

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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- Investigation reveals million-pound exit fee as first deals expire
- Leaders also fear legal disputes and inheriting huge repair bills

TOM BELGER | @TOM\_BELGER

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# SCHOOLS WEEK

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# Special school 'ineffective' during pandemic, says Ofsted

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EXCLUSIVE

A special school judged to be ineffective in providing education during the pandemic has been criticised by Ofsted for setting "time-filling activities rather than education".

Inspectors also warned that safeguarding failures such as damaged electrical sockets and missing fire extinguishers meant pupils were "not safe" at Unified Academy in Surrey, part of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT).

The judgment came after a remote monitoring inspection in March.

Ofsted has carried out remote inspections of schools graded 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' since January 25. Onsite monitoring visits resumed on Tuesday.

Sean Harford, Ofsted's national director of education, last week revealed the remote visits had identified ten schools that "weren't taking effective action" to provide education during the pandemic.

While the full number of remote inspections is not available, the watchdog completed about 300 between January and March alone.

It said reports on three schools identified as "not taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances" had been released. However, *Schools Week* could only locate two.

## 'Failed to ensure that all pupils receive an education'

Schools are usually given 48 hours' notice before a monitoring inspection. However, the inspection of Unified Academy (UA) on March 2 began on-site "at 15 minutes notice due to significant concerns about safeguarding". The second day was carried out remotely.

Inspectors ruled that safeguarding was "not effective" and the school was "not taking effective action" to provide education in the pandemic.

UA is a special school for boys with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties.

Ofsted found leaders "failed to ensure that all pupils received an education" during the



national restrictions. Pupils at home were provided worksheets in limited subjects, which did not take account of their literacy needs. "Many tasks are time-filling activities rather than education," inspectors said.

While pupils on-site were supported with reading, those at home did not have "similar support".

Leaders have provided "extensive" safeguarding training for staff, yet it remained ineffective, said Ofsted. The school did not act to repair damage to a refurbished building, which meant "pupils are not safe".

During their visit inspectors also pointed out risks such as damaged electrical sockets and missing fire extinguishers.

"These issues would have been seen by many adults at the school, all of whom should have instigated urgent action but did not," inspectors said.

Laurie Cornwell, OHCAT's deputy chief executive, said it was "disappointed" with the judgment. She acknowledged while improvements were needed, the report did not reflect the "tremendous hard work" of staff during a "challenging year".

A new principal has since been appointed.

Ofsted has said the remote inspections were to reassure parents and support school improvement. Full graded inspections are due to return from September.

Previous guidance said the power to treat monitoring inspections "as full inspections will only be used in exceptional

circumstances".

However, the watchdog does not appear to have used these powers in this instance.

## Remote teaching lacks 'coordination and consistency'

West Melton Primary School in Rotherham was also judged as "not taking effective action".

Until "very recently" the school's management of Covid-19 was "weak", with staff reporting they did not feel safe. The school closed to all pupils in October last year because of the high proportion of staff isolating.

Inspectors said the school had taken "recent and decisive" action to strengthen leadership, which "quickly put in place much-needed changes for safer working and remote learning".

Elsewhere, inspectors said the school's remote learning had "lacked coordination and consistency", resulting in an "ad-hoc approach and low levels of pupil participation".

Before "very recent improvements", Ofsted said a quarter of pupils were not completing the work set and the remote education policy published on the school's website "has not matched what has been happening".

Provision for pupils with SEND were also found to be "inconsistent", while support from its local authority "had limited impact".

West Melton did not respond to requests for comment.

# £125k fails to attract boss for 'orphan' trust

TOM BELGER

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EXCLUSIVE

An academy trust for schools struggling to find sponsors is facing its own struggle to find a chief executive – despite offering an annual salary of £125,000.

Falcon Education Academies Trust was launched as part of a government pilot in 2019 to turn around "orphan" schools in the north of England.

But Gareth Mason, its former chief executive, left in unexplained circumstances last year, and Covid has delayed expansion plans.

A recent recruitment drive failed to secure a new permanent chief executive – a further setback for the fledgling trust and the Department for Education.

Minutes for January's board meeting show trustees said the salary could be to blame, even though the job advert offered "circa £125,000, negotiable for the right candidate" and flexible working.

Trustees also said the trust's pilot status and its small size might "inhibit applications," suggesting its government-backed mission to transform under-performing schools failed to tempt recruits. Applicant numbers were "disappointing", in spite of an executive search as well as public adverts.

The trust also agreed to pay Outwood Grange Academies Trust, chaired by its own chair David Earnshaw, to help with recruitment. A Falcon spokesperson said selection was on a "best-value basis," with services at cost price.



One board member had questioned "why the trust needs to pay for [a] recruitment package at all", but was told the trust was "already facing capacity issues".

Minutes from October underlined the importance of the trust to the DfE and its involvement in decision-making. They note that the "DfE and minister expect a permanent CEO to be in place sooner rather than later", that the secretary of state "is keen for this to be a success" and a DfE representative planned to observe interviews.

The job was advertised in December, but five months later a spokesperson confirmed that the post remained unfilled, although interviews were held.

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act also throw up fresh questions over Mason's brief tenure.

Minutes for earlier meetings last summer suggest the former chief executive, on secondment from Delta Academies Trust, had been on the brink of a permanent appointment.

They show Earnshaw planned to begin the process by meeting Mason to review performance and set targets for the new academic year, aiming

to complete it by the end of September.

But by late October it emerged Mason had left, with Falcon, Delta and the DfE declining to explain why.

Accounts published earlier this month reveal further challenges at Falcon, which has a remit to improve schools enough to attract other MATs to take them on.

It had planned to have three schools by the end of last August before eyeing further expansion.

But its first school – Thornaby Academy in Stockton-on-Tees – only joined in September, and a second – Royds Academy in Leeds – joined last month.

The accounts blamed Covid, which they said posed a "major risk" of cashflow problems and a budget deficit.

But a Falcon spokesperson said Thornaby was making "excellent progress", while there were significant changes to support school improvement at Royds.

"Gareth Mason's secondment as CEO was for a year from September 2019, after which the trust agreed to make the role of CEO permanent," he added.

Anne-Marie Holdsworth, the interim chief executive, and Chris Mitchell, the director of education, made an "exceptionally good team" and recruitment had therefore been put on hold "for now".

But a new recruitment drive began last month for a principal at Royds, offering up to £97,273.

A DfE spokesperson said it was working closely with Falcon to "make sure they have the right leadership in place" and support schools to raise standards.

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## More evidence needed to defend high salaries for trust CEOs

Defences of high salaries for the chief executives of academy trusts are not "evidence-based or robust enough" to withstand government scrutiny, according to experts.

The Academies Financial Handbook says executive pay must be "reasonable and defensible". Trusts paying leaders more than £150,000 have received letters ordering them to justify decisions.

Emma Hughes, the head of HR at law firm Browne Jacobson, told a Confederation of School Trusts event last week that "discussing pay is emotional and can be drawn out if not handled properly".

"In our experience those procedures can then become quite clunky without planning and preparation, and evidence used to justify a salary decision when that letter comes in is often then not evidence-based or robust enough – it lacks rigour."

But she also warned the government's £150,000 threshold was "inappropriate" and "simplistic," making it harder to recruit or promote strong performance.

Her colleague Tom Wallace said trusts often "go wrong" in comparing pay to another single trust. "You don't know what evidence they used."

*Schools Week's annual CEO pay investigation*

found 29 leaders earning £200,000 or more – and revealed data collection problems had held up the government's clampdown.

Hughes spoke of "bubbling tension" over executive pay as a teacher pay freeze hit and Covid bruised schools' and parents' finances.

This made trust decisions "more challenging than ever. Would it be right to reward executives disproportionately?"

A DfE spokesperson said most trusts paid reasonably, but it would continue to challenge excessive pay. Plans on its letter-writing would be set out "in due course once quality assurance of the underlying data is complete".



# Two years on and Timpson wants action

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EXCLUSIVE

The author of a landmark exclusions review has secured a crunch meeting with ministers to kick them into action over promised reforms.

This week marks the two-year anniversary of Edward Timpson's review, but the government has implemented just six of its 30 recommendations. No action has been taken on 12.

The Department for Education agreed to all the proposals "in principle", including making schools accountable for the pupils they excluded, and a shake-up of alternative provision (AP).

Advisers who served on the review's reference group have also called for action.

Timpson, a former Conservative children's minister, told *Schools Week* the recommendations were needed "even more" since the pandemic, adding some of the "real gamechangers" on exclusion were yet to be implemented.

The Conservative MP for Eddisbury is to have a "serious, sit-down discussion" with the DfE about progress, but believes there has been "no change of direction or heart" from the government.

"I know the last year has been extremely difficult, but with a good run between now and the end of this year, there's every reason to believe that real progress can be made with many more of these recommendations," he said.

"What I want to really understand is, apart from Covid, what is it that is holding back the ability to make real and meaningful progress?"

He said there was "by and large" unanimity on recommendations that would have "a positive impact for the children they are there to help".

Analysis by IntegratED, a coalition of organisations tracking the review's progress, shows partial action on the remaining 12 recommendations. But responses to consultations from 2019 are still to be published.

One of Timpson's suggestions, yet to be implemented, was a practice improvement fund "of sufficient value, longevity and reach" to identify children in need of support and deliver "good interventions for them".

Timpson told *Schools Week* the fund was "not a big ask" and "great" value for money.

Kiran Gill, an AP expert who served on the reference group for the review, said schools were



Edward Timpson

"stepping into the breach where there is a gap from government".

"They are not waiting for permission," the chief executive of the education charity The Difference said. "What's definitely needed is leadership from government. Schools can't do it all – they need funding and support."

Dr Jeffery Quaye, an adviser to the review, praised the government's work so far, but said the full implementation of recommendations should be "at the centre of its agenda".

Another key suggestion said schools should be made accountable for the results of excluded children.

"Unless there's a serious attempt to turn that recommendation into reality, then many of the other recommendations won't have the power and impact," Timpson said.

Delays came before Covid-19. A consultation on children not in school – which relates to the recommendation of tracking all pupil moves – concluded in June 2019.

