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Ofqual flunks key promise to 'rebuild trust in exams'

- Regulator misses second deadline to publish last year's grade fiasco data
- Researchers say 'time running out' for the stats to stop chaos this year
- Track and trace firm to staff phone lines, as appeals warning sounded

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EXCLUSIVE

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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DfE officials plan white paper to deliver schools vision

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER

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EXCLUSIVE

Gavin Williamson has pledged to set out a "broader vision" for the school system later this year, with officials understood to be planning a white paper.

Asked about his plans for schools, Williamson said the system would be "moving over time to a fully academised model, with all schools being within a family of schools".

Speaking at the Festival of Education on Wednesday, he added: "That's one of those key planks, finishing those reforms that were started back in 2010."

While he pledged to "set out a broader vision for what our whole school system looks like" later this year, he would not be drawn on what form it would take.

But Schools Week understands Department for Education officials have met with Williamson over a proposed white paper.

They want to get more high-performing academy trusts into areas with the lowest number of schools judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted – particularly in northern regions.

Officials are now looking into whether they want more, smaller trusts, or to allow bigger trusts to get bigger. Schools Week was told there is "some scepticism" within the department over larger MATs.

The plans will also have to get approval from the Treasury, which will scrutinise the cost effectiveness of any proposals.

The last schools white paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, was published in March 2016 and proposed new powers for the



Gavin Williamson

government to direct all schools to become academies.

But the forced academisation plans were abandoned just two months later following a backlash from the education sector and MPs.

Schools Week understands the £10 million "levelling up" scheme announced earlier this year will act as a pilot to show the Treasury that academisation can raise standards.

The cash included £5 million ringfenced for trusts to expand in four areas: Plymouth, Ashfield and Mansfield, South Sefton and North Liverpool, and North Durham and City.

Government said these were chosen because they had a low proportion of pupils attending the best schools, but also a "high potential for rapid improvement".

According to DfE analysis of 312 districts in England, Plymouth has the 17th lowest proportion of pupils in 'good' or better schools, at 68.6 per cent, while Ashfield is 28th with 71.3 per cent and Mansfield is 95th with 79.8 per cent. The other areas highlighted are smaller parts of other

districts, so no specific data on them is included.

The data, published by the DfE yesterday (Thursday), shows large variation in the proportion of pupils in 'good' or 'outstanding' schools between local areas across England.

This ranges from less than 51.8 per cent in South Derbyshire to 100 per cent in the London boroughs of Camden and Kensington & Chelsea.

The government has prioritised trust capacity funding (TCaF) for 118 districts which have the lowest proportions of pupils in top schools or are part of the opportunity areas programme.

Williamson said on Wednesday that "improving outcomes for pupils is our number one priority and as we build back better from Covid, it's more critical than it has ever been".

He added, "We must go further and faster if we are to complete the revolution, end the postcode lottery and truly level up the whole nation."

Williamson confirmed that government is planning "a full programme of primary assessments in the 2021-22 academic year".

This will include the introduction of the statutory reception baseline assessment and the multiplication tables check, details about which will be confirmed "in due course".

The education secretary also announced a phonics check will be held in the autumn again "so that any pupils who need support are spotted early".

When asked whether league tables will return, Williamson did not commit to a date. But he said bringing back league tables had to be "done in a considered and fair way" that reflected schools' Covid challenges.

He said details on plans for exams next year will come "very shortly".

My deepest regret? Last year's grading approach, says Williamson

Gavin Williamson says his "deepest regret" during the pandemic was trying to standardise teacher grades last year.

Asked if he could do one thing differently since the pandemic, the education secretary said "without a shadow of a doubt" it would be the government's 2020 approach to grading and assessments.

He said there was "no playbook" for dealing with a global pandemic, and that the use of teacher assessments "with moderating

elements", was felt to be the "right approach".

"I think on reflection what we saw is an algorithm that didn't produce the results and fairness that we expected it to produce. And that was certainly my deepest regret."

However, he stood by his decision to threaten legal action against schools and councils over plans to close classrooms early for Christmas as the Kent variant caused huge disruption.

He said the government was "absolutely right" to keep schools open. Any decision to

close "has to be based on the best scientific and medical advice", and it was "right that we're guided" by the advice of government scientific advisers, he said..

Asked how he would be remembered as education secretary, Williamson said his "one key interest was making sure we got children back into school at the earliest possible moment". The next key priority was to continue delivering reforms.

Ofsted chief launches expansion offensive

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Ofsted's chief inspector has pressed the case for the further expansion of Ofsted's role within education after securing two more years in the post.

Amanda Spielman spoke this week of plans to increase Ofsted's SEND inspection remit, a need for extra cash to fully inspect school's safeguarding and said she still has an eye on full inspections of academy trusts.

It was announced last month the chief inspector had been given two extra years in her role following the disruption and delays brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

However concerns have previously been raised over the watchdog's reach with calls last year from school leaders to #PauseOfsted as critics questioned the performance metrics of current inspections. Any further expansion is likely to be met with further opposition.

Plans to 'broaden the scope' of SEND inspections

On Wednesday, Ofsted published research warning that children and young people with special educational needs and or disability (SEND) have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

The report described parents quitting their jobs to care for their children as existing weaknesses in the SEND system were exacerbated by the pandemic.

In commentary accompanying the report,



Amanda Spielman

Spielman said the watchdog wanted to "broaden the scope" of its area SEND inspections to look at support for all pupils in alternative provision.

She explained that as a high proportion of children in AP have SEND, areas' "response and commissioning strategies for AP and SEND are also likely to be intertwined".

SEND area inspections are carried out jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The inspections assess provision across local authority areas, but currently only look at AP for pupils with SEND.

Ofsted 'constrained' by not inspecting MATs

When appearing in front of the education select committee on Tuesday, Spielman was asked which areas of Ofsted's scope she would like to change following her extension.

She explained the watchdog's inability to inspect academy trusts is something she wanted to address. "I re-read my pre-appointment hearing transcript the other day – things I talked about then that I think are still unresolved are the position of MATs.

"We still operate what in some respects is historic inspection legislation, that constrains us to look at the level of the individual school."

Spielman also called for a "gateway threshold" for withdrawals of pupils from school for elective home education. Ofsted said this would be some form of assessment of circumstances before a youngster is allowed to withdraw from school.

Any "threshold" should consider whether parents are able to provide a good education that meets pupils' needs, and look at any social care concerns, they said.

Last month, Ofsted's remit was given powers to inspect online schools under a new accreditation scheme after the government failed to secure a commercial provider.

However, when addressing the select committee, Spielman said she had "significant concerns about this message that Ofsted is enormous". She pointed out that the watchdog was half the size it was 20 years ago.

Committee chair Robert Halfon asked if there should be an "offshoot" of Ofsted, or a separate independent body to advise and inspect schools specifically on safeguarding.

Spielman said: "We could absolutely do it if we were funded. In terms of Ofsted funding, as a percentage of the school budget, the school inspection budget is I think now under 0.1 per cent of school funding, where it was once 0.4 per cent.

"It has been a policy choice to reduce that capacity. That could be restored if there was a desire to put more effort into this area."

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

An inset day on sexual abuse 'won't cut it', says Spielman

Amanda Spielman has warned schools that a one-off safeguarding inset day alone "won't cut it" as the sector looks to address sexual abuse and harassment among pupils.

In response to Ofsted's review of sex abuse in schools, the Department for Education pledged to "encourage" schools to include relationship, health and sex education curriculum and safeguarding training as part of a national inset day.

But writing for *Schools Week*, the chief inspector said it was important schools did not take "a tick-box approach" and that a one-off inset day, commissioning a safeguarding consultant or requiring staff to read guidance

"won't cut it".

The watchdog's rapid review found that school leaders and teachers consistently underestimated the scale of abuse.

Elsewhere this week, the Ofsted chief was forced to clarify comments she made to the education select committee after it was suggested she claimed sending unsolicited nude pictures was not a safeguarding concern.

Spielman was asked when an allegation of sexual harassment involving a child would not be a safeguarding issue.

She highlighted the high number of girls who reported receiving photographs of nudes. Most "laughed that off" and wouldn't want to

be pulled into safeguarding procedures as a result.

Spielman explained Ofsted's review highlighted the difficulty schools faced when drawing the line between incidents that were a "serious concern" and those that required education to help boys understand what "oversteps the mark".

But in a later statement she said: "Sexual abuse or harassment is a safeguarding issue. The challenge for schools is how to respond appropriately to individual incidents while still recognising it's an endemic problem."

Amanda Spielman on Ofsted's report, page 24

Speed read

The new 'one-stop shop' for academy leaders

Sector leaders say "highly unusual" reforms to the academies financial handbook could pave the way for a "broader intervention role" for regulators.

The Department for Education has published the 2021 "academies financial handbook", now known as the "academy trust handbook".

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said at the Festival of Education the change brought "significant improvements and updates" to the rules, which take effect in September.

Ministers dubbed the latest edition a "one-stop shop"

for academy leaders, with most changes simply pulling in existing guidance from elsewhere.

Major changes include financial notices to improve renamed "notices to improve", to reflect that the warnings issued to academies sometimes cover "broader governance issues".

Meanwhile, trusts must now inform their regional school commissioners of chief executive changes, and there is greater emphasis on holding spaces on boards for parents.

