines. It's hopelessly idealistic to think we might get a prequel called *10 Things Schools Get Right*. But I'd be very happy with a sequel, *10 Things Schools Got Wrong But Sorted Out in a Way You Can Copy or Adapt This Year*.





# Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Melissa Jane**, class teacher, Castle School, Cambridge

@MelJaneSEN

## Build Back Bolder: Five Choices All School Leaders Can Make

@jonnyuttley

As I write, my timeline is full of reflections on the anniversary of the first Covid-19 lockdown. I don't think I've even begun to process all the grief and anger I've felt over the past year. But throughout, I've been able to rely on my headteacher to make compassionate, ethical decisions in the best interests of our staff and students. This post by Jonny Uttley is a call to school leaders to show this kind of ethical backbone and courage as we move towards rebuilding 'normal'.

While school leaders may criticise the government's 'tone-deaf messaging' about reintroducing graded Ofsted, Progress 8 and league tables, Uttley asks them to acknowledge their own power to either reinforce or resist these measures. Competing with other schools, he argues, is a "zero-sum game": "when we compete with other schools, we seek to gain advantage over other children." This critique gets to the heart of a problem I have always had with mainstream schools, so if more leaders follow Uttley's advice and resist competition, you might see me setting foot in one again.

## TOP BLOGS of the week



### I Am More Than My Survival

@1JamalKhan via @ExpertCitizens

*[Note: This post contains mentions of a suicide attempt]*

Jonny Uttley mentions exclusion and off-rolling as examples of harmful pre-Covid practices we should abandon, which links nicely with my next blog. Exclusion continues to be an incendiary topic, but my personal view is that the most useful perspectives come from those who have been through the process as students.

Here, Jamal tells us how his exclusion aged 15 was followed by imprisonment, untreated mental health symptoms and a suicide attempt in prison, before he was ultimately able to heal after his release by finding community and solidarity through his writing. His is just one story, but as Khan says, "when you tell your own story, you contribute to the healing of all those who have dealt with the same struggles".

### Growing Up Autistic: What it Was Like

@ItsEmilyKaty

Continuing the theme of learning from students' perspectives, this post by blogger Authentically Emily outlines the challenges she faced accessing the curriculum as

an autistic learner. These included struggling with anxiety and perfectionism, difficulty interpreting instructions and uncertainty in social situations.

Emily's post is in the first person, which is important every autistic learner will be different, and she doesn't speak for everyone. However, her post gives examples of the kinds of barriers autistic students might face, such as sensory sensitivities: while Emily hated the feel of socks, other autistic learners might struggle with the sound of a scraping chair, or even really enjoy certain shapes to the point of being distracted by them. The more accounts we have of the way autistic students experience school, the more we can make enabling environments for as many students as possible.

### Not Even Water? Supporting Muslim Staff and Students During Ramadan

@ShuaibKhan26

April 12 this year is likely to mark the beginning of a second Ramadan in lockdown for Muslim colleagues and students. Khan's post is a valuable resource to help those of us who aren't Muslim deepen our understanding of this time of fasting and reflection. Khan explains that while many fasting colleagues won't mind sharing their reflections and experiences, endless well-meaning questions can have a cumulative impact "some do find it unnerving and tiring to repeatedly correct others".

So if your fasting colleague turns down a staff room cup of tea, don't demand an elaborate scriptural justification! It's been a long year for everyone, and the least we can do is ease burdens on each other where we can.

# Research

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

## Could more education happen outside the classroom?

**Loic Menzies, chief executive, The Centre for Education and Youth**

A constant stream of teenagers trickled past my office window last summer. As schools closed their doors to most pupils, a decent chunk of Cambridge's youth hit the meadows to spend a few months dive-bombing their peers - and some distinctly unimpressed swans.

That was a far cry from what happened elsewhere, as research from Natural England makes clear. Their survey of 1,501 eight-to-15-year-olds shows that six in ten children have spent less time outdoors since the start of coronavirus and more than four in five spent less time outside with friends. This trend was heavily skewed by background, with the most dramatic reductions found among children from ethnic minority backgrounds and poorer families.

As with so many of the pandemic's effects, this exacerbated existing inequalities. In 2017 my team and I analysed five years of data on residential trips from over 10,000 establishments (mainly schools). We estimated that 1.8 million pupils participate in such activities each year. But schools serving disadvantaged pupils organise fewer residential trips and when they do, they are less accessible to poorer pupils. The government's 25-year environment plan notes a similar trend, stating that "the poorer you are... the less likely you are to enjoy ready access to green spaces".