The response is yet to be published, despite government guidance that all departments should publish consultation responses within 12 weeks.

Whitney Crenna-Jennings, associate director at the Education Policy Institute, said it was "more

critical than ever" to have better information on pupils' movement as those most at risk of exclusion "have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic".

Timpson praised Ofsted's plan to downgrade a school's leadership and management to 'inadequate' if it off-rolled. But the watchdog has no data on the impact of this yet because of the pause in inspections following Covid.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the delayed SEND review would look at reforms to improve outcomes for pupils in AP "who are most at risk of expulsion and disengaging from education". Publication is expected at the end of next month.

## EXCLUSION REVIEW PROGRESS: IN NUMBERS

30

RECOMMENDATIONS

12

NO ACTION

12

SOME ACTION

6

IMPLEMENTED

## 'Expulsion is not the right word'

Edward Timpson is "not keen" on using the word "expulsion" to describe permanent exclusions.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, used the term twice in his speech to a Confederation of School Trusts (CST) conference last week.

Williamson said the change in terminology was because "we need to make a differentiation between those children who are being suspended from school for a short period, as against those who are permanently excluded".

The government's response to the Timpson review said it would return to "suspension" for fixed-term exclusion and "expulsion" for permanent exclusion to prevent "confusion".

But Timpson said his review was not asked to look at this specifically and he was "surprised" to see the comment.

"Expulsion sounds too definitive, as if you are being removed from education all together. As I said in my report, exclusion from school should never be exclusion from education."

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# Brexit blamed for failure to make grammars more inclusive

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EXCLUSIVE

The government has claimed that Brexit hampered its monitoring of efforts to make grammar schools more inclusive, after admitting that the proportion of poorer pupils attending them rose by less than a percentage point in five years.

Department for Education data shows that, as of January 2020, 7.5 per cent of grammar school pupils had been eligible for free school meals over the previous six years. In January 2015, that figure was 6.9 per cent. The national rate is over 20 per cent.

The DfE launched a £50 million-a-year selective school expansion fund in 2018. In exchange for expansion cash, schools had to put a plan in place to admit more poor pupils.

But *Schools Week* revealed last year that just 77 additional pupil premium places had been created in 14 of the 16 schools first awarded expansion money, despite the number of overall places in the same schools increasing by 367.

Also in 2018, the DfE signed a memorandum of understanding with the Grammar School Heads' Association (GSHA), which included an agreement to report progress towards an "upwards trend of numbers of disadvantaged children being admitted to selective schools".

But minutes obtained by *Comprehensive Future* show that only five meetings about the MOU have taken place, with little progress data shared.

The DfE claimed its meetings had been "interrupted by the need to reprioritise activity towards delivering Brexit and supporting the schools sector on Covid-19".

*Comprehensive Future* chair Dr Nuala Burgess said the latest figure for poorer pupils was "shocking" given "how much money has been thrown at selective schools to encourage outreach and widening access work".

She added: "It seems clear that the DfE takes little interest in this work, and to blame the pandemic for disrupting the work of widening access to grammar schools is poor."



Dr Mark Fenton, chief executive of the GSHA, acknowledged that meetings had been "a bit start-stop on the DfE's part", but said efforts by schools to become more inclusive had carried on "regardless".

Fenton admitted that his organisation did not collect data on its members' pupil premium rates "since it's better to use official data collected through the annual school census", and had not been asked to do so by the DfE.

But he cautioned against comparing grammar schools' overall pupil premium rate with the national figure "since pupil premium children are not evenly distributed across the country".

Meeting minutes do offer some examples of how grammar schools have changed their systems. Some have moved the admissions test to weekdays, while others have reduced the pass mark for disadvantaged pupils.

Fenton said grammar school intakes were getting "ever closer to matching the profile of their local area, but we are working to overcome deep-seated issues which begin years before children get anywhere near applying".

## Grammars turn to 'test familiarisation' scheme

The minutes also reveal that 29 grammars are now using an online "test familiarisation" programme hosted by software company Frog Education.

The pilot project, paid for by the GSHA, provides a portal and materials to get poorer

pupils used to the test format and types of questions. The annual cost is £750 per school, with unlimited access for between 100 and 150 disadvantaged children per year.

The GSHA insisted that the familiarisation programme was not the same as tutoring, but Burgess said she was not convinced. "It begs the question: when does 'familiarisation' become 'tuition'?" she asked.

"If 10 hours' practice is good, isn't there even more advantage for anyone who can pay for 15 hours, 20 hours or more?"

But Steve Holt from Frog Education told *Schools Week* the system was designed only to be used by disadvantaged children, and could not be accessed by paying customers.

Tim Harris, head of Colyton Grammar School in Devon, said the programme had contributed to an increase in the proportion of pupil premium children at the school from below 4 per cent to 9.2 per cent in five years.

He said the approach was not about tutoring, but rather "demystifying the entrance tests and the nature of the kind of school, making people realise that this is a school for everybody".

The GSHA hopes to extend the programme to all its members.

The DfE said it hadn't asked the GSHA to provide data on disadvantaged pupil attendance as this was already available through the census. It also said the information shared by grammar schools during the meetings was "consistent" with the terms of the MOU.



## Investigation

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## DfE steps in to ensure PFI school handovers go to plan

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EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education has launched a new unit to help transfer the first private finance initiative (PFI) schools back into public hands.

It comes as an investigation by Schools Week can reveal one school faces a £1 million exit fee to change its maintenance firm after the deal ends.

Flawed contracts and schools' limited bargaining power could also see some sites handed over in a run-down state and spark legal battles as growing numbers of PFI contracts expire.

## Seven schools to get DfE help

Successive governments have used PFI to fund new schools since the late 1990s. Private firms build and maintain sites in exchange for mortgage-style payments, typically for 25 years, before handing them over to taxpayers.

The DfE recently launched a contract expiry unit, helping schools whose PFI deals expire soonest in a signal of just how difficult such handovers could prove. The DfE has sponsored more PFI projects than any other department.

Its four-strong team is supporting seven schools whose PFI deals expire in the next five years.

A freedom of information request by Schools Week reveals they will help school leaders assess what condition buildings are, and should be, in before handover.

One of those getting help is Barnhill Community High School, in west London, which opened in 1999 under the first school PFI deal.

Tracey Hemming, chief executive of the Middlesex Learning Partnership trust, which runs Barnhill, said it began pre-expiry talks with PFI operator Bellrock in 2019.

But she said progress was slow even agreeing what condition the site should be in at handover, and she fears running out of time before expiry in 2024. She blamed "terribly vague" contracts, and said it suited PFI firms to stall talks.

## Formal disputes and bullet payments

A quarter of public bodies surveyed in a National Audit Office report last year said contracts had no information on asset condition at handover. More



Barnhill Community High

than one-third expected formal disputes.

Hemming said Barnhill's contract includes a £1 million "bullet payment" if it wants to replace Bellrock as facilities manager – even after the deal and their ownership end.

Disagreements are also likely over schools' current condition. "How do you prove a boiler has ten years' life or two?" said Hemming.

Dominic Richardson, a complex projects specialist at law firm Gowling WLG, said schools risked "wholesale closures during term" if repairs were only agreed last-minute.

A recent Public Accounts Committee report warned of "misaligned incentives". While schools will want sites repaired and upgraded before contracts expire, PFI firms may prefer minimising spending.

"Of most concern are the bills a school could face if large-ticket items haven't been maintained sufficiently, or are at end-of-life," added Hemming.

## Schools 'struggle to make their voices heard'

Further thorny issues include who leads talks. Julia Harnden, funding specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said school chiefs typically "struggled to make their voices heard" on PFI issues. Most contracts are deals between firms and councils, not schools.

Matt Miller, chair of governors at Highlands School in north London, which is also receiving DfE support, said maintained PFI schools such as his felt like the "offspring of an arranged marriage".

These issues are particularly acute for more than 300 PFI academies. The NAO

noted that councils "may not be incentivised...to manage the expiry process effectively, knowing they will not retain ownership".

Barnhill is also Hillingdon Council's only PFI school, and the NAO worries many councils with a single PFI deal lack capacity or expertise for expiry talks.

The government too has been accused by the PAC of lacking "urgency" and an overall plan for expiry, with no guidance yet published. MPs warned it would become a "payday for consultants" without more help.

But Hemming praised the support from advisory firm Inscyte, the DfE and the Infrastructure Projects Authority, which appears to have U-turned on plans to limit its support to NHS trusts. "Had I been on my own, I'd have felt completely lost."

Later PFI handovers appear unlikely to receive as much support, however. An NAO report last year said the DfE only planned a "hands-on" approach to early projects, shaping guidance that other schools will receive.

## PFI firms could strike follow-on deals

Schools also face decisions on post-PFI arrangements. Hemming said it would be "complex" negotiating new facilities management from scratch.

Experts noted some councils would provide the services, but some PFI firms may strike new deals. For many schools, handover cannot come soon enough. Hemming said Barnhill's deal was "one of the most expensive in the country".

She hopes to end its "enforced dependence" on operator Bellrock for maintenance, cleaning and catering, despite the hefty exit fee. "Every interaction is around how much profit is there." She said boarding a door cost over £1,000 each if it fits.

Bellrock did not respond to request for comment.

For Miller, leaving is also about Highlands not being "shackled" at times by rigid rules.

He said the deal had got the school built and broadly "worked well". But it sometimes must pay extra for out-of-hours activities, like summer camps or meetings.

Highlands' PFI firm, the Guernsey-registered John Laing Infrastructure Fund, and facilities manager Pinnacle were not available to comment.



Tracey Hemming

## Investigation

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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# Consent workshops and reviews: schools respond to sex abuse claims

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EXCLUSIVE

A school named on the Everyone's Invited website, set up to tackle rape culture, is to run compulsory "consent workshops" for pupils as young as 11, while others form staff working groups to review abuse.

The avalanche of sexual abuse allegations has also pushed other schools, not named on the website, to take stock of their safeguarding procedures.