Here's your trusty *Schools Week* guide.

1 HANDBOOK BECOMES A 'ONE-STOP SHOP'

Baroness Berridge (pictured), the minister for the school system, said the latest edition had been renamed to highlight trusts' responsibilities "in a wider range of areas" than finances alone.

It was now "close to a "one-stop shop" for trustees, governors and leaders, she said in the foreword, highlighting rules "by which you are already bound".

2 FTNIS BECOME NTIS

The name of financial notice to improve warnings issued by the DfE has also changed, becoming merely a "notice to improve".

Berridge said the change recognised that the government "intervenes on occasion in broader governance issues, not only in response to financial management concerns".

Sam Henson, the policy director at the National Governance Association (NGA), said the rebranded notices and handbook "continues a pattern of introducing more rigorous controls and checks".

"It is logical to assume the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will potentially have a broader intervention role for trusts. The NGA is seeking further clarification on these changes."

3 INFORM RSCS OVER LEADER DEPARTURES

One of a handful of new obligations is to approach the local regional schools commissioner when the senior executive leader plans to leave the trust.

This will allow discussion of trust "structure and options, including plans for recruitment".

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, called it a "highly unusual" requirement to place on legally independent charities. "We need to understand more about the intention behind this."

Meanwhile, pay information that trusts must publish for those earning

more than £100,000 now covers non-employees with off-payroll arrangements.

4 DFE EMPHASISES ROLE OF PARENTS ON BOARDS

Berridge said the new handbook "emphasises" existing rules on trusts, reserving board places for parents or carers.

This "helps ensure that boards stay accessible and connected to the community they serve and supports robust decision-making".

Single academy trusts need two board places, and multi-academy trusts need two on either the board or every local governing body. Emma Knights, the chief executive of the NGA, welcomed the focus and called it a "very different attitude" to several years ago.

Ministers had planned to scrap the requirement for reserved places for parents, but the proposals were shelved in 2016. Cruddas agreed it was important boards were "accountable to communities".

5 PERMISSION NEEDED TO PAY CYBER RANSOMS

Berridge highlighted a new section on cyber-security that says the ESFA backs the National Crime Agency's advice to not pay cyber ransoms.

Trusts must seek ESFA permission before paying ransoms, with the handbook noting payment is likely to spark repeat incidents.

Trusts must also have "proportionate controls" as attacks affecting education increase, and take "appropriate action" over incidents.

6 EXTERNAL REVIEW OVER SELF-EVALUATION

The updated handbook encourages external governance reviews as a "more powerful diagnostic tool" than self-evaluation. Knights called it an "exceptionally good move".

The DfE's "strong preference" is for their routine use, but they are particularly important before significant changes such as large trust growth or where there are governance concerns.





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2021 grades

'Time running out' for Ofqual's 'rebuild trust' promise

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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EXCLUSIVE

The publication of data from last year's grading fiasco, promised by Ofqual to "rebuild trust in exams", has been delayed.

Academics say the setback means "time is running out" for the data to be any use in preventing possible chaos this year.

The regulator pledged in December to use the the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Secure Research Service to publish the source data used to award grades last year. More "transparency" would help Ofqual "learn" from last year's chaos.

Accredited researchers could then forensically analyse the data, including looking at the relationship between results and university applications and attainment data, as well as the model used.

The regulator initially said it expected researchers would be able to apply to access the data from "early 2021". In March it said the plan was to send data to the ONS in April or early May "at the latest" as it sorted data protection issues.

But Schools Week can reveal the release has been delayed again over "further data protection issues".

Sir Peter Lampl, the founder and executive chair of the Sutton Trust and chair of the Education Endowment Foundation, said: "While due consideration must be given to data protection, time is running out for the data to be of any use this year."

It was "imperative" to analyse and review what



Sir Peter Lampl

happened last year. "Knowing how different groups and schools were affected should play an important part in mitigating against this happening in 2021."

Ofqual said it was "working towards" making the data available "before this summer's results".

A spokesperson said: "It's important to get this right. While we anticipated that this would take some time, there is some further work that we need to do to ensure that pupils' data is shared securely."

Professor Julius Weinberg, who is leading an expert board advising on the project, said last year it could affect "fundamental change".

It was about "trusting others" to interrogate data, allowing independent researchers to "hold the system to account" and "being confident and open".

"Ultimately openness and accountability will, I hope, rebuild the trust that young people, their parents, teachers and others should have in the exam system."

Ofqual was heavily criticised for keeping details of its ill-fated algorithm secret in the run up to last summer's exams.

Robert Halfon, the chair of the education select committee, said Ofqual "buried it head in the sand" in the run-up to results day. He also accused the regulator of "hiding away in the Ofqual attic" over a lack of communication.

Roger Taylor, Ofqual's former chair, told the committee last September that it was "absolutely essential that independent researchers" have access to data from last year "in a secure way that will enable those lessons to be learned".

Ofqual said the planned release would include data used to develop the standardisation model, including centre-assessed grades, calculated grades and final grades. It would date back to 2017 to allow comparisons and would include linked data from the Department for Education and UCAS, with support from Ofsted.

Two reports from Ofqual's new expert data-sharing advisory board are also delayed.

One is expected to look at "factors affecting centre-assessed grades" (CAGs) compared with examined grades. The other is the difference between CAGs and calculated grades in 2020 as well as the characteristics of those students "with larger gaps".

Weinberg, the board's chair, said in December he hoped to report in May. Ofqual said the reports would now be published in "the coming weeks".

Several evaluations and analyses on summer 2020, including a 340-page technical report, have already been published, a spokesperson said. "The data-sharing project is a long-term project and we will move forward as soon as we can."

EXCLUSIVE

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Regulator calls in Sitel to manage public enquiry phone lines

Ofqual is paying £225,000 to an outsourcing company used in the government's much-criticised Test and Trace system to answer calls from students, parents and teachers.

The regulator outsourced its public enquiries lines to Sitel to meet an expected rise in calls.

Last year Ofsted staff were deployed to help in the height of the grading fiasco, but they have since gone back to the watchdog.

The contract notice states Sitel will be required to answer all incoming calls, working with Ofqual service managers and frontline Ofqual staff who will handle all email and outgoing calls.

Sitel will also "represent" the regulator in "support of promoting public confidence" in



qualifications. The contract will run for two years.

Ofqual said it had "secured the services of an acknowledged expert organisation who are currently delivering services in the education sector to meet expected demand".

Sitel has received tens of millions of pounds for its part in the government's Test and Trace scheme.

A National Audit Office (NAO) report in December said contract tracers employed by Sitel and Serco reached just 60 per cent of contacts by the end of October.

It also found that "utilisation rates for call handlers remained well below the target of 50 per cent" during September and October. "Substantial public resources" had been spent on "staff who provided minimal services in return", the NAO said.

Ofqual said the procurement process "included appropriate due diligence and provided us with access to Sitel's existing systems and people".

Sitel did not respond to requests for comment.

2021 grades



Exams appeals will set 'high threshold'

SAMANTHA BOOTH
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Appeals against this summer's GCSE and A-level results will have to meet a "very high" threshold with no scope for "speculative" attempts to earn a better grade, says Ofqual's chief regulator.

It appears to be a step change from ministers' reassurance this year of a "full and fair" appeals system after the chaos of last summer.

Students can request that their school reviews their teacher assessment grade for procedural problems or administrative errors.

If they are not satisfied, their school will escalate an appeal to exam boards, which can consider whether the grade was a "reasonable exercise of academic judgment" based on the evidence available.

But Simon Lebus, Ofqual's interim chief regulator, told the Girls' Schools Association's summer briefing this week that it was "important to emphasise that this a very high threshold to meet".

Grades were based on a teacher's "holistic judgment" so there was no scope, as in a normal year, for "speculative appeals" in which a student was near a grade boundary. "That is not the nature of the grading judgment that is being applied."

Lebus said Ofqual would try to emphasise this point in its communications over the next few weeks.

Ian Bauckham, Ofqual's interim chair, said in April that a successful appeal would be "unlikely" if the school had followed its approved policy by using a "reasonable and consistent set of evidence for the whole cohort, permitted exception circumstances notwithstanding".

But when the plans for this year were confirmed in February, Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, told the Commons "a full and fair appeals system" would "provide a process to enable students to appeal their grades, should they believe that their grades

are wrong".

Ofqual and exam boards have attempted to lower the volume of appeals by allowing students to know what evidence is submitted to support their grade, but not the final result.

But there are still concerns about teacher workload. The Department for Education will pay schools £75 for each "priority appeal" so they can bring in staff to oversee the process in the summer holidays.

When appealing to the exam board, a student will need to say "in what way they considered there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgment", either in the evidence used or the final grade.

Some respondents to Ofqual's consultation on the appeals process were concerned pupils "might find it difficult" to explain why an academic decision was unreasonable.

One unnamed exam board told Ofqual that "consideration must be given to the possibility that not all learners will be equally supported, by their centres or others". Another said appeals might "effectively increase inequality" since disadvantaged pupils were "unlikely to be confident or comfortable in disagreeing with their teacher or school".

But Ofqual said any explanation "need not be complex" and student request template forms have been produced.

However, law firm Stone King said "very few" appeals would be successful.

The firm said the standard set by Ofqual "broadly mirrors" the legal standard required to avoid a claim of negligence. If an appeal succeeded on this ground, it "may result in an attempted negligence claim".