But does this matter and, if so, what can be done about it?

It certainly matters to pupils. Seventy per cent of children in Natural England's study said that they want to spend more time outdoors with friends in



future. Meanwhile, an Australian review by Keniger et al categorises the purported benefits of interacting with nature as psychological, cognitive, physiological, social, spiritual and tangible. However, the authors note that studies often depend on self-report, are prone to sampling bias, make their measurements over short timeframes and frequently lack control groups.

On the other hand, there is relatively good evidence for 'adventure learning', with the EEF concluding that there are benefits for academic learning, particularly for vulnerable students and teenagers. Meanwhile, a 2013 meta-analysis found moderate effects for 'adventure therapy'.

A 2017 Defra-funded 'Natural Connections' programme involving 190 schools in the south-west of England had a broader focus. It showed that 90 per cent of the surveyed teachers agreed that learning outside the classroom was useful for curriculum delivery. Unfortunately, not all schools were surveyed and only perceived benefits were measured.

My colleagues and I at CfEY recently made an additional contribution to the evidence base, and the fact that our study took place in the context of Covid

makes it particularly relevant to schools planning for educational recovery.

We used a battery of quantitative measures combined with detailed qualitative work to evaluate Learning through Landscape's My School My Planet Project (MSMP). MSMP was funded through a Heritage Emergency Fund grant and ran in 49 schools last autumn. The programme aimed to re-engage pupils in learning when they returned from the holidays, and to encourage a greater connection to natural heritage through outdoor learning. It particularly targeted disadvantaged ethnic groups and children from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Participating pupils increased their physical activity levels, developed new knowledge and felt more 'useful'. They also described how MSMP helped them strengthen relationships and build new ones. This is particularly important given that ImpactEd has shown pupils are eager for opportunities to spend time with friends.

Sobel notes that learning about nature often means learning about endangered animals in distant countries, which does little to help children connect to what is more immediately around them. It was therefore encouraging to see that even schools with limited playground space made big changes that helped pupils connect to their immediate vicinity as part of the MSMP programme.

The government has pledged to "encourage children to be close to nature, in and out of school"; however, the pandemic has kept many pupils inside. My local teenagers were lucky to have easy (if not entirely legal or safe) access to outdoor space, but as schools reshape their provision, research suggests they could make greater use of outdoor space and, in doing so, help bridge yet another gulf that has widened this year.



# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## FRIDAY

Geoff Barton has been quietly re-elected as general secretary of ASCL with almost none of the fanfare and drama as when he won his first election in 2017.

Barton ran unopposed this time, quite the opposite to the situation four years back, when he was the anti-establishment challenger to the executive's pick in the first contested election in the union's history.

The former secondary head has in the last few years – and the past year especially – earned plaudits for his many media appearances. And few would suggest he's lived up to the "left-wing firebrand" reputation some ASCL insiders feared when he was victorious.

## MONDAY

We were surprised to hear a few weeks ago that attendees at a DfE meeting on school reopening plans were urged not to leak details shared, given the record of the current education secretary.

Allegations that Gav leaked discussions about Huawei's role in the UK's 5G network were back in the news again this week after former PM Theresa May, who famously sacked Williamson from the role of defence secretary in 2019, appeared before a parliamentary committee.

She told the national security strategy committee she felt the incident had caused a "slight judder" in the "freedom" that intelligence agencies needed to give "their best and genuine advice".

It's a good job Williamson is now hidden away in the unimportant job of education secretary, unable to undermine confidence in anything – except maybe his own decisions...

## WEDNESDAY

We all know how much schools-minister-for-ever Nick Gibb values evidence, evidence, evidence. Oh to have been a fly on the wall when the Gibbster was told about the Department for Education's Get into Teaching newsletter promoting the widely debunked VAK learning styles (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic).

After screenshots on Twitter prompted much ridicule, including from the department's own behaviour adviser, the newsletter was promptly deleted.

## THURSDAY

The government is clearly still smarting from a series of victories on free school meals engineered by footballer Marcus Rashford last year.

The England and Manchester United star teamed up with other poverty and education campaigners to make sure ministers repeatedly U-turned on their refusals to extend support over school holidays. He was rewarded with an MBE, but hasn't shied away from criticising subsequent decisions not to extend the vouchers scheme into the Christmas, February and Easter holidays.