Everyone's Invited (EI) allows young survivors of sexual abuse to tell their stories anonymously. It has far received more than 16,000 testimonies, ranging from reports of rape to "slut shaming".

However, Ofsted will only inspect 30 education settings under its investigation to establish the "extent and the severity of the issue".

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said the testimonies have sparked a "renewed focus and activity around safeguarding" in schools.

## 'We're starting the consent conversation much earlier'

St Benedict's School, an independent Catholic school in west London that was named in an Everyone's Invited testimony, is extending "consent workshops" to all pupils in year 7 and above.

The school previously ran Schools Consent Project workshops for pupils aged 15 and up.

The workshops focused on consent, as well as dealing with harassment, revenge porn and sexting.

Luke Ramsden, senior deputy headmaster and safeguarding lead at St Benedict's, said the school was starting the "conversation about consent, and appropriateness of behaviour towards each other, much earlier".

All pupils in year 7 and above will have attended a workshop by the end of term. They will take place during timetabled PSHE



lessons.

The school is also rolling out the wellbeing "check-in" app Skodel free. It allows all pupils to provide daily updates of how they are feeling and to raise concerns with staff quickly.

Ramsden said it would provide a "new avenue of communication".

## Sex abuse review action plans for schools

The Olympus Academy Trust is setting up in-school working groups to review sexual violence, sexual harassment and peer-on-peer abuse across each of its nine schools.

Its Bradley Stoke Community School in Bristol was named on EI.

Reviews are due to be finished next month when an action plan will be drawn up to address any areas of concern.

"We're reviewing our processes in light of what's going on," said Dave Baker, the trust's chief executive. "We're taking it really seriously".

Olympus has also updated its safeguarding and child protection policy to include more "specific" information on sexting, abuse and sexual violence.

Meanwhile, Queen Mary's Grammar

School in Walsall is reviewing its policies, with the local authority.

The school has held assemblies and told parents that anyone who has experienced or witnessed abuse or behaviour should speak to staff.

## Pupils need 'culture of visibility' to report abuse

Charlotte Aynsley, a safeguarding consultant at Impero, a safeguarding software company, said it was "incredibly hard" to get pupils to disclose issues such as peer-to-peer abuse. A culture of reporting and visibility was needed in schools.

Sue Bailey, the safeguarding lead at The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, said it was drawing up a strategic plan "to strengthen what we do".

That included reviewing safeguarding policies, culture, reporting systems and curriculum to highlight potential areas of improvement.

"You can never be complacent because the safeguarding world changes so much," she said.

None of the trust's schools was named on EI.

## Details of Ofsted sex abuse investigation emerge

Ofsted told *Schools Week* it would visit about 30 schools as part of the sexual abuse review announced last month.

Complaints about the schools have been made to Ofsted and the EI website or through other "regional intelligence".

Visits will be conducted over two days and led by a Her Majesty's Inspector. Inspectors from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) will shadow a small number of visits, which are due to conclude at the end of this month.

Baroness Berridge, the academies minister, previously revealed the inspectorate would talk to "over 900 children and young people" during the review. She also planned to meet some heads of schools in which allegations of sexual abuse had been made.



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# Speed read

## New Covid study finds no reading loss, but confirms maths drop

Interim findings from another study into Covid lost learning have been published today. This one, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and carried out by FFT Education, investigates whether Covid has widened the attainment gap.

### GAP WIDENS IN MATHS, BUT NOT READING ...

The study found the attainment gap between disadvantaged primary pupils and their peers had widened by one month in maths since the onset of the pandemic.

Years 2 and 3 pupils saw the largest estimates for gap widening – which matches other studies suggesting younger children have been hardest hit. But researchers said they do not have enough data from each year group to draw firm conclusions.

However, the study found there was no “discernible” change in the disadvantage gap for reading. This is contrary to a previous EEF-funded study that indicated there had been a gap widening in reading. However, the previous study looked solely at year 2 pupils.

The FFT Education study compared reading and maths assessments (PIRA and PUMA tests) taken by pupils in years 1 to 5 in autumn 2019, in September last year and again towards the end of the autumn term. A total of 132 primary schools were involved.

### ... AND GAP REMAINS DESPITE SCHOOL RETURN

Researchers found there were “no clear changes” in attainment gaps during the autumn term – when most pupils returned to face-to-face schooling. The EEF said this suggests the gaps caused by Covid are “unlikely to close without intervention”.

Professor Becky Francis, EEF chief executive, added it is “clear evidence that substantial existing gaps have grown further due to the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic.

“In strategising an approach to recovery, we are presented with the opportunity to go beyond restoring the learning lost during partial school closures, and work towards rebalancing the scales for disadvantaged pupils,” Francis added.



### NO EVIDENCE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH KIDS BOOSTED ATTAINMENT

Researchers also investigated associations between how schools conducted remote learning during March to May last year and any changes in the attainment gap.

The study found “considerable variation” in how schools responded to the initial lockdown. For instance, 23 per cent of teachers reported phoning students at least once a week, while 37 per cent never phoned pupils.

Researchers also asked about timetabling, whether live or recorded lessons were run, the frequency of pupil work submissions and the use of technology platforms.

But the study found no “clear evidence” of associations between the above approaches and pupil attainment.

### ‘TENTATIVE EVIDENCE’ OF LIVE LESSONS BOOST

Researchers also found limited evidence of “clear associations” between the methods that schools employed when pupils returned on-site and a change in attainment gap.

However, there was “some tentative evidence” that providing live lessons to absent pupils was associated with reductions in attainment gaps.

The study examined five approaches employed by schools in the autumn term, including running video or live streams for absent pupils and whole classes, extra learning time and reducing the curriculum.

Nearly a quarter of schools provided live or recorded video lessons for individual pupils who were off, while three-quarters didn’t.

But researchers warned the analysis had “several limitations”. No qualitative information was collected about how different responses were implemented, for instance.



## WHAT THE OTHER COVID STUDIES FOUND...

Pupils in the most deprived secondary schools have lost 2.2 months of learning, compared to 1.5 months for kids in the most affluent, a study published in February by the Education Policy Institute and Renaissance Learning found.

Researchers also found pupils in year 3 to 9 combined appeared to have lost around two months of learning in reading. The loss in maths was estimated to be around 3.2 months of learning at primary level.

The interim findings from the Department for Education-funded study are based on more than 400,000 reading and maths assessments.

\*\*\*

A previous EEF study with NFER found that disadvantaged primary pupils were seven months behind their peers in reading and maths, although researchers urged caution over the finding. Overall, year 2 pupils were two months behind in reading and maths compared with previous cohorts. The study was based on test scores from 5,900 pupils across 168 primaries.

\*\*\*

Meanwhile a study by comparative judgment software firm No More Marking found year 7 pupils were 22 months behind where they should be. However, the study, based on writing skills tests of over 112,000 children, was unable to confirm if the fall in attainment was solely down to Covid disruption.

## 2021 results

## Tell us why grades will be withheld, say heads

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Headteachers are demanding Ofqual come clean over why pupils might have grades “withheld” this summer.

Ofqual’s chair and chief regulator last week warned results could be withheld should an exam board and school not agree on the teacher-assessed grade awarded.

But Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said the guidance for schools only contained the “vaguest of the vague” references to results being withheld.

There was “no explanation” of the process. “We have asked these questions, but have not been able to elicit any further information.”

He called for Ofqual and the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) – the board representing exam boards – to have “a clear process in place and an answer about how such a dispute would

ultimately be resolved if grades were to be withheld.

“Obviously, everybody hopes that no such impasse will happen, but it is a good idea to have it mapped out at this stage so that it is clear and is not left hanging in the air.”

At the third stage of quality assurance this year, exam boards will conduct random and targeted checks on the evidence used to determine teacher-assessed grades.

JCQ guidance published in March said a board would decide whether to accept the grades submitted or undertake further review, which “may lead to the withholding of results”.

Ian Bauckham, Ofqual’s interim chair, last week said boards “reserve the right to withhold or delay the publication of results if it is not possible to agree an acceptable way forward in such cases”.

Ofqual said this week it expected exam boards to resolve concerns through “professional dialogue”. Results would only be issued in

“withheld cases”.

“As in any year where an exam board has remaining concerns about any result, this is an important safeguard to protect the integrity of qualifications.”

JCQ said in any exam series there were “isolated circumstances” where a student’s grade may not be available on results day.

Where issues were “unresolved”, exam boards “reserve the right to temporarily withhold results pending any further investigation required”.

Boards could use the no result code – (X) – where a result was not issued because the candidate was not due to receive one. Code X could also be used because of malpractice investigations.

Pending – (Q) – indicates that no result has been issued as the grade was not yet available.

In 2018-19, about 0.3 per cent of GCSE entries (14,094) were “no result” – but it is not broken down by X or Q grades in government data.

## Autumn resit plans revealed

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Exam boards will be required to offer AS-level exams in only five subjects during this year’s autumn exam series.

The exams will be open to any student receiving a teacher assessment grade this year, or those who an exam board “reasonably believes would have entered for the exams in summer 2021 had they taken place”.

Ofqual will require boards to offer all exams in all GCSE and A-level subjects, but will only have to offer AS exams in biology, chemistry, further maths, maths and physics.

These were the only subjects in which autumn exams were taken by more than 100 students last year. Boards can offer exams in other AS subjects if they wish.

Boards can also offer GCSE English language and maths exams in January 2022 “for students who were eligible to enter the autumn exams in those subjects but did not do so”.

The regulator published a consultation response this week that confirmed other proposals set out earlier this year.

AS and A-level exams will be held in October and GCSEs in November and December. Exams will be in their usual format with no adaptations.

Pupils can request replacement certificates showing the higher of an autumn 2021 or summer 2021 grade.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the ASCL leaders’ union, said the creation of the autumn series “creates more problems than it solves”, and would put “more pressure” on schools.

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# Funding boost extends support service for heads

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A mental health and wellbeing support service for headteachers will be extended after an extra £62,000 in government funding.

The school leaders' wellbeing service, a pilot scheme run by Education Support to provide online peer and telephone support to about 250 school leaders, launched last year. It was backed by £95,000 in initial Department for Education funding.