But lawyers admit the claim would "still have to prove causation of actual damage and loss to the student, which we anticipate will be difficult in practice".

Meanwhile, nearly two thirds of headteachers think schools should get back at least 75 per cent of exam fees this summer, a move that exam board Pearson has already said was "unrealistic".

Blame human error not algorithm, says former Ofqual chief

SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Last year's exams fiasco resulted from a "gross miscalculation" about how to treat people, Ofqual's former chair has said.

Roger Taylor (pictured) also admitted the regulator knew "that in many cases people would be given the wrong grade".

Speaking publicly for the first time since leaving Ofqual in December, Taylor revealed more about what went wrong last summer when the government was forced to abandon its moderation algorithm and issue centre-assessed grades.

Boris Johnson blamed the chaos on a "mutant algorithm", but Taylor wrote in a report this week that "the mistakes were made by humans, not machines".

Speaking at a Centre for Progressive Policy event, he said blaming the algorithm was the "wrong response" as the problems lay with the policy choices and a "colossal misjudgment".

"It was in effect a gross miscalculation about what was a reasonable and acceptable way to treat people."

He added that there was a "risk that we don't take the right lessons from what happened. If we make that mistake we will continue to repeat the same errors."

Ofqual knew that the mechanism put in place to award grades "wouldn't be wholly accurate."

"We knew that in many cases people would be given the wrong grade, that they would have done better in an exam and they would know that, and they would feel a deep sense of injustice."

He said the regulator had "very strong legal advice" not to fix those grades before results day as it was likely it would lose any potential judicial reviews.

While there was a "deep sense of unease" about the process, this did not "sufficiently crystallise in the policy-making".

Taylor blamed a "frame of mind that is weak at recognising the experience of the individual and thinking about it from the citizen's perspective, which greatly overvalues benefits in terms of the smooth running of the administration, keeping things on track, enabling the systems to work as closely as they can as they normally work".



Speed read

DfE data dump: everything you need to know

The Department for Education yesterday published reports on the pupil and teacher workforce, and school admissions. Here's what you need to know.

1 PANDEMIC FUELS RISE IN FREE SCHOOL MEAL PUPILS



More than one in five pupils are now eligible for free school meals, following a steep rise during the pandemic.

Children living in households in England on income-related benefits are eligible, as long as their annual household income does not exceed £7,400 after tax.

As of January, 20.8 per cent of all pupils were eligible, up from 17.3 per cent last year – an extra 300,000 young people. Overall, it means 1.74 million pupils can now claim free school meals.

The highest rates were in the north east (27.5 per cent) followed by the West Midlands (24.5 per cent).

In contrast, just 16 per cent of pupils in the south east are eligible for free meals. The DfE said there were increases in all regions.

2 PUPIL PREMIUM “STEALTH CUT” TOTALS £145 MILLION



Schools are missing out on funding for potentially more than 100,000 vulnerable pupils after the government altered its method for calculating pupil premium.

In December last year, ministers decided to base premium funding on the number of free school meal pupils in October, rather than January as previously.

The number of eligible pupils rose by 103,900 between the autumn and spring term alone. It means £129 million of funding could have been lost – confirming similar estimates from an earlier *Schools Week* investigation.

Under the DfE's recovery premium, schools will receive £145 for each child eligible for pupil premium – suggesting schools could miss out on another £15 million on top.

Jon Andrews, the head of analysis at the Education Policy Institute (EPI), said the government should “publish its analysis of the impact of this decision ... and clarify whether any savings from this have been redistributed”.

3 PRIMARY APPLICATIONS DROP 5 PER CENT ...



Primary school applications fell 5.1 per cent this year. The government said this could in part be due to an increase in home-schooling.

Parents made 580,771 applications to primary schools, down from 612,146 for the 2020-21 academic year.

The DfE listed four possible reasons, including “reactions to the pandemic” such as “an increase in the number of parents and carers opting to home-school”.

A *Schools Week* investigation last year found some councils

reported increases in elective home education registrations of more than 200 per cent.

The DfE also said there was a reduction in births in England from late 2016 onwards. A “larger than usual” number of late applications could be a factor as was a “reduction in migrations” due to pandemic travel controls.

The decrease takes applications down to their lowest level since at least 2014-15.

4... 11-PLUS TEST DELAYS HIT SECONDARIES

The number of secondary school applications rose 0.8 per cent.

However, the proportion of applications receiving an offer from their first-choice school dropped 1.1 percentage points, to 81.1 per cent.

The DfE says this figure will have been affected by delays to selective school tests. Some areas allowed parents to name selective schools as preferences before they knew whether their child had passed the 11-plus.

Slough, which has a high number of grammar schools, had the lowest first preference rate (56.1 per cent). It is the first time the council with the lowest first preference rate was outside London.

5 TEACHER NUMBERS RISE AS STAFF STAY PUT DURING COVID



New school workforce figures for 2020 show the number of teachers increased 7,000 on 2019, rising to 461,088 last year.

The number leaving the profession dropped 17 per cent to 34,116 as the pandemic boosted retention.

Teachers are also younger and more diverse. The proportion of teachers aged 50 and over continued to fall, with the number aged 30 to 49 increasing.

The proportion describing themselves as an ethnic minority rose to 15 per cent, up from 11 per cent in 2010.

6 SECONDARY AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS GROW

The annual schools, pupils and their characteristics data collection, based on the January census, shows numbers in secondary schools grew 2.5 per cent, from 3.41 million to 3.49 million. The state special school population increased 4.7 per cent from 128,146 to 134,176.

In contrast, the overall number of pupils in all schools rose just 0.2 per cent. In primary, the number of pupils fell 1.2 per cent. The largest drop was in London (1.6 per cent).

Meanwhile, the number of youngsters in pupil referral units fell 17 per cent from 15,396 in January 2020, to 12,785 in January this year.

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RSC's push to get communities on board not matched by academy guidance

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education has quietly removed the need for schools to be “answerable” to communities and parents from its governance handbook.

It comes in spite of renewed emphasis in recent weeks on community involvement, with Claire Burton (pictured), the regional schools commissioner for south east England and south London, saying academising schools must show the DfE how they have addressed local objections.

Meanwhile, the latest academies financial handbook emphasises being “connected” to communities. It reminds trusts to reserve two places on boards or every governing body for parents.

Experts say guidance should be clear and consistently applied by regional schools commissioners. Some sector leaders say parental voice is key, but others argue governors are better placed to determine schools’ long-term futures.

Burton will decide next week whether to approve one of the most fiercely opposed academy conversions in recent years.

Plans to transfer Peacehaven Heights primary in East Sussex to the Step Trust sparked protests and staff strikes last month.

The RSC said recently that governing bodies facing objections “must outline to the department how these concerns have been addressed”.

Neither academy legislation nor the government’s conversion guide mention having to inform the DfE over addressing objections, or

include advice.

The Academies Act simply states governors must “consult such persons as they think appropriate”, which the guide says includes parents, staff and community.

“If there’s a move to allow more parental voice within academisation, there should be clarity about how schools should respond to consultation. You can’t have people guessing,” said Andrew Pilmore, director of school improvement at DRB Schools and Academies Services.

Burton’s comments came in an email responding to criticisms of Peacehaven Heights’ conversion by Angela Mills, a former chair of governors.

Burton also recently blocked another conversion following local opposition. Schools Week analysis of board minutes found no other RSCs blocking voluntary conversions on similar grounds over the previous eight months.

Jeff Marshall, the managing director of conversion advisers J&G Marshall, said requirements should be “communicated better from the top” as RSCs interpreted them differently. “It should be joined-up and consistent or it becomes a postcode lottery.”

In her email, Burton said she may order non-complying boards to properly consider feedback, and highlighted a “greater emphasis on parental engagement” in recent editions of the governance handbook.

Updates in 2019 include schools having to inform strategic decision-making with parents’ views, and being able to show how they have “fed back” to parents and communities.

But there is no requirement to proactively inform the DfE, and Schools Week

analysis reveals a watering-down of other local accountability.

In 2017 a line was added saying boards must “never become detached, distant or unanswerable”, and must be “connected with, and answerable to, the communities they serve, particularly parents/carers”.

Yet the first line was removed in 2019, and the second last year.

Pilmore said schools should remain answerable, with the changes a symptom of “slow disintegration” of parental involvement as governors.

He noted multi-academy trusts were not required to have local governing bodies, but welcomed recent National Governance Association research suggesting Covid had increased commitment to them.

But Marshall said schools were accountable to many stakeholders beyond parents. Governors should be responsible for “strategic thinking for generations to come”.

RSCs also face questions over accountability. Parents, staff and media cannot attend RSC headteacher board meetings, including one next Thursday in which Peacehaven Heights’ conversion will be decided. Minutes are typically published weeks or months later.

Mills said they should not be “veiled in secrecy”, and decision-makers needed to hear directly from those affected.

A Peacehaven Heights spokesperson said conversion would deliver the “rapid improvement needed”.

A Step Trust spokesperson said it supported all views being “carefully considered”. The school already had experienced the trust under an existing deal that provided leadership and learning support.

The DfE has been approached for comment.



EXCLUSIVE

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

Struggling schools need ‘support, not public tellings-off’

An academy trust given a termination warning notice has called the procedure “demotivating” and “against the basic principles of education”.