But Vicky Ford appears to want a medal too, despite being the minister in charge of free school meals.

She told *Good Morning Britain* she extended FSM cover to "more groups of children" at the beginning of the pandemic and set up the voucher scheme "early on".

Ford also claimed Rashford had been "very supportive" of a move to extend a

winter Covid grant. But as Labour recently pointed out, that doesn't guarantee support to all eligible pupils.

\*\*\*

After Gav admitted the other week that "not every day has been brilliant" during his stewardship of the pandemic, the DfE perm sec threw her hat in the ring for "understatement of the year" this week.

Susan Acland-Hood told the Public Accounts Committee she accepted that the decision to partially close schools in January, after primary schools went back for just one day, had made things "difficult" for leaders.

"I completely understand and accept how difficult it was for school leaders in January because, again, I completely understand that we said one thing and then another."

Tune in next week, when we expect Nick Gibb to admit he's "quite a fan" of knowledge-rich curriculums...

Acland-Hood also, finally, revealed a date for when her department's review of education for children with special educational needs and disabilities would be published.

Last year, education secretary Gavin Williamson admitted the review would report later than hoped, but that it would come in "the early part of next year". I mean, the government has only been working on it since September, 2019.

However, Acland-Hood confirmed today that the green paper would be published "towards the end of June". We await finally seeing the document sometime in, maybe, December?





Newfriars College is passionately committed to harnessing the potential of every student. Do you believe everyone deserves a rich, rewarding and stimulating education? Do you believe that College has a critical role in transforming learning and enriching the lives of students and their families? Would you like to be part of something energetic, innovative and empowering?

Two exciting opportunities have arisen for a Talented Director of Education and Student Experience and a Talented Curriculum Manager of PMLD and SLD provision to join our College.

We are seeking to appoint highly motivated, enthusiastic people who are committed to achieving excellence and ensuring every student succeeds. It is imperative that you have high expectations, ambition, a love of challenge and a determination to make a difference to the lives of our fantastic students.

Application packs from: [morag.dunster@newfriarscollege.org.uk](mailto:morag.dunster@newfriarscollege.org.uk)

Completed applications to be returned by e-mail to [rob.millington@newfriarscollege.org.uk](mailto:rob.millington@newfriarscollege.org.uk)

Closing date: **8th April 2021**



## Deputy Headteacher for Pinn River School

**Salary:** L11 – L16; £57,436 – £64,514 per annum

**Contract:** Permanent, Full – Time

**Start Date:** September 2021

The Trustees of the Eden Academy Trust are looking to appoint a Deputy Headteacher for Pinn River School. The position offers a unique opportunity to play a senior role in the Trust's Free School Project which will culminate in the building of two new special schools over the next three years.

Prior to the opening of the Pinn River School, the new Deputy Head will have a vital role to play in the development of the school, supporting the temporary relocation of Grangewood to the Grand Union Village site and the bringing together of Grangewood and Sunshine House Schools into a new single school.

To find out more about this exciting opportunity, please view our full-page advert [here](#).

**Closing Date:** Monday 19th April at noon

**Interviews:** Tuesday 27th April 2021

## Pathway Lead for Languages, Communications & Arts (specialising in English)



**Do you share our determination to give the most vulnerable children and young people the best chances to succeed and thrive in the future?**

Are you a dedicated, committed and experienced teacher and leader, who can inspire and deliver the very best learning opportunities to our students?

We are seeking a Pathway Lead to develop and manage a cluster of subject specialisms, including English at Olive AP Academy – Thurrock and with the potential of working in our Havering academy as well in the future. We are an alternative provision academy which has up to 96 students aged between 11 and 16 on roll at any one time. Our staff support young people who have been placed at the academy for a period of intervention work following a permanent exclusion from a mainstream school. The academy also supports young people with medical needs.

Just 40 minutes from central London by train, Olive AP Academy – Thurrock is based in Tilbury. Our brand new purpose built building opened to staff and students in summer 2017 and has specialist teaching and activity rooms, a hair and beauty studio, outdoor gym, art room and science lab.