Now Vicky Ford, the children's minister, has confirmed that "following the success of the pilot", the support will be extended between now and August to another 160 schools.

It is not known what will happen beyond the summer.

Education Support told *Schools Week* the original pilot had helped 225 heads, 57 by telephone and 168 by peer support. Participants said they benefited from the



"space and permission" to talk.

The programme's extension follows warnings from the charity that senior leaders are the "most stressed-out teachers in the sector".

According to Education Support's teacher wellbeing index survey last year, 77 per cent of teachers reported they were stressed, but this jumped to 89 per cent for senior leaders.

"We are now seeing significant signs of

burnout across the profession," said Faye McGuinness, director of programmes at the charity.

"We also know that only 8 per cent of teachers say they currently have access to supervision, yet they frequently provide frontline support for increasingly vulnerable children. Being able to access a safe and confidential space to talk through challenges and experiences can really help."

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 for vacancies in January and February showed there has been lighter turnover than feared.

Ford also said the government's new mental health action group was considering how it could support pupils and staff after the return to schools earlier this year.

Places on the support programme are free to heads and academy trust chief executives working in England. Applications can be made online.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## DfE keeps edtech conflicts 'action plan' close to its chest

The government has an "action plan" to address potential conflicts of interest in its edtech demonstrator contract with United Learning, but is refusing to publish it.

*Schools Week* revealed last month that England's largest academy trust had been awarded the contract to run the scheme for its second year.

The programme in "demonstrator" schools helps others reduce workload, supports professional development and improves pupils' results using technology. It has been run for the past year by the London Grid for Learning, the Education Foundation and Sheffield Hallam University.

But the consortium's bid to continue to run the scheme lost out to United Learning.

Critics have flagged potential conflicts of interests as some of the trust's schools are already funded as demonstrators and will continue to be involved under its stewardship.

Contract documents confirm United Learning

will be responsible for distributing £5.5 million in funding to the network of "up to 44" schools and colleges – including its own schools taking part.

There were 48 demonstrators in the first round and £6 million of funding, but *Schools Week* revealed last month that four demonstrators had backed out.

The government insisted last month it had a "robust governance process" in place. Contract documents seen by *Schools Week* refer to a "conflict of interest action plan", which United Learning has to follow to manage a "declared conflict of interest".

But the Department for Education refused to provide a copy, claiming it contained "commercially sensitive information". United Learning did not respond to requests to see the document, or to comment.

Professor Bob Harrison, a school and college governor and former education adviser to Toshiba, said it was "crucial" there was transparency about how the "critical" programme was managed

and governed.

Funding will be distributed quarterly in line with "grant agreements" signed with the demonstrators, and United Learning is responsible for ensuring "value for money".

It will be paid up to £600,000, including VAT, to run the scheme. This is less than the £850,000 offered via the tender process.

In exchange, it will have a responsibility to "manage the coordination of the network, including day-to-day and financial management of 44 schools and colleges".

The contract also includes an agreement to support DfE "spot checks" of "funding and payments" in demonstrator schools.

The trust and the DfE will meet monthly to "review performance", with United Learning providing a report to each meeting that will include "assurances regarding adherence to ethical walls and avoidance of conflict of interest".

It is not known whether the reports will be made public.



## News in brief

# Pupil Covid absences nearly double in a week

The number of pupils absent because of potential contact with a Covid case in school has almost doubled in a week.

Attendance survey data from the Department for Education shows 46,900 pupils were off last Thursday because of potential contact in-school, up from 25,200 on April 22.

The number of pupils isolating because of a suspected case increased from 6,800 to 11,600. Confirmed cases, however, rose from 2,400 to 2,700.

Despite the rise, the numbers are still far lower than in March. At its peak, 173,000 pupils were absent because of potential in-school contact, with 3.3 per cent not attending for Covid-related reasons.

In comparison, about 1 per cent of pupils nationally were absent for Covid-related reasons last Thursday, up from 0.6 per cent the week before.

Attendance rates initially fell during March, following the wider reopening of schools, as more pupils were sent home to isolate. But data released last week by the DfE showed how primary attendance had recovered to pre-pandemic levels after the Easter break.

This week's statistics show overall attendance has fallen slightly at both



phases. On April 29, 95 per cent of primary pupils were in school, down from 96 per cent the week before. Over the same period, secondary attendance fell from 91 to 90 per cent.

Workforce absence statistics show 0.5 per cent of teachers, leaders, teaching assistants and other staff were absent for Covid-related reasons last Thursday, up from 0.3 per cent the week before. In comparison, 4.2 per cent were absent for other reasons.

A DfE spokesperson said attendance in schools "remains consistently high, showing the continued importance of the rapid testing programme for all staff, families and secondary pupils in helping keep the virus out of classrooms".

## Infection levels dip, school testing survey shows

Levels of infection revealed in a Covid school testing survey last month were "significantly lower" than in similar studies in the autumn, the Office for National Statistics has said.

The fourth round of the schools infection survey was conducted in 137 schools between March 15 and 31, shortly after wider reopenings. The survey is a joint initiative by the ONS, Public Health England and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

In the latest survey, 0.33 per cent of secondary pupils and 0.32 per cent of secondary staff tested positive for Covid-19.

This is compared with 1.42 per cent of pupils and 1.36 per cent of staff who tested positive in the first round of the study last November, and 1.22 per cent of pupils and 1.64 per cent of staff in December.

It comes as unions and scientists this week urged the government not to rush into lifting its recommendation that face coverings be worn in secondary classrooms. In an open letter, they argued the recommendation should stay in place until at least June 21.

The government expects face coverings will no longer be required in classrooms "no earlier than May 17".

## Slow start to languages 'disappointing', say Ofsted

Ofsted says it is "disappointing" how many primary schools are "barely out of the starting block" with their languages curriculum.

The watchdog visited 24 'outstanding' primary schools between October 2019 and March 2020 to identify "good practice and strong curriculum management".

A blog by Michael Wardle, Ofsted's subject lead for languages, said inspectors found an "impressive array of languages on offer", including German, Mandarin and modern

Hebrew, as well as French and Spanish.

While there was a host of "excellent examples", Ofsted also found "a lot of variation in the quality of the curriculum".

But Wardle said it was "disappointing to see how many schools were barely out of the starting block with their curriculum", given pupils should leave year 6 with four years of language study.

The national curriculum requires primary schools to teach languages to pupils in key

stage 2.

In some cases poor curriculum quality followed the departure of a languages specialist.

Elsewhere it was because "leaders were focused on other areas of the curriculum" or "there was just a simple lack of expertise".

"Whatever the reason, the result was that several schools were only scratching the surface when it came to matching the scope of the national curriculum," Wardle wrote.

# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## The government must pick up the pace on Timpson

It's been two years since the 128-page Timpson review landed on ministers' desk at Sanctuary Buildings.

But analysis by researchers shows that only six of the 30 recommendations have been fully implemented – and two of them aren't even the DfE's responsibility.

We already knew the government's promise to implement the recommendations was a bit shaky. For instance, Timpson wanted a "practice improvement fund". But the government's promise omitted the rather important "fund" element.

It's understandable some work may have stalled because of the pandemic. But it was already delayed before Covid hit.

The department says much of the Timpson work is tied up in the SEND review – which has also been continually delayed.

With societal inequality widening during the pandemic, Timpson's recommendations are more important than ever. The government must pick up the pace to protect the most vulnerable children in our schools. The sector has waited long enough.

## Why can't the turnaround trust find a new CEO?

Established by the government to take over schools that other trusts deem too risky to sponsor, the Falcon trust could play a huge role in the academies sector.

But worrying cracks show that not all is going to plan, the latest a failure to attract a chief executive – despite a £125,000 salary.

Meddling from government officials might not help.

Board minutes seem to suggest trustees are more than happy with the current interim leadership set-up.

But the department wants a permanent chief executive in place "sooner rather than later" with Gavin Williamson said to be "keen for this to be a success".

The government is pinning its hopes on Falcon to finally find a home for schools left for years in takeover limbo. Plans are already in the pipeline for another turnaround trust, this one specifically to take over Catholic schools.

We cannot afford to fail these schools again.

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## Academies minister questions 'moral purpose' of single school heads

### Janet Downs

The message to standalone academies is this: swallow other schools or be swallowed. So much for the much-vaunted 'autonomy'. The only schools that will have true 'freedom' are those remaining local authority schools.

## Grades can be 'withheld' if schools and exam boards don't agree

### Peter Endersby

I get the feeling we will see another group of young people let down by the system again this summer. I work across a number of different schools and all have approached assessments differently this year. How this year's results will be fair and equitable is a mystery.

## Statutory school uniform guidance due in autumn after bill gets royal assent

### Katie Silsby

More needs to be done. If schools must have branded clothing then parents should be able to choose whether or not they buy it. In primary school, you have the option to wear branded or generic uniform and I believe high school should be no different. I also think that blazers should be ditched completely, they are too hot in the summer and not warm enough in the winter. They are uncomfortable and impractical. Boys should be allowed to wear shorts.

### Tom Bewick

Given that school uniform is a state education requirement, I've never understood why the state/councils didn't just set up its own company(ies) to supply them, obviously at a subsidised cost. Avoids the need for govt to control prices set by private companies.

## No ifs. No buts. A national phone ban is necessary now

### Karen Elkington

About time. I'm a teacher of 45 years and I do not believe mobile

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

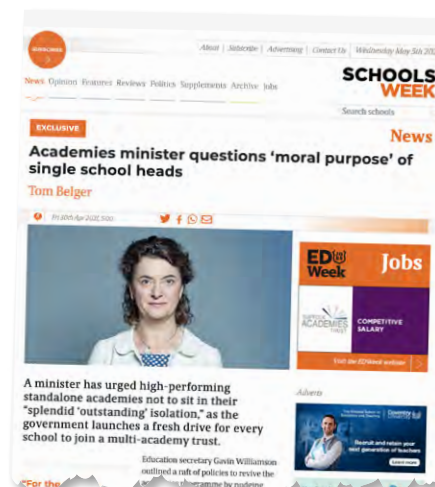
Greg Coleman

## Academies minister questions 'moral purpose' of single school heads

I find it frustrating that the government still has the view that MATs are the only way. Gavin Williamson has heaped praise upon MATs during the pandemic.