The Dean Trust was sent the notice by the Department for Education in May after its Dean Trust Wigan school was rated ‘inadequate’ after an Ofsted inspection in February last year.

The notice, published last week, warns the trust’s funding agreement for the school may be terminated.

Ofsted’s report highlighted areas for improvement such as behaviour management, attendance and SEND provision.

But a further remote monitoring inspection in March this year found the school was taking effective action to provide education during the

pandemic and praised the strengthening of senior leadership and delivery of curriculum.

However, Carol Gray, the interim regional schools commissioner for East Midlands and Humber – who issued the notice – said the scope of the March report was limited and she still had concerns about the school’s educational standards.

Tarun Kapur, the trust’s chief executive, told *Schools Week* it had been “successfully taking action over the last 15 months to improve the school during the pandemic” and was “delighted” by Ofsted’s recent feedback.

He also said the trust did not consider the publication of the notice “to be motivational. Whilst the trust is fully cognisant of the requirement to publish a termination warning notice following a grade 4 category,

this goes against the basic principles of education that we aspire to, which is that if a child is struggling we provide support and encouragement as opposed to admonishment, which simply serves to demotivate them.”

Julie McCulloch, the director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said struggling schools needed “timely support, not public tellings-off”.

“The system of warning notices is a heavy-handed and inflexible approach that is not conducive to supporting improvement, and may well be counterproductive by demoralising staff, parents, pupils and communities.”

The DfE did not respond to a request for comment.

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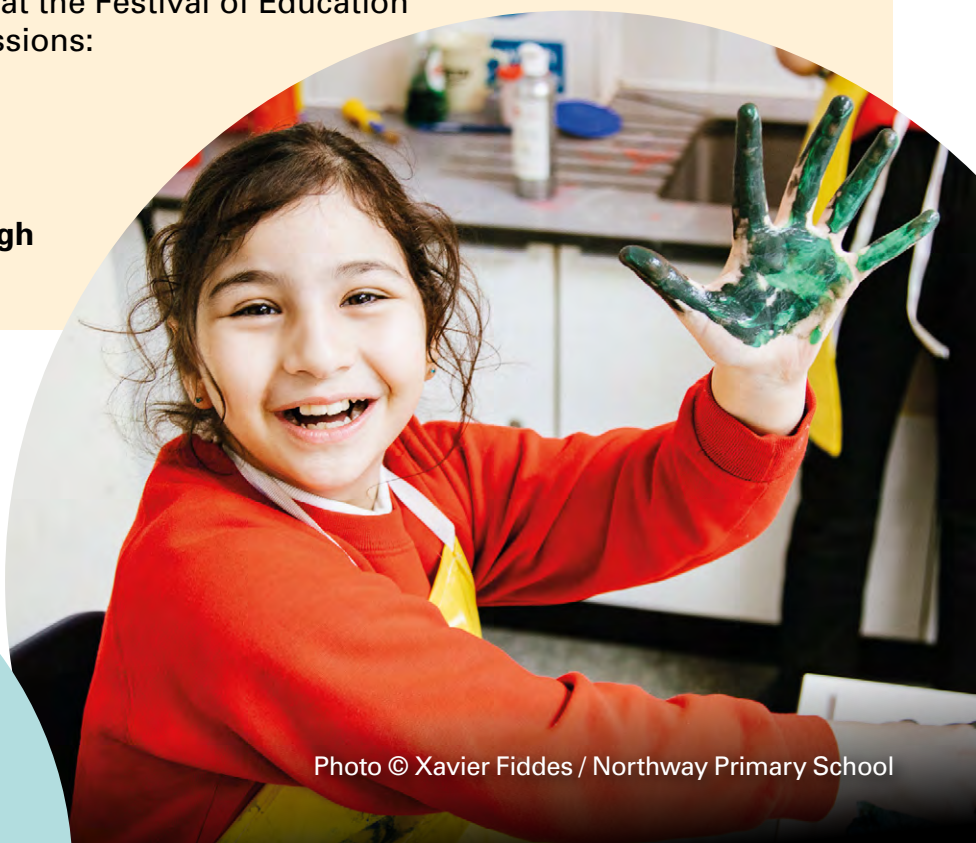


Photo © Xavier Fiddes / Northway Primary School

No 10 looks for adviser to push education policy

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Downing St is seeking a “deputy director for education, jobs and skills” to join its new delivery unit set up to drive policy implementation.

But former government advisers this week said the No 10 role would only make a difference if the government had a “clear vision”, and that its impact on policymaking and delivery would depend on having “the ear” of the prime minister.

According to a job advert, the new £71,000 to £117,800-a-year role will be based in the No 10 Delivery Unit, a new team within the Cabinet Office that “should grow to around 40 staff”.

The vacancy is likely to exacerbate concerns that education policy is increasingly run not from the Department for Education, but from Boris Johnson’s office.

The unit, set up on the recommendations of former Tony Blair adviser Sir Michael Barber, will “support capacity building in government departments”.

The deputy director, who will be appointed on a two-year contract, will lead an education, jobs and skills team and “focus departments and delivery partners on the successful delivery of critical outcomes in that area”.

The new role will involve using the prime minister’s “backing” to “intervene effectively where delivery is slowing to get projects back on track”.

But Jonathan Simons, who did a similar job during Gordon Brown’s premiership, warned that “no central unit, however lavishly staffed, can make a difference unless the government has a clear vision of what it wants to track



delivery against - and I’m not sure we always have that”.

It was “not a surprise” that the new unit wanted a team covering these issues, and it was “good to see an explicit link between jobs and skills and education”.

“I’d expect the attention to be more on FE and skills and HE than schools issues.”

Sam Freedman, who worked on policy during Michael Gove’s time at the Department for Education, said role’s impact would depend “entirely on who they hire. Who their boss is. Whether they have the PM’s ear and whether they have any relationships in the DfE”.

“Everything in Westminster in relational. Titles don’t mean much.”

The advert says the unit is looking for someone with expertise “relating to the education, jobs and skills mission”, for example, in “education or skills policy or education bodies”. Applications close on June 27.

The new unit, which will be run by Dr Emily

Lawson, England’s lead on vaccine deployment, will be similar to Barber’s group during the Blair years.

Johnson warned in a speech last year of a need to fix problems “brutally illuminated” by Covid, including the “parts of government that seemed to respond so sluggishly so that sometimes it seemed like that recurring bad dream when you are telling your feet to run and your feet won’t move”.

According to Civil Service World, Johnson’s official spokesperson said earlier this year that the unit would not affect policymaking at department level. It was “about making sure that the prime minister’s priorities are being delivered”.

But i News reported that the prime minister risked accusations of trying to “override” the civil service.

Kate Green, the shadow education secretary, pointed to the recent resignation of Sir Kevan Collins, the education recovery commissioner, and said creating new government jobs “does nothing to create better outcomes for children or better public services”.

A Number 10 spokesperson said the new deputy director would be “crucial to the successful delivery of the plan for jobs, the lifetime skills guarantee and our ambitious education and schools programme”.

This includes the government’s tutoring programmes and other education recovery measures, they added.

They also said the government had a “clear vision for education to make sure that every child gain the skills and knowledge they need to be able to seize opportunities in future”.

Virtual heads to help schools support children with social workers

Virtual school heads will be asked to help schools support children with social workers under an expansion of the scheme first mooted two years ago.

From September, virtual school heads will be asked to work with schools to “create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with social workers to make educational progress”.

Virtual school heads have a statutory role based in local authorities, and currently oversee the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

They will now also have an additional non-

statutory responsibility for promoting the educational outcomes of children with, or who have previously had, a social worker.

Department for Education guidance said it was a “strategic leadership role” which will not involve “intervention, help and support” for individual children or their families.

Councils will get £16 million in funding to support the expansion up until March 2022, though it is not known how much of this is core funding they normally receive for existing duties.

In guidance about the expansion, the DfE said the funding was “sufficient to recruit additional

team members to support them with these responsibilities”.

The department also said this week that virtual school heads would be “central” to ensuring its education recovery package reaches children with social workers, and could advise on spending of the recovery premium and access to tutoring.

Expansion of the virtual school heads role was proposed in the 2019 Children in Need review.

The DfE said it “recognises the short timeframe between announcement of the role change and the start of these new responsibilities in September 2021”.

Durand cottages for sale - but who gets the cash?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

A dispute over proceeds from the sale of a failed state boarding school is dragging on four years after it closed, with two cottages on the West Sussex site now listed at £500,000 apiece.

Durand Academy's satellite boarding site at St Cuthman's, near Midhurst, closed in 2017 after the Department for Education withdrew its offer of more than £17 million in funding.

It opened three years earlier to cater for pupils in certain year groups from Durand's main school in Lambeth, south London. It was the first in the country not to charge parents boarding fees.

The site, known as the Wispers Estate, was put on the market for about £4 million. Its current owner is the Durand Education Trust (DET), the sister charity of Durand Academy, which was rebrokered in 2018 and is now called Van Gogh Primary School.

But two cottages on the estate were recently listed for sale, while the rest of the site will be sold for a development of flats and houses. The fee has not been disclosed.

An advert on Rightmove lists the two cottages as ripe "for refurbishment within charming rural surroundings of the South Downs countryside".

The cottages also have the "potential to extend, subject to planning approval, on the outskirts of the desirable village of Stedham".