**Please download an application pack to find out more about the role.**

**Salary:** Leadership 1 – 5 Fringe £43,356 – £47,737

**Hours:** Full time

**Contract:** Permanent

**Start date:** 1 September 2021 (or earlier)

**Location:** Olive AP Academy – Thurrock, Tilbury, with potential of working in our Havering academy

**Closing date for receipt of applications:**

**Monday 19 April 2021 (noon).**

**Interviews to be held at Olive AP Academy – Thurrock in Tilbury on 22 or 23 April 2021.**

Please email your completed OA application form and equalities monitoring form to [susie.tyler@oliveacademies.org.uk](mailto:susie.tyler@oliveacademies.org.uk). Please note we cannot accept CVs.



## Headteacher

Wesley Methodist Primary School, Bury

Wesley Methodist Primary School is a school with a strong community, and it encourages all of our pupils to shine like stars.

This is an exciting opportunity for an exceptional and inspirational leader who has the aspiration, integrity and ability to help shape the next phase of the Wesley Methodist Primary School's journey.

The ideal candidate will be a professional with a track record of successful leadership and a commitment to ensuring that our school continues to be a happy and thriving environment where young people can flourish.

Working alongside a supportive senior leadership team,

committed Governors, and a strong Trust with aspiration and integrity, our new headteacher will promote excellence, equality and have high expectations of all pupils within a strong Christian ethos.

To find out more, please visit: [www.joinwesley.co.uk](http://www.joinwesley.co.uk)

Key dates:

- **Closing date:** 12 April 2021 at 12:00pm
- **Shortlisting:** 14 April
- **Final interview:** w/c 26 April

For an informal discussion about the school or for more information on the Epworth Education Trust, please contact Mrs Julie-Ann Hewitt, CEO, [ceo@epworthtrust.org.uk](mailto:ceo@epworthtrust.org.uk)



Bacup & Rawtenstall Grammar School

## Deputy Headteacher

Required for September 2021

Salary Scale: L22-26

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding candidate to the full time, permanent post of Deputy Headteacher.

As the sole Deputy in this large, academically successful and oversubscribed 11-18 grammar school, you will have a critical role in supporting the Headmaster in the strategic leadership and day to day management of the school. This is an exciting opportunity for an outstanding teacher and leader to take on a significant and wide-ranging whole school responsibility; this post offers outstanding preparation for headship.

Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar school is situated in the Rossendale Valley, within easy reach of Manchester and the Yorkshire Dales.

The successful candidate will have specific responsibility for the safeguarding, pastoral care and welfare of students and staff.

Further details and application form available on the school website <https://www.brgs.org.uk/job-vacancies/deputy-headteacher>



Vacancy

## Director of Learning and Development

### Pay Range:

L26-L31 (£76,141 - £88,187)

**Contract:** Permanent, Full-time

**Start date:** 1st September 2021

The role of Director of Learning and Development is a hugely significant one for the Trust as this role will directly support the Executive Director of School Improvement to develop and implement the Trust's school improvement model and associated curriculum framework.

In addition to an impressive track record of school improvement, you will have superb leadership skills and the credibility to motivate and empower others. You will have a clear vision for how coordinated professional development at all levels can support the achievement of improvement in teaching quality and improved pupil outcomes across all Trust schools.

Contact **James Hill** (Executive Director of School Improvement) on **07725 984363** for informal conversation.

Information Pack can be downloaded from [www.drbignitemat.org](http://www.drbignitemat.org)

Email applications to [rhawkins@drbignitemat.org](mailto:rhawkins@drbignitemat.org)

**Closing Date:** Friday 16th April 2021

**Interviews:** TBC



## HEAD OF SCIENCE FACULTY

MPS (Outer London) + TLR 1C (£13,518)

We are looking to appoint a dynamic and outstanding practitioner to lead our successful Science Faculty from September 2021. The successful candidate will have the ability to embrace the inclusive culture and ethos of the school. A strong commitment to raising achievement and standards is required, along with an informed and creative approach to the curriculum delivery and the use of new technologies to support learning in the full range of courses including large cohorts at A Level and BTEC Level 3.

Continuing professional development for our Middle Leaders is at the core of everything we do and you would be joining an organisation which would offer numerous career developments to Senior Leadership and beyond.