In so doing, he has largely ignored the fantastic work done by local authority and diocesan schools – whether standalone or like mine, a federation. We are seeing a move to larger federations in Kent and East Sussex and we are fully aware of the enormous benefits of collaboration as a group of schools.

However, we do not believe we need to change our legal status and academise to continue to provide the high quality of education to our pupils or to improve it further. In fact, it is likely that the additional expenditure on back-office staff, auditing and accountancy fees may well divert funds away from frontline teaching and learning. Hopefully, the government will take the time to reflect and acknowledge that federations of LA/VC/VA schools can and do achieve the benefits of collaboration and that a MAT is not the one and only way.



phones should be allowed in school. I never have my phone in the classroom. If the teacher has their phone on the desk and goes on it, so do the students. More work is achieved when the students don't go on their phones.

I also think that there are some very weak heads out there who do not and cannot control the behaviour in schools ... these heads should set an example to the students. I actually asked the students why they misbehave in other classes and about the school. They said, "Well the head doesn't care, so why should we?" Need I say more?





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# Profile

JL DUTAUT | @DUTAUT



**‘Individuals can have a big impact, but what you leave behind is the vision and values’**

**JL Dutaut meets a CEO who was a trailblazer for school cooperation and could be leading the way towards a new status quo for universities and the sector.**

**Keith Hollins, CEO, Staffordshire University Academies Trust**

The government’s education vision has often placed it at odds with universities. The ITT market review getting under way and the DfE’s plans for an Institute of Teaching are just the latest volley in what many academics see as a decade-long onslaught.

The early careers framework, the core content framework, new teaching school hubs and a new suite of national

professional qualifications add up to the wholesale disruption of higher education’s relationship with schools and the teaching profession.

But a new type of relationship has been developing in the wings in the form of university academy trusts. Somewhat ironically, the government’s new push towards mass academisation could open the door to more. So far, there are only nine multi-academy trusts. (The University of Birmingham has got in on the game but only runs a single academy trust, at the

time of writing.) And their history is already chequered. Chester University Academies Trust, for example, had to be wound down, with seven of its schools rebrokered. This followed a critical Ofsted in 2017 and a £3 million deficit, which meant that it was no longer financial sustainable.

When it comes to league tables, it’s fair to say university-sponsored academy trusts’ performance is, at best, average. Brighton, Chester and Wolverhampton universities’ MATs significantly underperformed in the last round of secondary performance



## Profile: Keith Hollins



Hollins and his wife



With his family in 1961. Keith front left



Hollins aged 6

tables (registering -0.53, -0.58 and -0.65 for Progress 8 respectively).

But there are exceptions. NOVA Education Trust, led by Nottingham University, scored 0.43 in 2019's Progress 8 figures. And league tables are a blunt instrument in any case. They don't tell us the journey MATs or their schools are on, or anything about their catchments and contexts. They say nothing of the quality of school improvement the trusts provide, or of the school environments being fostered.

Search the MAT league table, and you'll find no evidence Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT) even exists. Thirteen of its 20 schools are so newly academised that their performance had not yet been measured before the pandemic put a halt to the practice.

But its CEO, Keith Hollins, is confident the trust is on track to impress. The MAT was set up in 2011 with only one struggling secondary school. In 2014, two further schools were added – both primaries in 'special measures' – before Hollins was appointed as the trust's first CEO, in 2015.

In six years under his leadership, the trust has taken on 17 schools. "It's got nothing to do with me," Hollins throws in as he takes me through the SUAT timeline – not as false

### "We make no changes other than supporting people better"

modesty, but as a genuine testament to his commitment to a cooperative ethos that has defined his career.

He's equally keen to emphasise that the expansion isn't a tale of hostile takeovers. "Sixteen of the 17 schools who have joined us actually approached us. The 17th is a sponsored school. We haven't actually approached a single school."

So what's the appeal? What are schools getting for the five per cent top-slice they accept as part of joining the trust? Well, for all his modesty, the trust has a CEO with a wealth of experience and a career-long dedication to partnership working that predates the MAT model.

In 2009, he founded the South Moorlands Learning Community, a partnership of the six schools in the pyramid of The Cheadle Academy where he was headteacher and executive principle. While executive principal of three secondary schools in

Leek, he oversaw the formation of a hard federation between them and also founded and chaired the Leek Education Partnership, which saw 20 local schools working together rather than competing.

He also holds an impressive record of school turnaround. He's been a head, an interim executive and chair, and a National Leader of Education. In each role, he's taken schools out of Ofsted 'requires improvement' and 'special measures' categories at pace.

A quick glance at his CV does leave one wondering how he manages to fit in his motorcycle hobby, seeing his two children – both successful young adults – or walking his three working dogs. His wife is also a former headteacher and now part of the



# Profile: Keith Hollins



SUAT executive team (which he is keen to tell me happened without his involvement and with the DfE's approval!).

He's clearly a master plate-spinner, but this son of a miner-turned-health service engineer, and a milliner without school qualifications, is pretty far from the stereotypical image of the brash CEO/super-head. Speaking of the cooperative trust of schools he led in Leek, he says: "The governors' view there, and my view now, and our trust's view, is that individuals can have a big impact on an institution, but we all believe what you leave behind is the vision and values."

And what does that look like in practice? "We're a big believer in trust and honesty and openness," he tells me. "Any school that's joined us in a period of challenge, what we haven't done is 'root and branch', remove the senior leadership team and the governors... We don't make any changes other than supporting people better."

That focus on shared principles and a supportive environment wasn't just a formative influence on Hollins' leadership career because of his early involvement with the cooperative trust. In fact, having played a foundational role in formulating that trust's articles of association, his influence on them is as great as theirs on him, though he'd deny it.

What Hollins freely admits is that the model heavily influences how SUAT



## "The university doesn't interfere in any way, shape or form"

operates. Covid has drastically reduced his mileage, he tells me, but in normal times he makes a point of visiting every school in the trust on a regular basis. He's confident – and Ofsted results confirm – that the trust's schools are in a good place.

And a lot of that is down to the university's role in the trust's workings. "We have their name but the university doesn't at all interfere in any way, shape or form," Hollins tells me frankly. "There's been no pressure in that the university is not worried about reputational damage to them."

In essence, they are a supportive partner. From university expert support to tender for the revamp of the trust's 21 websites to subsidised Masters in Education courses for SUAT staff, and from a steady supply of newly qualified teachers to free access to the premises for their annual conference, it's clear their support brings massive benefits. And there's untapped potential for much more. "This year in particular they've really gone to town on making sure all their staff (and they've got thousands) are even more aware of SUAT."

Hollins adds the university makes "very little money out of it and anything they do has to be at cost anyway. They make

a loss on the MA." But he says there is a promotional aspect, adding: "The only compulsion is that we ask schools to put our logo on the sign at the entrance."

If that's promotional, it's quite a long game for the university to be playing. But what it does in spades is encourage local talent to remain local. "A big majority of their students come from within an hour or so of the university itself. So in contributing to improvements in primary and secondary schools in Staffordshire, they're doing what they say they want to do, and that is to contribute to the raising of living standards in the area."

Hollins was ahead of the game on school partnerships. Could he be repeating his trailblazing here?

The government has oft repeated its Northern Powerhouse promise and stated its commitment to close regional gaps by tailoring education offer to local job markets. The focus of that policy drive is usually vocational providers, but if SUAT's model proves it can deliver post-pandemic, it could be a game changer.

And wouldn't that be a turnout for the relationship between the DfE and universities?

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**There's nothing inherently 'moral' about being in either a trust or a standalone school – unethical behaviour is almost always driven by fear or pride, writes Caroline Barlow**

Last week, academies minister Baroness Berridge came out strongly for the government's policy of expanding MATs en masse. Hardly surprising. What was surprising was that her argument rested on an appeal for morality from those not currently in a trust.

Questioning another's moral purpose is a novel approach to seeking a change in their position. And in our fragmented system, it's a technique for motivating unity that isn't entirely devoid of risk.

The academies minister is correct: the issue at hand is moral purpose. But not in the way stated. Her substantive point is about system re-alignment, and it's perhaps questionable whether the morally driven collaborative culture she describes will be achieved by the means she and the government propose.

Ethical approaches vary depending on desired outcomes. Are we seeking to be regarded as 'virtuous', displaying 'righteous' behaviours? Are we motivated by a sense of duty? By outcomes for a particular group, or by a sense of greater good? All will drive the choices we make. None depends on being in a standalone school or a trust.

In my experience, being in a trust has not prevented some leaders talking a good game of local collaboration while excluding students too swiftly, referring parents of students with SEND to other schools that will "better meet their needs" or otherwise acting unethically in recruitment of staff or students.

These actions are born of the wider climate in which we work, and are displayed equally by trust and single-school leaders. Fear or pride drive these



CAROLINE BARLOW

Headteacher, Heathfield Community College, and chair, East Sussex Secondary Heads Group

## In creating a MATopia, invoking moral purpose is a risky approach

actions, which almost never intend to do harm. They are not unique to certain schools or leaders and don't appear in a vacuum. And by my moral compass, they should not – as I was recently told – "be expected".

In many ways, the level of collaboration achieved in the pandemic

genuinely accept responsibility for all students in a locality equitably.

I have seen trust and single-school leaders recite superficial tropes of collaboration while in reality manoeuvring for position and baulking at the hard yards it takes to bring about mutual, co-operative

**“Ethical approaches don't depend on being in a stand-alone school or trust**

has been the profession's finest hour. School leaders have earned the trust and admiration of their communities. But it's one thing to virtuously share policies on CAGs, testing kits, PPE and risk assessments and quite another to

school improvement.

There are trusts working brilliantly to take on and drive schools forward in difficult circumstances, proactively seeking to improve the system for all. Let's recognise and celebrate them.



But in 21 years of leadership I have seen many kinds of schools roll up their sleeves and put their differences aside to change the life chances for young people in a location.