Adrian Hearle, who lives near the estate, said residents were keen to see it brought back into use, but questioned the rationale for selling the cottages separately.

"It's been very sad to see the deterioration of the building over the years. The dumped rubbish on the site of the demolished classroom blocks, things like that. It's all very depressing. Certainly as locals we're very keen that the site has a sustainable future," he told *Schools Week*.

The listing of the cottages comes in



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The Rightmove advert for the cottages

the midst of a long dispute over what will happen with the proceeds from the estate's sale.

In its accounts for the year ending August 2018, DET said the Education and Skills Funding Agency "consider the funds from the proposed sale of the property at St Cuthman's should be held on trust for the benefit of the primary school on the Hackford Road site (in south London), which the trustees dispute".

DET's latest accounts, for the year to August 2019, said the company was still "in the process of selling" the St Cuthman's site and "will apply the proceeds towards its charitable objects".

But the Department for Education said it was still "in discussion" with Durand and the Charity Commission over the proceeds, but could not say more because of separate legal proceedings regarding the school's main site.

A Charity Commission spokesperson said it had been "made aware of the sale of two cottages on land owned by the Durand Education Trust in Sussex".

"We continue to engage with the charity on a number of issues following our earlier statutory inquiry, including about the application of funds arising from the sale of the former boarding school site. We can't comment further."

The failed boarding school was one of a number of controversial ventures by DET. The charity wholly owns a private company, London Horizons Limited,

which runs commercial leisure facilities and accommodation on the Lambeth site.

Although the commercial land was transferred back to Lambeth council in October, DET is embroiled in a legal fight for compensation. It lost a Court of Appeal last year to get the money, and is now appealing to the Supreme Court.

Durand has racked up huge legal bills through court action. In 2017, the academy trust took Ofsted to the High Court and was initially successful in quashing a damning 'inadequate' grading, but the inspectorate won at appeal.

Accounts show Durand's legal and professional fees bill rocketed to more than £620,000 in 2018.

DET also had a "special payment" contractual agreement to pay Sir Greg Martin, the academy's former head, £850,000 in compensation from the profits of the leisure facilities.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said it would be "morally reprehensible" for Durand to be given any more public money.

"The eye-watering sums that have accrued to the charity over the years and the fact that the former headteacher received such lavish compensation, are an indictment not just of Durand, but of the system that allowed this to happen."

DET was approached for comment.

Catering giant's menu leaves a sour taste in some schools

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

The catering giant Chartwells has lost school food contracts worth up to £19 million since its lockdown parcels sparked outcry earlier this year, with one trust accusing it of putting "profit before pupils".

But the company has still bagged seven deals in recent months worth at least £92 million over the next six years, assuming schools use extension options built into new contracts.

They include a £20 million deal agreed by Lewisham council in south London last week, after it canned its plans to bring services in-house.

Chartwells' owner Compass and other caterers faced public fury when viral images appeared of meagre food parcels for children on free school meals during lockdown in January.

The company, part of footballer Marcus Rashford's child poverty taskforce, pledged higher standards.

But it faces scrutiny once more as Royal Docks Academy in east London has confirmed it will end a three-year deal early over "quality issues".

BMAT Education, which runs the school, will move services in-house, highlighting not only "appalling" parcels, but also meals like a reported £2.20 half-burger served without garnish last month.

"These outsourced firms' thing is profit before pupils. Ours is pupils before profit," said Lucia Glynn, BMAT education's head of operations.

A Chartwells spokesperson apologised and said it worked to resolve concerns, but was "obviously disappointed" to lose contracts. "The image falls short of standards we would expect."

But she noted secondary pupils could choose salad, relish and wedges "within the price" of burgers.

Merton council in south west London



Royal Docks Academy cut ties with Chartwells over "quality issues" - like this burger

also ditched Chartwells last week, handing another provider a £18.6 million five-year deal. It did not respond to request for comment.

Yet *Schools Week* analysis shows Chartwells has won or extended seven other deals covering more than 280 schools this year.

"We are really pleased to have won and retained a number of contracts this year," said the Chartwells spokesperson, praising the company's staff for their hard work during the pandemic.

They include a £56.6 million five-year extension with West Sussex County Council, after positive feedback from schools.

Officials in West Sussex had also warned schools of "turbulence" in the catering sector, arguing retaining suppliers would help weather Covid and Brexit.

Financial results for multinational Compass show cost-cutting helped to raise its profit margin from 2.7 per cent to 4.2 per cent between January and March however, despite education sales slumping 21.6 per cent in the half-year to April, versus a year earlier.

Meanwhile Lewisham's Labour council

found itself stuck with Chartwells, despite a critical petition.

Chris Barnham, children's services cabinet member, admitted "not enough schools" backed its preferred in-sourcing plan.

Chartwells alone applied for the contract. Lewisham will "explore the scope for more ambitious models" in future, he said.

Hayley Dunn, a business leadership specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said there was no "definitive answer" on in-house versus contracted services.

Covid disruption might have led many schools to review arrangements, but equally "logistical implications" around staffing and administration could deter switches.

Jacquie Blake, the vice-chair of the school meals industry group LACA, said some schools had found in-sourcing a "bigger task than they thought", particularly during Covid.

Councils have had to run competitive tenders since the 1980s. While many authorities remain major providers, Blake said devolved budgets and academisation had further fuelled fragmentation, increasing private provision.

Historian Alan Finch said before the 1980s, many children disliked council meals.

But as subsidies and national food standards were slashed, contractors prioritised cost and mimicked high street fast food to boost sales.

National food standards returned in 2015, after campaigning by chef Jamie Oliver and as concerns over childhood obesity grew.

Quality was now a primary driver for some schools, Blake said, as no one wanted a "race to the bottom".

Providers also face other expectations. Merton and Lewisham councils demanded climate change commitments. West Sussex and Chartwells worked to cut sugar levels and food miles. The company said it planned a more plant-based, sustainable menu from September.

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EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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A schools white paper would be a welcome development

Kudos to education secretary Gavin Williamson for fronting up to questions this week on his and his department's actions during the pandemic.

Appearing in front of the Festival of Education, he spent nearly an hour talking about his vision for schools – and answering our readers' questions.

It was refreshing to hear him open up about the tough decisions he had to make, and his regret for last year's grading fiasco. People make mistakes, especially so in a pandemic. Let's just hope lessons have been learned for this year's grading system.

Another welcome development was a commitment to set out a "broader vision" for the school system later this year.

Williamson has rightly been focused on the Covid response, but as we start to emerge from the pandemic, it's the right time to come up with a proper plan for schools.

It is currently a mish-mash of local authority-

maintained schools, single or smaller academy trusts and a handful of large chains.

A more joined-up system is needed, with clear roles for all the important players.

The government wants all schools to become academies, which would make solving the problem easier. So it will again have to confront how it reaches its goal without forcing the point.

It looks like officials are scoping out a match-making approach: to link good trusts up to failing schools in left-behind areas.

But, as always, any plans will require cash incentives to make them work, and the Treasury is looking increasingly like it has pulled up the drawbridge on its Covid-induced spending.

It might not be Williamson who ends up unveiling this vision. Several newspapers have reported he is to be moved on in the next reshuffle.

But it is welcome that he is taking on the issues that need resolving.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

'Once you've worked in a specialist setting, it's hard to go back'

Caron Johnson arrived to change alternative provision, and it changed her. After taking her school straight to 'outstanding', she explains what she wishes she'd known in mainstream

Caron Johnson, executive headteacher, The Rowans AP Academy, and chief executive, The Inspiring Change Multi-Academy Trust

Caron Johnson, executive headteacher at The Rowans Alternative Provision Academy in Kent, hadn't meant to leave mainstream

schools. In 2010, her then-boss told her about a job at the nearby struggling provision, suggesting as a formidable assistant principal she would be well placed to help. She could always leave and return. More than a decade later, she didn't expect to still be in the sector, explaining to the government why they should let her open a new primary alternative provision, as

demand rises in the area.

"I couldn't believe what I was seeing," she says of her initial arrival at the school. "It was awful. The children were loved and their welfare was of paramount importance, but in terms of curriculum, academic rigour, expectations of outcomes, future plans for them, that didn't exist. It was a massive shock to me."

Profile: Caron Johnson



Pupils gardening at The Rowans



Johnson as a child



Johnson and her mother

“Academic rigour, expectations, future plans - that didn’t exist”

It was partly a shock because, as a mainstream secondary teacher since age 24, who’d risen rapidly through the ranks, Johnson had never thought very hard about life for excluded pupils. She was known as a “strict teacher”, she tells me. “I’m embarrassed now when I look back, because when a young person was permanently excluded, in all honesty I didn’t really think about where they were ending up.”

Johnson herself was from the Medway area, and had been brought up by her mum, a strong, powerful character, and a loving and supportive stepdad. Finances were tight, but her mum was so determined for her kids that she booked Johnson’s PGCE interview herself, forcibly picking her up by car to make sure she attended it. “She told me, ‘You need to grow up.’ My mum taught us, don’t whine about what you don’t have, go and fight for it. She equipped me with the skills I needed to survive.”

By now a successful senior leader, Johnson told her head, with some

reservations, she would move to The Rowans pupil referral unit to support improvement. “It was a lot of children doing what they wanted to do,” says Johnson with a wry smile. Students were on a fixed diet of maths, English, science, ICT and art, and if “you didn’t like art, you did it anyway... The staff had lost links with any other type of school, and so were quite narrow in their thinking,” she continues. “They’d become Rowan-ised.”