**Closing Date:** Noon, Saturday 17 April 2021

**Interviews:** To be confirmed

**Start date:** September 2021



# HEADTEACHER

**Full Time, Permanent, Required for September 2021**

**Salary L17 - L 23**

**£62,570 - £72, 497**

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 strong commitment to achieving success through partnership and teamwork
- A strong commitment to the 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 – we guarantee you will fall in love with them.
- 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 so proud of our school, 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 Jilly Geering (PA to the Director of Primary Education) to arrange your visit via email: [recruitment@bdac-academies.org](mailto:recruitment@bdac-academies.org)

| Timeline                |                               |  |                           |  |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Closing date:</b>    | Monday 12th April 2021 at 9am |  | <b>Tour dates:</b>        |  |
| <b>Shortlisting:</b>    | Tuesday 13th April 2021       |  | Wednesday 24th March 2021 |  |
| <b>Interview: Day 1</b> | Monday 19th April 2021        |  | Thursday 25th March 2021  |  |
| <b>Interview: Day 2</b> | Tuesday 20th April 2021       |  | Friday 26th March 2021    |  |

*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.bdac-academies.org/bdac-business/bdac-policies/](http://www.bdac-academies.org/bdac-business/bdac-policies/)*

**For the Full Job Description and Application Form please visit**

**<https://www.bdac-academies.org/employer-of-choice/vacancies/>**



**JOB TITLE:** HEAD OF SCHOOL

**LOCATION:** SHENSTONE SCHOOL

**SALARY / SALARY RANGE:** L19-L24

**CLOSING DATE:** 30/04/2021

**INTERVIEW DATE:** WEEK COMMENCING 17/05/2021

**START DATE:** 01/09/2021



**SHENSTONE  
SCHOOL**



As the Head of School you will work alongside the Executive Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team, Governing Board, TKAT Trust and staff to develop the shared vision and strategic plan, which serves to inspire and motivate pupils and all other members of the school community. You will lead on teaching and learning and help to ensure that we consistently offer an environment which enables each child to achieve their full potential through the provision of quality teaching and learning at our specialist school setting.

Shenstone School is a special school for pupils who have severe and/or complex learning difficulties within the London Borough of Bexley. Shenstone School is located on two sites, Sidcup (for younger pupils) and Crayford (for older pupils). We work hard to ensure that Shenstone is a safe, happy, welcoming and truly outstanding place for our pupils to thrive. Our school benefits

from impressive facilities across the two sites, enabling us to offer a wide range of opportunities and activities for learning both inside and outside the classroom.

For more information about the role please email [admin@shenstone-tkat.org](mailto:admin@shenstone-tkat.org)/phone the office on **0208 302 1743** and request a virtual meeting or COVID risk assessed face to face meeting with the Executive Head Teacher.

**Professional qualifications required –**

- Is a qualified teacher with QTS
- Experience of senior leadership in a school (NPQSL/ NPQH)
- Evidence of relevant CPD
- **Experience in a special school setting is essential**



For further information and to apply please visit

<https://careers.cranmereducationtrust.com/vacancies>

## Strategic Director of Teacher Training and Development

GBP £62,570 - £69,031 per year

We want to appoint a knowledgeable, skilled and experienced professional to lead both our Initial Teacher Training arm, Manchester Nexus, and the Teaching Hub for Oldham and Tameside, based at The Blue Coat School, Oldham.

S/he will be committed to driving and shaping the quality of teacher training and professional development to achieve the best provision for children and young people, and will be steeped in the curricula for initial and early career development, with significant experience and understanding of the development of NPQs.

S/he will be a strategic thinker and planner, able to inspire and empower others through a clear and compelling vision for developing the profession, and an effective manager and communicator who can operationalise the planning, working collaboratively and astutely with colleagues across the region and the system.

This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check.

**Closing date for applications:** 9am, 14th April 2021

**Interview date:** 22nd and 23rd April 2021



# Chief Finance and Business Officer

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join our successful and ambitious Trust, due to retirement of the current postholder following a long and successful career. We would like to recruit an outstanding individual who can share the Trust's ambition and aspirations. The successful candidate will ideally know how schools operate and will have the ability to further develop the financial systems across the Trust, working closely with the Executive Team to support the operational and strategic objectives of Connect.

Reporting to the CEO, the CFBO is responsible for overseeing the successful and highly effective delivery of financial and business management across the Trust, leading a highly efficient service. In addition, the CFBO will help shape the strategic development of the Trust and add value at the Trust board level. The post-holder will play a leading role operationally across the organisation and manage all commercial decision making and third-party negotiations, delivering high quality outcomes. Ideally, you will have also managed financial and business strategies, as well as experience of leading a team in a fast-paced environment.