In this MATopia envisaged by the government, what will prevent networks collaborating within, but not between, each other – leaving children in the middle of competing tribes? Trusts can be fabulous, but they are not necessarily designed to reach across the system.

Having worked on developing collaboration for school improvement in West and East Sussex since 2010, I understand exactly how hard it is. It has to overcome system-borne self-interest, competition and division. It requires clear overarching leadership, shared aims and accountability, adequate resource and support. It requires commitment to a locality and to a group of children, not all of which you may initially view as 'yours'. It therefore requires integrity, and fidelity to a transformational journey for staff, students and families.

I run a highly successful school, and I am not sure we lack moral purpose. SLE, ELE and LLE capacity in depth is deployed across a wide variety of schools and students. We freely offer cross-structure and cross-phase CPL. We have a clear inclusive vision for our community and locality and we have tried numerous ways to be system leaders. But countless bids have fallen foul of checklists and ever-changing initiatives that preclude by location or demographic.

If you want strong schools to play a leading role in a genuinely collaborative structure, we are ready. But if nothing changes, then it's not at all clear the system itself – rather than any individuals within it – will have the moral purpose for the task.

# Opinion

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

**School leaders will need to plan ahead to minimise the possible impact of staff heading for an overseas break, writes Jenny Arrowsmith**

As half-term and the summer break approach, staff will likely be hoping to get away on holiday. If they choose to go abroad, they risk having to self-isolate afterwards.

Until May 17, when the government provides an update on foreign travel, it remains unclear what restrictions will be in place in popular holiday destinations. Some foreign travel may be opened up before the Whitsun one-week half-term break and some school staff will decide to go away.

School leaders must decide how they will deal with anyone who can't return to work on time during quarantine restrictions and communicate this to staff as soon as possible.

The extent of restrictions for inbound passengers will depend on which country they are returning from. The ten-day managed quarantine, ten-day home quarantine, and stringent testing will apply to people differently depending on whether the destination visited is 'green', 'amber' or 'red'. Only people travelling from 'green' destinations will avoid quarantine.

The government has indicated that it won't change travel corridors at very short notice but has also stated it "will not hesitate to act immediately should the data show that countries' risk ratings have changed". Holidaymakers could therefore find out part-way through their holiday that they will have to quarantine on return.

In schools, staff are generally not required to work over Whitsun or the summer school closure break and do not need to ask for permission to go on holiday, or to report where they



JENNY  
ARROWSMITH

Partner, employment team,  
Irwin Mitchell

## Quarantine and isolation: what you need to know about holidaying abroad

are going (abroad or otherwise). Additionally, you can't normally dictate what your employees do in their own time or tell them where they can go on holiday.

However, given the position on foreign travel and quarantine risks, it

workplace at the beginning of term.

This will preclude staff from travelling abroad to any country not included on the green list over Whitsun and possibly also holidaying abroad near the end of the summer holidays.

“Staff could find out part-way through a holiday that they'll need to quarantine

would be reasonable for school leaders to ask staff to tell them if they have booked a holiday abroad or are likely to do so, and to remind them that they must be in a position to return to their

If you are going to ask for this information, we recommend you do the following:

- Explain why you need it and signpost where your staff can find



up-to-date information about overseas travel.

- Set out your expectations in a policy or write to employees so that they understand what might happen if they holiday abroad and are asked to self-quarantine during term or normal working time.
- Explain how you expect them to notify you if they have travelled abroad or to report their absence and how it will be recorded on their records.
- Be clear on whether they will be paid if they have to quarantine.

Members of staff who have to quarantine will only be able to work if it is feasible for them to work from home or from their quarantine hotel. If they can work, you must pay them at their appropriate rates.

If they have not used up all their holiday leave, they could use it during quarantine. But, in the context of schools, this isn't straightforward as most leave must be taken outside of term time. You are entitled to turn down requests for holidays if the timing doesn't suit you.

In general, if a member of staff can't work, you don't have to pay them unless they are in fact ill. The Burgundy Book and the Green Book have provisions in place for pay when someone cannot attend the workplace due to infectious disease.

However, our view is that this doesn't apply where the individual is isolating because of the quarantine measures following a holiday abroad. A joint circular issued by the ASCL, LGA and NAHT unions last summer – when the same issue arose – acknowledged that teachers and support staff whose terms and conditions are covered by the burgundy or green books are not entitled to be paid if they self-quarantine in these circumstances.



# Opinion

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

**When life feels scary for children, teachers are particularly well placed to notice and offer ways to cope with the pain of loss, writes Beck Ferrari**

School staff provide daily support to children and young people who are facing tough times. Sadly, the death of someone significant in a pupil's life is likely to be one of those times.

Even when you are experienced in providing such support, you can find yourself more worried about a child or young person than usual. This could be because you notice that child appears to be persistently struggling with their learning, with intense emotions, their friendships, or their ability to manage their behaviour. Following a death in a child's life, such difficulties suggest they may be experiencing a traumatic bereavement.

In a traumatic bereavement, the trauma gets in the way of the typical process of grieving. It blocks a child's ability to 'make sense' of the death and adjust to their loss. This can happen to children and young people in any circumstance and at any age.

We are all aware how much the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the lives of children and young people. For some, this includes situations where a death has arisen in a way that is either sudden or unexpected (without the chance to say goodbye), or where the ability to follow important beliefs and cultural practices may have been prevented. Layered on to this can be feelings of guilt about potentially having brought the virus into the home. These factors may increase the likelihood of what we call a traumatic bereavement.

In a more typical bereavement, children and young people dip in and out of their grief as if stepping



BECK  
FERRARI

CBT Practitioner and Bereavement  
Therapist, UK Trauma Council

## How to support children out of the deep well of traumatic bereavement

in and out of puddles. Traumatic bereavement, however, is experienced more like being in a deep well, and is much harder for the child to step out of.

The first step is ensuring that we identify and notice children or young people who may be struggling in this

whether things are getting easier, or worse.

For such children, whose lives feel unsafe, keeping a positive relationship going is vital. The reality is that the time pressures teachers face can make this feel hard. But even a simple "good to see you today" or

**"A trusted adult with regular time to listen is key"**

way. You will know the pupil from before the bereavement, so will be well placed to notice how much of an impact the death is having – and

"thanks for making a start on your work" helps a pupil feel noticed and their efforts acknowledged.

Sharing your concerns with other



teachers and helping as a broader teaching team to ensure that there is someone the young person can speak to are important next steps. A trusted adult with regular time to listen is key. Even when they find it hard to talk about their grief, the adult can show they are there for them. This can be really significant when a young person feels like giving up.

Careful monitoring can help you build a clearer picture to aid decision making about whether specialist help might be needed. Ongoing engagement with parents or carers at home will also help you to understand how the child is managing outside school.

Do remember that you will also need support, and that this is an important part of the school's response. You are not alone in this situation, and nor is your school. We've worked hard to ensure that's the case.

The UK Trauma Council, in collaboration with leading bereavement charities Child Bereavement UK, Winston's Wish and the Child Bereavement Network, is offering a new portfolio of resources for schools and colleges. Developed and tested with education professionals and those with lived experience, it features a comprehensive written guide to traumatic bereavement, with supporting tools including videos and an animation.

School staff play a crucial role in addressing the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of children and young people. When life feels scary and uncertain for children, they need adults to show they still believe in them and to help hold the hope for them. Traumatic bereavement is a deep well, but teachers have a very long reach.

# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### Mark. Plan. Teach 2.0

**Author:** Ross Morrison McGill

**Publisher:** Bloomsbury Education

**Reviewer:** Thomas Raine, english teacher and implementation champion, Shotton Hall Research School

In this updated version of *Mark. Plan. Teach.*, Ross Morrison McGill focuses on the essentials we need to promote learning. Under any circumstances, this would be a worthwhile endeavour. Picking up the pieces after lockdown, this collection of practical, evidence-based ideas proves a timely tonic.

McGill insists that teaching boils down to three activities that must be performed well – marking, planning and teaching. Here, he offers ten ideas to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of each, with helpful, accessible summaries of the research underpinning his proposals.

Some are suitable for immediate implementation by teachers, while others are aimed more squarely at senior leaders. Readers may wish to target their reading accordingly. However, McGill is clear that any teacher can drive evidence-informed change within their school.

A central theme is that good teaching is relentlessly focused on what students are learning rather than what they are doing. To this end, McGill introduces the concept of “stickability”; If we are clear about what must stick, teaching becomes more disciplined, with learning at its heart.

In Section 2 (*Plan*), McGill argues that effective planning centres on the knowledge students must take forward. When planning lessons or curricula, we should ask why students are doing particular activities and what they contribute to learning.

However, stickability is helpful at each stage of the ‘mark, plan, teach’ cycle. In Section 1 (*Mark*), McGill suggests making self- and peer-assessment an integral part of our feedback process.

For this to be effective, however, students need clear success criteria to guide their evaluations, and these criteria should form central precepts the lesson seeks to impart.

Similarly, in its review of the research on written feedback, the Education Endowment Foundation reported that marking should provide clear, actionable targets for students to improve, with feedback focused on the knowledge and skills required for success.

In Section 3 (*Teach*), McGill champions the use of retrieval practice. Students should regularly be required to recall important knowledge, with ‘spaced’ retrieval allowing time for them to ‘forget’ certain concepts before having to remember them. Retrieval practice supports learning by ensuring that ideas successfully pass from short- to long-term memory – it helps to make learning stick.

It is also an efficient strategy, with Jeffrey Karpicke identifying low-stakes, closed-book quizzes as an effective approach. Requiring few resources and little preparation time, retrieval practice is a strategy that adds little to a teacher’s workload (and may in fact reduce it).

Stickability is a simple yet powerful idea.

As teachers battle to convey knowledge-rich curricula in the aftermath of lockdown, knowing how to achieve is seems more valuable than ever. Approaching each stage of the ‘mark, plan, teach’ cycle as an opportunity to make learning stick –

with precision about what students need to know – promises to make teaching more focused and efficient.