Johnson was astonished at some of the attitudes: she was told certain pupils couldn’t take their maths lessons that day because of a distressing family event in the morning, for instance, or that assemblies should not be attempted. “It would be, ‘but we can’t put them all in one room – it’s just an opportunity for them to act up.’ It was, ‘you can do that in your mainstream school, Caron, but not here.’”

When Rowan’s head left, Johnson was invited to apply for the role. She wasn’t especially keen to join AP full-time. “I said, ‘No way, this is not where I want to be.’”

But then two things happened. First, she was showing around the school “a guy in a suit” who was interested in the headship. One of the year 11 boys, who didn’t think much of him, turned to Johnson later. “He said to me, ‘Are you actually going to let him run the school? Are you actually going to let that happen?’” And I thought, ‘He’s right. We’ve actually already made progress.’” Secondly, Johnson spotted her deputy-to-be, Fiona May, teaching at a nearby school. Impressed, she persuaded May to join her.

A third thing had perhaps also happened. Johnson describes with admirable frankness the transformation the provision had already wrought on her – easily as much as she had changed it.

“At my old school when I walked down the corridor, they were quaking in their boots,” she says. “They were petrified of me, and

Profile: Caron Johnson



I had no problem with that." Johnson had spent her career before The Rowans in a single-sex all-boys secondary modern, and was physically smaller than most of her charges. She felt she needed to be tough. "If we were talking about outcomes, progress, behaviour management and controlling 30 boys, I was good at that. My view was, you do what you're told. For 99 per cent of people that worked. But for the one child that didn't fit, I wasn't good at that."

Just as much as Johnson had found a closed culture at The Rowans, she seems also to have found that mainstream was cut off in its own way. "I'd gone from being what I'd considered a highly skilled teacher, to being completely deskilled overnight. The pupils didn't take any notice of me. I became acutely aware it was all about relationships."

As Johnson brought in a new curriculum, high expectations, better behaviour – which some staff welcomed, while others left – her approach was changing, too. "I'm still a strict teacher. Just this morning I gave a pupil short shrift for being quite rude, saying, 'This is very disappointing.' But the difference is that I've got a real relationship with her. I know when to be stern. And I know the young people who wouldn't cope with me being upset with

them, and to take a different angle." Having her own teenage sons also led Johnson to hear how children really feel about their teachers, she adds. Authentic relationships, where teachers show who they really are, matter to them.

In 2015, Ofsted arrived. The school went from special measures to 'outstanding' – such an unusual and rare leap the lead inspector had to talk it through with Ofsted HQ, says Johnson. The report simply glows. "Teachers are expert at gaining students' interest and challenging them to improve their work. Students respond extremely positively"; the "partnership between the headteacher and her deputy is the driving force behind the improvement in the school"; and perhaps most tellingly of all, "students make excellent progress, and for many of them, it is the first time they have experienced success in education". Of course, that report is six years old now, and there is always more to be done in alternative provision: 14 per cent of the year 11 students got five GCSE passes including English and maths in 2019-20.

Johnson is conscious of the paradox of alternative provision. The report says the majority of pupils will spend "the rest of their school career" at The Rowans – but she is clear they are best served in

"At my old school they were petrified of me, and I had no problem with that"

mainstream. Otherwise, the real world will be too much of a shock for them, she explains. They need to learn how to cope with larger class sizes and a wider society not trained in trauma-informed practice. "Part of the problem at The Rowans is, we're victims of our own success. The kids come and they don't want to go."

So now her team has secured sign-off from the Department for Education for a primary AP site, to break the cycle. Delayed since 2017 due to elections and the pandemic, construction of The Beeches will start next year and it will take pupils from as young as five to year 9. Both will come under the trust headed by Johnson: The Inspiring Change MAT. The idea is to offer 12-week interventions – possibly longer – as a "service, rather than a school". "There was lots of talk in the area about the need for primary behaviour support," says Johnson. Fixed-period exclusions from primary schools increased from 2017 to 2019, government data shows. "Now with the pandemic, that need has grown. The Beeches can't come soon enough." Johnson adds: "We've got children who I honestly believe, if we'd met them much earlier, they wouldn't be here now."

But isn't the problem in mainstream itself? Isn't the solution for more mainstream teachers to have Johnson's epiphany? One of the senior leaders at The Rowans is set to return to a mainstream secondary school next year.

For Johnson, though, she's not keen to return. "I think once you've worked in a specialist setting, it's hard to go back into mainstream. I've got so many ideas, I think I'd be too much of a maverick now."

Perhaps that's fine, and AP has simply gained a brilliant leader who suits it. But perhaps mainstream – and staff who may be too stretched or inexperienced to focus on relationships – still needs to change too.

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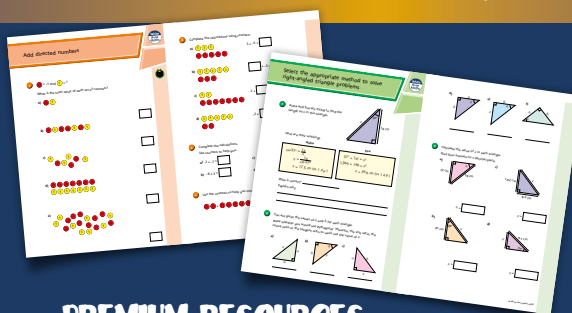
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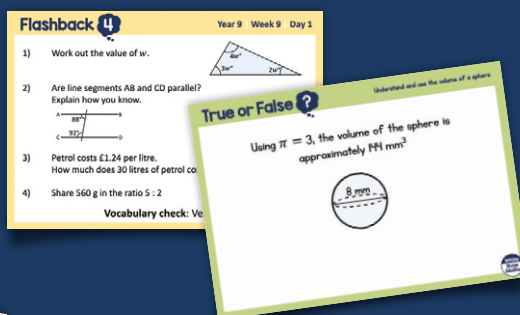


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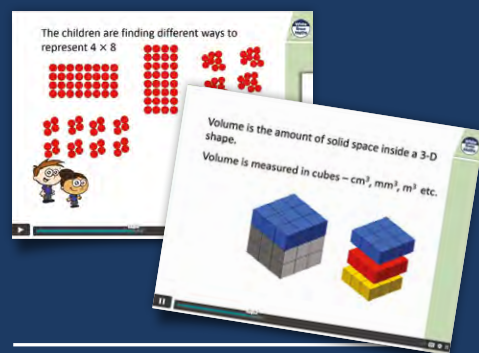
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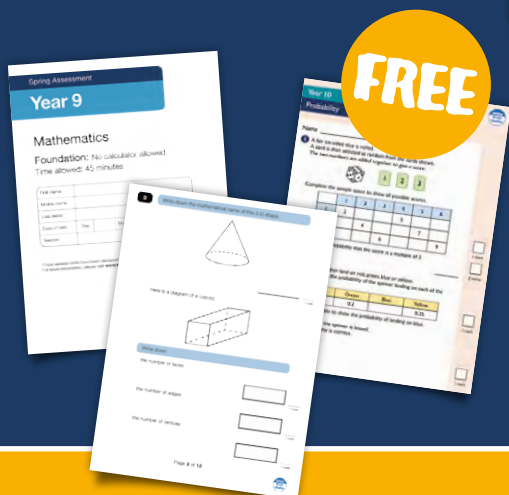
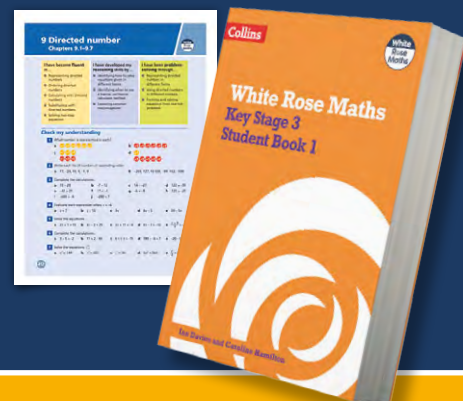
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Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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AMANDA SPIELMAN

Ofsted chief inspector

Tackling sexual abuse is urgent - and an INSET won't cut it

Our review into sexual abuse has been widely accepted, writes Amanda Spielman. So how can leaders make a start tackling the issues it raises?

Last week we published our review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges.

While we knew these issues were a problem, it was appalling to see that so many children and young people – especially girls – feel they have to accept harassment and online sexual abuse as part of normal life, to the point that they don't think it's worth reporting.

The response to the review has been really positive. There's been no attempt to deny the scale of the problem or to define it as an issue that affects some schools and colleges more than others. Teachers and leaders are clearly determined to grasp the nettle.

So where to begin? Accepting this is an endemic issue means we can't stop at tackling the incidents we know about. Whether it's evident on the surface or not, we have to start with the assumption that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are going on underneath.

The government's guidance on keeping children safe offers a framework to help shape culture change and should be the first port of call. But beyond that, it's important that schools don't take a tick-box approach. Just doing a one-off INSET day, commissioning

a costly safeguarding consultant, or requiring staff to read the guidance won't cut it.

So there's no one-size-fits-all and certainly no "Ofsted-approved" approach. However, through the review we've seen some useful examples of what schools are already doing.