Working alongside senior leaders, you will ideally be ACCA/CCAB/AAT4 qualified, although this is not essential and have experience of working with school/Trust budgets. In addition, you will take a keen interest in the financial viability of projects and advising as necessary to all levels of leadership and Trustees. If you are a solution focussed, ambitious person, who likes the mix of both hands on and strategic challenges, then this could be the role for you. The key priority is to find the right person for the post who will help shape the future direction of the Trust.

## The CFBO role includes:

- Exciting opportunity to support the development of the central structure and systems
- Overseeing all financial management and reporting
- Overseeing HR, Estates Management, Health and Safety and other Trust Business
- Completing all DfE and ESFA returns on time
- Working closely with the Trustees, CEO, Trust ELT and Trust SLT

Salary Range £43857 - £54956, depending on experience, skills and qualifications. This is a full time, permanent position, based at Leigham Primary School, although frequent visits to other schools and meetings will be required.

If this sounds like a position you could thrive in, then we would love to hear from you! If you are keen to find out more, then please contact us via [admin@connectacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@connectacademytrust.co.uk) to arrange for an informal discussion and hopefully the opportunity to look around our schools, bearing in mind the current national lockdown we are in.

The deadline for applications is **Monday 19th April (midday)** with interviews planned for Tuesday 27/4/21, to be confirmed. All applications must be submitted using the Connect application form that is available here, and emailed to [admin@connectacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:admin@connectacademytrust.co.uk). CVs or similar will not be considered. Anticipated start date: June to September 2021, depending on experience and availability. Actual start date and induction programme to be agreed.

*Connect is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS criminal record check.*





### Our Vision

Camden is a place where everyone has a chance to thrive and where nobody gets left behind.

# CPD Support Officer Camden Learning £30,000 circa

Camden Learning is a local education partnership established in 2017 and jointly owned by and Camden's schools and Camden Council. It was created for the benefit of all our children and schools, with a core focus on school improvement.

We have made good progress in building Camden Learning and developing greater capacity locally for a school-led system. We have a strong relationship with schools and have worked closely with leaders to put the architecture in place to provide stronger and more creative connections between them. Working with and through our school members, Camden Learning has made significant progress and all Camden's schools are currently graded Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

We are looking to appoint a CPD Support Officer to support the delivery of Camden Learning's continuous professional development (CPD) offer to Camden's schools and other customers and stakeholders. The post holder will proactively assist with the implementation, planning and delivery of the Camden Learning CPD offer.

The role will require contributing fully to service improvements and developments, policy and best practice, and support quality assurance processes for the CPD offer. The successful applicant will work collaboratively with the Managing Director, all members of the Business Development Team, School Improvement Team, STEAM and Partnerships Team, Camden's schools, Camden Council's school facing

teams, and all other stakeholders. We are a small organisation so would expect the CPD Support Officer to work flexibly and proactively within our team.

We are looking for someone with the ability to operate independently, making decisions and judgements in the context of a complex school's landscape, generating innovative ideas and practical solutions for service initiatives, improvement, and partnership opportunities. To make a success in the role you should have effective personal management skills, acting proactively, flexibly, and constructively, bringing energy and focus to the work of the team.

Our member schools are committed to working together for the good of all Camden children and young people, and Camden Learning is the glue that binds them together locally. They have a strong sense of belonging and pride in Camden and its communities, and you would enjoy working with them.

For further details of the role or to discuss any aspect of the job opportunity please contact Camden learning via [customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk)

The closing date for submission of applications will be **Wednesday 31st March**. To apply, please send your CV accompanied by a statement of application which should be no more than two pages of A4. Please send to [customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@camdenlearning.org.uk)

This role will be subject to an enhanced DBS check





16 - 30 JUNE 2021 | ONLINE



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The annual

# FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

ONLINE | 16-30 June 2021



## INSPIRING KEYNOTES

Hear from leading educationalists and thought leaders during our daily broadcasts.



## CPD DAYS

Our Friday Fest days will feature invaluable CPD opportunities for all education professionals, with over 50 sessions.



The 2021 Festival of Education will take place online across two inspiring weeks and will be free for educators across the globe.



# #EDUCATIONFEST

## JOIN US AT THE PREMIER EDUCATION EVENT OF THE YEAR!

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