And it is that emphasis on efficiency that comes through as one of the book’s great strengths. With concerns about workload and teacher retention, McGill’s focus on strategies that can have the greatest impact on learning is welcome. In particular, his recommendations on marking seem noteworthy. His “less but better” mantra offers simultaneously to improve the quality of feedback and ease one of the biggest contributors to a teacher’s workload.

Finally, it is worth heeding the value he attaches to modelling as a mode of instruction. Live modelling – where teachers demonstrate exactly what is expected of students and articulate their own thoughts while doing so – is a valuable addition to any teacher’s toolkit, helping to reinforce success criteria and identify challenges students are likely to encounter in completing a task.

If there’s one criticism of this book, it is that it tries to be useful for everyone in a school. As a result, that can make it hard to get to the information that’s relevant to you relative to your role – teacher,

middle leader, senior leader.

On the whole, though, anyone with the patience to sift through the bits that aren’t for them will gain something from it. While much of it isn’t new information, it offers a succinct repository of what we know now about how teachers can give their best and keep their workloads manageable.



# Reviews



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

@son1bun

## Empathy Day: A Magic Bean

@jocotterillbook (hosted by @Petersbooks)

This blog is about Empathy Day, which this year falls on June 10. And as a member of the EmpathyLab judging panel, I am compelled to share it here. In it, author, Jo Cotterill captures the essence of the day beautifully, celebrating a hive of authors, activities and books brought together to create and teach empathy. Cotterill deftly sets out the scientific and social benefits of empathy, and flatly rejects the stereotypical comments that it's all "wishy-washy feelings stuff". She entreats us to do our own research about how the brain reacts when we read empathetically. I am wholly convinced, and totally primed for the magic on the June 10. I hope you will be too.

## History in outstanding primary schools

@Ofstednews

Ofsted is the Marmite of education world, but love it or loathe it, you certainly cannot afford to ignore it. Here, HMI Tim Jenner sets out a menu of excellence in primary history teaching that he calls the "building blocks of progress".

## TOP BLOGS of the week



The blog summarises what inspectors have found nationally and cements the importance of knowledge, ambition, challenge and the centrality of pupils' grasp of concepts across contexts. The areas for improvement are punchy, too, calling for support for leaders from subject specialists and associations and calling out "anachronistic writing tasks" that "distracted from the history content pupils needed to learn".

Ofsted is planning a number of such subject inspection blogs. For those who think Ofsted should not be telling us how to teach but limiting itself to judging the quality of our provision, this will be hard to swallow. For me, as a head and history lead, it does offer the prospect of something useful.

## Changing what's in the tin

@MrMJLane

Matthew Lane knows his RE. Here, he walks us through his journey to overhaul his school's RE curriculum and in doing so, sets out a convincing blueprint. The blog centres around the multi-disciplinary pedagogies contained within the "Religions and Worldviews" document. Matthew credits it, alongside the "Agreed Syllabus", with providing him with the opportunities he capitalised on. As he puts it, it contained "the knowledge-rich, engaging and downright meaty learning that I wanted to see in our curriculum".

In this articulate blog, Lane starts with an audit of where they were as a school, sets out the issues they faced and takes us through the solutions that were needed for his context. He is frank that what was lacking (as with many primary schools) was subject knowledge and his solution echoes one of the points in the Ofsted history blog: Lane entreats us to seek help from experts and associations. Any RE subject leader who is striving to deepen their thinking about their subject will find this blog a revelation.

## Teach them the moves

@bennewmark

Ben Newmark was featured in this column last week, but it's impossible not to include his musings again. Here, he ponders the plight of a lottery winner who wants to become a pop star and hires a team of experts to help. He imagines a choreographer who expects our novice to make moves he hasn't seen modelled, and likens this to how we sometimes deal with new teachers.

Newmark castigates this approach. "Teacher training and development, particularly for early years teachers," he says, should give teachers 'moves', even if in the moment they do not understand them or cannot articulate why they are effective. The blog is clear that this is not about "brainless implementation". Rather, it's about equipping teachers with the routines needed to do the job, while the expert helps them to perfect and understand the routines, one sequence at a time.

Newmark asks us to consider the alternative: a teacher facing a class with nothing in the armoury. He calls it "the transition between doing and understanding faster" and appreciates that the process might be slower for it. For me, he makes a compelling case that having the moves will mean new teachers have a greater chance of becoming strictly teaching champions.



# Research

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

## How can we secure the recovery without losing teachers?

**Jack Worth, NFER School Workforce Lead**

**W**hile full details of the government's plans for post-Covid educational recovery are still coming together, the overall strategy is clearly to provide 'more' for pupils. That could mean a range of different things, but one thing is clear: if 'more' means more work for teachers, then more teachers will be needed to do it.

Teachers already had high workloads going into the pandemic. Our recent analysis shows that both working hours and teachers' perceptions of their hours were similar in autumn 2020 to before the pandemic and substantially higher than those in other professions. Workload must remain a priority.

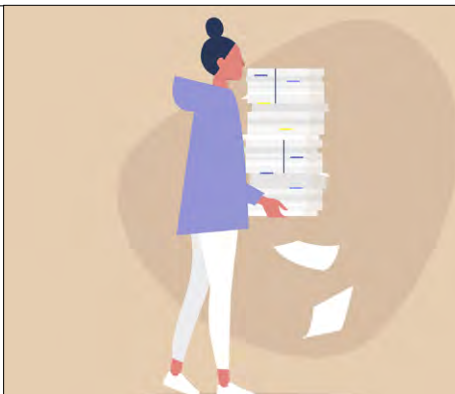
More teacher training applications due to the recession mean the system is already over-recruiting in primary and in many subjects. A year ago, we could only have dreamed of numbers like today's in the hard-to-recruit subjects of maths and sciences.

But recruiting more teachers comes with three key challenges, for which we must account in delivery planning.

### 1. Training

A lot of commentary around recovery has focused on a well-evidenced need for speed, but the reality that policymakers need to appreciate is that it takes time to train and induct new teachers.

Since April 2020 we have seen a surge in ITT applications, with more trainees in the system this year compared to last, who will enter the workforce this September. The recruitment surge has continued in 2021,



with the latest data showing applications to ITT are 22 per cent ahead of the same point in 2019. But that cohort won't start until September 2022.

The 2020 cohort is also likely to have a need for enhanced induction, since its training was disrupted due to Covid. In a recent NFER survey, many school leaders perceived that the disruption had had a negative impact on a range of NQTs' skills, particularly behaviour management, assessment and lesson planning.

Indeed, around 40 per cent of primary leaders and one-fifth of secondary leaders expressed reluctance to employ NQTs because they had less practical experience. More than half of school leaders who had recruited NQTs reported that they'd had to put additional support in place.

If recovery plans run ahead of these realities, the burden may fall back on the existing workforce.

### 2. Capacity

There is also mounting concern about the capacity of the school system to support the training, induction and mentoring of new teachers. Covid-19 has led to schools being less willing to offer placements, with the burden on existing staff of supporting trainees a key concern. Fewer vacancies due to reduced

turnover is likely to be another factor.

This has squeezed the available placement capacity, just when more is required. The DfE's main short-term strategy has been to relax the ITT requirements, but there will be pressure to remove these flexibilities once the crisis is over. Longer-term policy solutions will be required.

Limited mentoring capacity is also a significant factor in the placement squeeze, particularly given that the national rollout of the Early Career Framework (ECF) from September 2021 extends induction to two years.

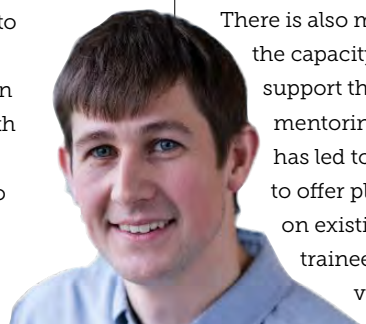
As part of NFER's evaluation of the ECF early roll-out, we are conducting a randomised controlled trial of the impact of financial incentives on mentor engagement. We hope this will add to the evidence base about what works to enable schools to make effective mentor capacity available to new teachers.

### 3. Funding

Training more teachers is one thing, but employing them requires schools to have the necessary funds. Almost three-quarters of secondary senior leaders (73 per cent) and 87 per cent of primary senior leaders reported in our autumn 2020 survey that their school could not afford to recruit one or more additional teachers, regardless of whether they wanted to.

Research led by my NFER economist colleague Jenna Julius shows that many schools were facing substantial financial challenges before the pandemic, and that Covid has added to costs. Employing new teachers will not happen unless the costs to schools of doing so are fully covered.

Training, capacity and funding. Whatever the recovery strategy shapes up to be, any reliance on more teaching capacity will need to address these challenges.



# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## FRIDAY

NAHT general secretary Paul Whiteman may have resisted calls for strike action when he took to the stage at its (virtual) annual general meeting last week, but the union boss didn't pull his punches. He suggested that the extra powers handed to Gavin Williamson as a result of the pandemic may be going to his head.

"Ministers have started to enjoy their Covid emergency powers too much," Whiteman warned. "As a profession, we should reject this most strongly."

His comments came as the education secretary rebooted the government's academisation drive.

But Whiteman said the profession should "resist any attempts to impose particular ways of teaching, particular suppliers of content or support, and particular structures for schools".

"Let's not get distracted by debates over structure. We must support and fund schools wherever they are. Multi-academy trusts or local authorities."

Sounds like leaders are going to take a lot of convincing that the government's approach is the right one.

\*\*\*

Ministers may be desperate to return to exams, but Ofqual's interim chief regulator seems to think it's worth a debate about the future of teacher judgement.

Simon Lebus appeared at the Schools & Academies Show last week to discuss plans for grading this year and beyond.

The former exam board boss said discussions about arrangements for next year were "already underway", but in the longer term there was "clearly

going to be scope to reflect on what we have learned during this time and what implications it might have for assessment".

"I am thinking especially of the large scale of adoption of technology and online learning and its integration into pedagogy and whether that will ultimately have a washback into assessment," he said.

"I am also hopeful that a successful experience this year will allow us to reflect in a more substantial way on the role of teacher judgment in assessment and the contribution it can make."