For example, the review calls for a whole-school approach. Some are using focus groups or anonymous reporting systems to gather pupils' views about where they feel their peers could be better educated. At one school, girls had raised concerns about the normalisation of harmful sexual behaviour in light of the Sarah Everard case, leading to a



review of their RSHE curriculum.

Children and young people need to have confidence in the people and the process they will be dealing with. Some girls told us they had concerns about what would happen when they told a teacher – so demystifying the

“It's intolerable that children see sexual harassment as part of growing up

process could help. Some have created a "What happens next?" guide. Others have set up different ways for children and young people to report.

Some schools said they found it helpful to have a small number of trained staff working with the designated safeguarding lead so that there are a variety of adults for pupils to turn to. Some had appointed governors with a safeguarding background to challenge and support leaders.

Some teachers told us they lack confidence or feel under-prepared to teach RSHE. Where schools have recognised this, they're training teachers to recognise and tackle harmful sexual behaviour

when it happens.

That includes thinking about how staff model positive behaviour, for example by not sexualising uniform issues – such as girls being told that their skirt length is distracting to others – and instead focusing on smartness and standards for boys and girls.

While some schools brought in organisations to support with RSHE, what mattered most to the pupils was that the person in front of them was knowledgeable and provided time for discussion.

And while some children said they found it less embarrassing talking to outsiders about sex, others appreciate talking with a trusted teacher. Meanwhile, many teachers said they found talking the issues through with pupils opened their eyes to what the children were dealing with and meant they were closer to any safeguarding issues.

We all know this corrosive culture extends beyond the school gate. It can't be right that children have easy access to pornography or that social media platforms can enable 24-hour bullying and harassment. We need the government to put its shoulder to the wheel, and I'm pleased ministers have accepted all the review's recommendations. There is also a huge role for parents to play here.

But we can't overstate the positive impact schools have on the social development of our children. It's intolerable that thousands of children see sexual harassment and abuse as part of growing up. My hope is that our review galvanises policymakers, teachers, parents and young people, and helps to bring about real and lasting change.

Opinion

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

Jewish teachers just want to be represented and supported in the face of antisemitism, writes Madeleine Fresko-Brown, so why are the NEU finding that so difficult?

The actions of some NEU leaders over the past few weeks have reignited questions about its ability to represent its Jewish members. The 1996 Education Act mandates that schools provide “a balanced presentation of opposing views”. So why, faced with one of the most partisan issues, did the NEU encourage members to join “Free Palestine” rallies? Why were the NEU’s “understanding antisemitism” events organised by a staff member infamous for spraying “Free Gaza and Palestine” on the wall of the Warsaw Ghetto?

And when it could have been supporting Jewish members facing a rise in antisemitic incidents in schools, why did the NEU leadership instead put their energy into defending their stance against Jewish members who decided they’d had enough?

It hasn’t been an easy term to be a Jewish teacher. While support for the rights of Palestinians is not antisemitic, some who align themselves with this cause can be. The devastating flare-up in violence in the Middle East brought its own violence (mostly verbal, but occasionally physical) to UK streets. In May, a convoy of cars draped in Palestinian flags drove through Jewish areas of North London loudly inciting sexual violence against Jewish women and girls to “show support for Palestine”. At a Jewish school, the older brother of a non-Jewish student with a similarly adorned car shouted “we’re coming for you” to Jewish parents collecting their children.

Of course, the majority of people who support Palestinian rights vigorously



MADELEINE
FRESKO-
BROWN

Assistant headteacher and member,
Jewish Teachers’ Association

Why is the NEU finding it so hard to retain Jewish members?

distance themselves from hatred of this kind, but it provides some context for why Jewish students and staff members can feel uncomfortable when confronted with Palestinian flags at school. Moreover, when banners comparing Israel/Zionists/Jews (often used interchangeably) to Nazis are seen

prioritised over being pro-peace or pro-solution. According to its website, the NEU runs three international delegations: two to Palestine and one to Cuba. This prompts another question: is this a delegation to Gaza, or the occupied territories of the West Bank – sometimes referred to

“Scores of Jewish teachers leaving the NEU no longer feel represented

at a rally, it becomes hard to justify the attendance of an elected officer who claims to represent all members of his union.

Jewish members have long felt that the NEU has a clear pro-Palestine and anti-Israel bias. This seems to be

as Palestine – or does the NEU not recognise Israel as a country?

Although the total numbers have not been shared by the NEU, the Jewish Teachers’ Association has heard of scores of Jewish teachers leaving the NEU as they no longer

feel represented in this union. These teachers work in both Jewish and non-Jewish schools. Many say they want a union that will represent them, protect their employment rights and provide legal representation, not take controversial political stances on foreign policy.

That’s not to say education doesn’t have a role to play. We may not be able to solve conflict in the Middle East from our classrooms, but there are practical steps we can take. Instead of speaking at one-sided rallies, we can champion organisations such as Solutions Not Sides and Stand Up Education, which are working hard to dispel myths and educate young people in a balanced way.

When we teach about antisemitism, we can avoid falling into the trap of equating antisemitism to only the Holocaust, as seen in many of NEU’s “tackling antisemitism” resources. Teaching about antisemitism before and since the Holocaust allows for a more holistic understanding. This may include acknowledgement of contexts where anti-Zionism can feel like antisemitism.

As leaders, we should strive to recognise nuance and complexity in political conflicts such as Israel-Palestine. “Free Palestine” means different things to different people. Jewish staff and students should never feel like they are being held accountable for the actions of the Israeli government. Unbiased support for people who find themselves on different sides of the argument can go a long way.

All that is within our grasp as teachers, and it is achievable for the NEU. So until they act differently, they will continue to leave many Jewish teachers with more questions than answers – and a clear motivation to find another union.





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Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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As a school leader, I've never been more convinced of the importance of the early years, writes Ed Vainker. And now the sector has two powerful allies

Despite education having spent weeks on the front pages since March 2020, we have heard far too little about Early Years (EY), given its importance and the impact of the pandemic on our youngest children.

I started my career in secondary, but when we founded Reach Academy Feltham, Rebecca Cramer and I were in no doubt that we wanted our school to be all-through and to start with a nursery. Since then, we have extended our provision to offer additionally ante-natal classes and perinatal support as part of our cradle-to-career offer.

In truth, if I'd known then what I know now, I wouldn't have set up a school; I would've focused my work on the years 0-5. We know so much more than we used to about their importance and what works to help children flourish, and at the moment we are simply not investing as much as we should in children of this age.

In that context, it was a pleasure to be invited to chair a discussion about the importance of EY between the Duchess of Cambridge, the First Lady of the United States and UK and US experts in Cornwall last week.

Rumours that the county would become a 'no-go zone' were exaggerated: an empty train carriage to Penzance and clear roads got us to Connor Downs Academy in plenty of time. Fans of *The West Wing* will not be surprised to learn that the White House advance team were pretty exacting. But the team from Aspire Academy Trust did a brilliant job: the school looked stunning and the pupils were charming.

Those of us with a passion for EY



ED
VAINKER

CEO, Reach Foundation

The Duchess, the first lady and a new global focus on the early years

have found a brilliant ally in the Duchess of Cambridge. For years, she has invested time in building her understanding of the sector, meeting parents and children, visiting settings and speaking to professionals, and learning from researchers in neuroscience, psychiatry and child

The Duchess spoke compellingly at the roundtable about the impact of early development on adults, the importance of parents and the need for integrated, holistic support for young people. Alongside her, Dr Biden is a powerful ally, reflecting on how she came to understand the

“Early years is a cross-sector issue which requires collaboration

development. She has made a long-term commitment and is brilliantly informed about what matters and what works.

sector's importance through her career as a teacher in high schools and community colleges.

The panel they convened reflected



their understanding that EY is a cross-sector issue that requires collaboration and integrated services. The UK was represented by a psychiatrist, a professor of neuroscience and a parenting support leader, alongside me from education; while the US delegation comprised senior officials from their departments of education and health and human services.

The panel reflected on how much we now know about this age group, the vital role parents play and the need to support them, the importance of the EY workforce and the need to raise the sector's profile. On that last point, we made immediate progress. I imagine this was the only time this century that CNN ran a live 30-minute discussion about the first years of life, a reflection of the convening power of our hosts.

The event showed, in a microcosm, the role the Duchess of Cambridge can play here in the UK - bringing attention to research and fostering insights in wider society around its findings; convening partnerships between diverse groups with an interest in EY; and involving parents to collaborate around new approaches.

But the EY sector - which includes all primaries with reception years - also has work to do. We must remain solution-focused and optimistic, amplify other voices in the sector and push for the integration of health and education around our youngest children.

It's no small feat, but we are fortunate to have the Duchess of Cambridge on our side in the effort. She understands the work, recognises its importance, and will be with us for many years to come.

Opinion

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

There are encouraging signs that school improvement is being put on a more sustainable footing, writes David Weston. And not a minute too soon

Exhausted by Covid. Worn down by waves of change. Teachers and school leaders have never been asked to give so much nor to be more resilient. But, just in time, policy shifts are pointing in a much more positive direction.

Teachers have been feeling the stress, with one-third planning to leave within five years. Covid has been particularly challenging, with spikes in staff anxiety every time schools have reopened, and workload from teacher-assessed grades has left staff feeling extremely tired.