We wonder how Nick Gibb feels about this newfound enthusiasm for teacher assessment...

## SATURDAY

It seems it's not just Boris Johnson whose mobile number is readily available online.

According to *Daily Mail* columnist Sarah Vine, Gavin Williamson got an earful last year from the daughter of a friend of hers, distraught that her exam results had been "ruined by an algorithm".

"It took no time at all to find his number on Google, whereupon she left him a tearful voicemail message. Politicians have no privacy, I'm afraid. It comes with the territory."

Vine's husband is none other than the former education secretary Michael Gove. We look forward to being able to ring him for a regular chat.

## WEDNESDAY

We've all heard of the phrase "brownie points", but former shadow early years minister Tracy Brabin found herself in hot water over real brownies as her campaign to become mayor of West

Yorkshire entered its final stretch.

Police investigated the Batley and Spen MP after the Conservatives accused her of "treating", an offence under the 1983 Representation of the People Act.

However, police confirmed later the candidate did not break the law. According to *The Guardian*, the brownies are understood to have only been given to party members following canvassing, which is not against the rules.

The results of the election were not known as *Schools Week* went to press.



Gavin Williamson

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or email [timothy.field@hays.com](mailto:timothy.field@hays.com)

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**Contact Hazel Baxter on 07872 672282  
or email [hazel.baxter@hays.com](mailto:hazel.baxter@hays.com)**



Langley Park  
School for Girls

**TEACHER OF MATHS  
RUGBY HIGH SCHOOL****Rugby, Warwickshire**

September 2021 start. A fantastic opportunity for a qualified teacher able to teach Mathematics to Years 7-11 (the ability to teach A level Mathematics, would be an advantage but is not essential). RHS is a girls' grammar school graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Closing 11 May 2021.

**Contact Mike Sherwin on 07525 889925  
or email [mike.sherwin@hays.com](mailto:mike.sherwin@hays.com)**

**TEACHER OF SCIENCE, MPS/UPS  
FULWOOD ACADEMY****Fulwood, Preston**

September 2021 start. Fulwood Academy seeks to appoint a Science teacher who is driven by a passion to make a difference. You will be supported and empowered to teach high quality lessons and be able to access extensive CPD. Closing 17 May 2021.

**Contact Hannah Connell on 07966 129657  
or email [hannah.connell@hays.com](mailto:hannah.connell@hays.com)**

**LEVEL 2 VOCATIONAL STUDIES TEACHER  
HASMONEAN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST****Barnet, London**

September 2021 start. Hasmonean Multi-Academy are looking to appoint an excellent teacher of BTEC Vocational studies who would like to work with, contribute to the development of highly motivated students, and work with pupils who require SEND support. Closing 21 May 2021.

**Contact Brett Coventry on 07879 692409  
or email [brett.coventry@hays.com](mailto:brett.coventry@hays.com)**





# Director of Sixth Form (Deputy Headteacher)

**Based at Sir Frederick Gibberd College,  
Harlow, Essex CM18 6RW**

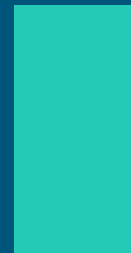
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Points L19 - 27 (£66,900 - £81,124)**

## KS5 Experience Essential

Sir Frederick Gibberd College (SFG) is an 11-19 school that opened in September 2019. Having operated from a temporary site for two years, we are now moving to our state of the art permanent building with 21st century teaching spaces and opening our highly academic sixth form.

We are looking to appoint a Director of Sixth Form (Deputy Headteacher) with a proven track record of leading a successful sixth form either at Deputy Head or Assistant Head level. As a senior leader in our school, the post-holder would be expected to be involved in all areas of school life and work closely with other schools across our Trust.

This is a unique opportunity to join a dedicated team of staff who are driven and passionate about transforming young people's lives through education. Joining the SFG family will mean you become part of a legacy that will last generations. Visits to our current site would be welcome and will give you the opportunity to experience our extraordinary school.



For more information and to apply, please visit:  
**<https://www.bmat-trust.org/304/current-vacancies>**

## TRAINING MANAGER MATERNITY COVER (13 MONTHS, FULL TIME)



The Bell Foundation is a Cambridge based educational charity working to overcome exclusion through language education and is delivering its vision through four programmes which focus on pupils, young people and those involved with the criminal justice system for whom English is an Additional Language.

The Foundation has an exciting opportunity for a Training Manager (Maternity Cover) to lead on the operational management, development and implementation of training and resources across the Foundation's integrated programmes including the EAL Programme, Language for Results International, the ESOL Programme and the Criminal Justice Programme.

The successful candidate will manage a team of trainers to develop and deliver high-quality training and resources in line with agreed programme objectives and timelines. You will have a proven track record of operational management and course development and will have experience of working in a comparable role in either the UK or international context.

With excellent attention to detail and an eye for quality, you will ensure high standards for all outputs developed both internally and by external consultants or partners.

**Training Manager:** £37,565-£45,912

### To apply

To download the application form please visit:

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/about-us/vacancies/>

The Bell Foundation is committed to building a diverse and inclusive organisation to better represent the communities we serve. We welcome applications from all regardless of age, gender identity, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, or socio-economic background.

The Bell Foundation is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. A DBS check will be requested in the event of a successful application.

**Closing date:** 17:00 Tuesday 25 May 2021

**Interviews:** Tuesday 1 June and Thursday 3 June 2021



## Head of School

Co-op Academy Southfield

L30-L34

We're looking for a passionate and dedicated Head of School. You will lead a large Secondary Special School in Bradford. The postholder will develop their skills to progress in their career and become Headteacher after April 2023.

[www.coopacademies.co.uk/vacancies](http://www.coopacademies.co.uk/vacancies)

**Closes 16 May 2021**



## Principal

Paradigm Trust is looking to appoint a Principal for Murrayfield Primary Academy.

This is a great opportunity for a highly-motivated, ambitious professional who wants to make an impact.

Our vision is to develop and sustain great schools where we can make the biggest difference to pupils. We are strongly values-led (integrity, community, excellence) and work hard to be inclusive. We deliver high quality education and play a positive role in local and national education systems.

You will strive towards ensuring there is a positive ethos in the school in which individuals feel valued, and where you will encourage your team to ensure that the school provides an excellent education for all pupils.

If you have a passion to make a difference, we would love to hear from you.





Anthem Schools Trust is seeking an exceptional individual to lead Oxford Spires Academy following the appointment of the current Principal to a second headship within another multi-academy trust. Oxford Spires Academy is part of Anthem Schools Trust, an education charity serving over 8,000 children and young people in 16 schools across the East Midlands, London and the Thames Valley.



## Principal Oxford Spires Academy

Hours:  
Full time

We are looking to appoint a Principal with a proven track record at either Principal or Deputy Principal level. As a senior leader in our organisation, the post-holder would be expected to embrace Anthem's values of integrity, collaboration and excellence and work closely with other schools across the Trust, whilst enjoying the autonomy to further develop the Academy's distinctive ethos.

To discover more about this exciting opportunity, please click here.

Find out more about Oxford Spires Academy at [www.oxfordspiresacademy.org](http://www.oxfordspiresacademy.org)



Newton Abbot College

Imagine what's possible ...

## Assistant Principal

Required for  
**September 2021**

**Salary Range:** L13 – L17

We are seeking to appoint a highly effective school leader who will use evidence-based research to drive improvement and implement change. The role represents an extremely exciting opportunity for an exceptional and committed individual to develop their career by taking on key senior leadership responsibility. The successful applicant will make a significant contribution to the further development of the College and will play a major part in helping us to achieve our strategic intent of "Excellence for all and in everything".

Newton Abbot College is a mainstream, comprehensive, inclusive, large 11 – 19 academy within a three academy trust. The partner schools in the trust are Dawlish College (a smaller 11 – 16 academy) and Starcross Primary (a small village primary academy).

Newton Abbot College became an academy in 2011 and, after 8 years as a very successful stand-alone academy, was a forming partner of the launch of a new MAT, Estuaries, in December 2019.

Details available on the College website [www.nacollege.devon.sch.uk](http://www.nacollege.devon.sch.uk).

**Closing date:**  
10th May 2021 at midday



St James' Catholic High School  
Great Strand,  
Colindale,  
London,  
NW9 5PE

## PA TO THE HEADTEACHER/HR MANAGER

**Salary Scale 28 (£34,209 pa - £36,705 pa)**

An opportunity has arisen to appoint a full time PA/HR Manager for September 2021.

The role includes responsibilities that require a broad set of skills, enthusiasm and resilience. Applicants must have exceptional organisational skills and be able to multi-task, in a confidential environment. They must be personable, approachable, flexible and accommodating.

The successful candidate will ensure good communication to all stakeholders both internally and externally with a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail. As well as excellent interpersonal skills, you must have resilience and empathy and be able to work under pressure. A sound administrative background is essential; as is an excellent working knowledge and application of various IT packages.

The successful applicant will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

**Closing Date: 17.05.21 at noon Interviews w/c: 24.05.21**

Email [shmccgovern@st-james.barnet.sch.uk](mailto:shmccgovern@st-james.barnet.sch.uk) for an application pack.



Central Academy  
The best in everyone™  
Part of United Learning

## Principal

**Location: Richard Rose Central Academy**  
**Salary: Competitive**

Richard Rose Central Academy is a 11-18 co-educational Academy that forms part of United Learning, a successful national group of academies and independent schools. Our schools share a mission to bring out 'the best in everyone' and to improve the life chances of the children and young people in their care.

Richard Rose Central Academy is a good school, proudly serving its local community. The Academy's leaders have grown its educational success and created a school with a strong curriculum and good teaching, and effective pupil support. The school ethos is underpinned by the key values of care, community, and confidence. We are looking for a leader with the highest expectations, committed to continuous improvement, who believes that extraordinary success is possible.

If you are looking for an exciting, challenging and highly rewarding role where you can combine the opportunities of running a large secondary school with the benefit of working as part of a national group, and if you have an unshakeable commitment to improving the lives of young people, we encourage you to visit us.

**Closing Date: 12th May 2021**  
**Interviews: 24th and 25th May 2021**