Economic challenges have seen a surge in applications for teaching, but there are signs that this may be returning to normal levels as we begin to emerge from the pandemic. So, once again, retaining our teachers and leaders is becoming a top system priority.

But the picture isn't uniform. Across the profession, the intention to leave teaching varies considerably with how supportive workplaces are. In particular, teachers in England are less likely to leave when they feel more supported by leaders and peers, when they have less struggle with classroom behaviour and when they have more time to collaborate internally with colleagues for their continuing professional development.

And the case for better working conditions isn't just about retention. My colleagues and I have been exploring the impact of staff working conditions on pupil outcomes, finding that these same factors (collaboration, support from leaders and peers and better classroom behaviour) are also clearly



DAVID WESTON

Chief executive, Teacher Development Trust

We're finally turning the corner to a more sustainable improvement model

associated with improving outcomes for children and young people.

We also find that when teachers are involved in shaping change and improvement efforts, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and open communication, this also supports better pupil outcomes.

Ultimately, we see that effective

you know you are doing something wrong.

Fortunately, government policy is encouraging the system in the right direction. The revised headteacher standards ask school leaders to "promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community" and to "prioritise the

“Effective improvement doesn't come at the expense of staff morale

and sustainable improvement doesn't come at the expense of staff morale. It's respectful and supportive and it puts teachers and leaders at the heart of change instead of making them the victims of it. To contradict a former chief inspector, if anyone says to you that "staff morale is at an all-time low"

professional development of staff".

A new specialist national professional qualification (NPQ) in leading behaviour and culture will build the capacity in schools for every pupil and staff member to thrive and learn in a supportive, calm and warm environment. New

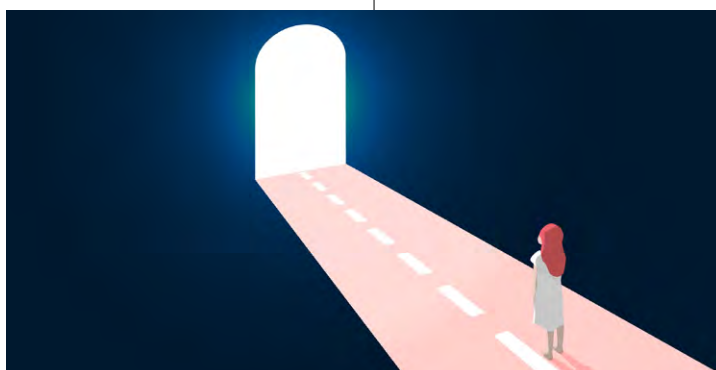
specialist qualifications in leading teaching and leading teacher development offer new development opportunities for teachers (another helpful way to retain staff) while also building specialist middle leadership that embeds these same respectful principles.

The new NPQs for senior leaders and for headteachers explicitly support leaders to harness the fact that "teachers are more likely to improve if they feel that they are working within a supportive professional environment, where both trust and high professional standards are maintained". New headteachers are now eligible for a targeted package of additional coaching support to help them apply and embed these ideas with the help they need in their first roles. And teachers and leaders will be supported to access these with £184 million of new government funding.

It's only recently that the NAHT-led School Improvement Commission noted that, "first and foremost, the role of the school leader is to create the conditions in which teachers can flourish and pupils can succeed. Yet in recent years this simple truth has [...] become lost".

Now, the new leadership courses my colleagues and I are preparing for these reformed NPQs are rooted in the growing evidence that school improvement must be grounded in the art, craft and science of people development.

Echoed across the system as a whole, that all adds up to a profound and important shift for the sector. And it comes not a minute too soon. We've been through some profoundly challenging times, but the signs are very encouraging that the next generation of leadership thinking will help to bring about better times for the whole profession.



Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Writing for Pleasure: Theory, Research and Practice

Authors: Ross Young and Felicity Ferguson

Publisher: Routledge

Reviewer: Louise Quinn, deputy head, Ashington Academy

As an English teacher, for many years I have found myself both perplexed and frustrated at the lack of high-quality writing instruction that goes on in classrooms. Too often, I see writing presented as a task rather than a process, without effective explicit teaching despite the wealth of robust evidence around teaching writing effectively.

So I was delighted to find that in *Writing for Pleasure*, Young and Ferguson have set out to deliver exactly that, albeit with an alternative slant. In it, the authors synthesise the global research into a pedagogy that advocates the importance of the affective domains (feelings, emotions and attitudes) as well as high-quality explicit instruction. With regards to the latter, they are also keen to emphasise its dual role in not only influencing cognitive development and academic achievement, but also how children approach the writing process with confidence, pleasure and enthusiasm.

As a writing and evidence enthusiast, I found most affiliation with Young and Ferguson's useful summary of meta-analyses regarding types of writing instruction. They then integrate these findings with observational studies of exceptional teachers of writing across different contexts. Together, these two sources of evidence are synthesised to create 14 interconnected principles for the effective teaching of writing.

The principles can be broadly grouped into teacher expectations and instructional methods (goal setting being the most effective practice); children being part of a collaborative writing community; fostering

authenticity, pleasure and motivation; and, finally, developing self-regulation. Collectively, and when utilised successfully and flexibly, these principles have the potential to develop children and their teachers as lifelong writers.

After a round-up of the evidence, subsequent chapters in *Writing for Pleasure* then go on to take each of the 14 principles individually to dig deeper into their finer detail. Throughout, Young and Ferguson take great pains to show how each principle is rooted in evidence before discussing their various facets, offering a list of practical strategies and posing some reflective questions.

That structure makes the book's content very accessible, but for me it was a source of high and low(er) points in equal measure. As a busy teacher, I welcome the practical strategies, but I would have liked to have seen a much greater amount of exemplification than the case studies the authors have provided.

When looking to implement pedagogical tips in the real classroom, examples are always crucial, no matter the subject. This is especially true because of the wide range of contexts in which teachers operate, and nowhere truer or more important than when it comes to writing.

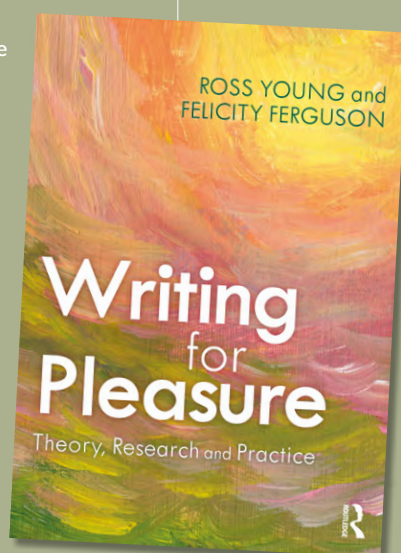
And because the evidence the book explores comes from such varied fields of research, including self-regulation, cognition and affective domains, it is all the more necessary for readers to get a real feel for what the recommendations look like

when they meet groups of pupils.

I found the sections on setting writing goals the most engaging. Their focus on the fundamentals of good writing – purpose, audience and genre – echo a common message from any synthesis of the research on the subject. But what made *Writing for Pleasure* stand out is the depth of its exploration.

Another particularly interesting section looks at what constitutes high-quality feedback and the contentious issue of how to provide it. I was surprised to read that excessive written feedback can actually be detrimental to writers in terms of their enthusiasm for writing. Supporting the recent push towards verbal and whole-class feedback, Young and Ferguson offer pupil conferencing – essentially a one-to-one or small-group discussion with a teacher – as an effective and efficient alternative to excessively marked compositions. This mirrors the Education Endowment Foundation's latest guidance report and gets a definite thumbs up from me!

Writing for Pleasure is initially quite dense in academic content and theory, so it is not for the faint-hearted. But it is well worth a read. It comes to life when diving into each individual principle and, as someone reasonably well versed in evidence around writing, it certainly challenged my thinking.





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Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Mary Hind-Portley, assistant subject leader (English), Hillside High School, Bootle

@Lit_liverbird

The leverage of professional discourse @saysmiss

This is the final post in a series of six exploring the intricacies of effective professional development in schools, and a post that captures the essence of her insightful session for ResearchEd Rugby. Here she asks "What is the problem we are trying to solve?"

Howard argues that much of our professional development is about 'busyness' rather than a 'less-is-more approach'. She presents a thoughtful exploration of the uncomfortable relationship between PD and performance management where, at its worst, the former becomes little more than a tick-box exercise for the latter.

Further, a consideration of the DfE's standards for teachers' professional development leads to a rigorously evidence-informed discussion of our options for PD aligned with specific examples. Howard is a well-known champion of teachers' wellbeing, and in this post she continues to challenge traditional and often ineffective approaches to it. '[...] if professional development was a core feature of school improvement alongside a concerted effort to reduce the pace of change,' she states, "then perhaps teachers would have the time and scope to

TOP BLOGS of the week

commit to developing their expertise."

If you want to create a culture where staff are highly valued, nurtured and challenged to be their best, then this post with its extensive reference list – and indeed the whole series that leads to it – will be invaluable.

The school improvement story @head_teach

Also emanating from ResearchEd Rugby, and also exploring school improvement, this blog by Matthew Evans focuses instead on the role of the headteacher.

All the while entertaining us with examples from film, comics and musical theatre (among them two of my favourites), Evans presents a critique of the notion of the 'hero-head'. As an English teacher, a headteacher fronting the narrative to explore the hero-head motif from different narrative viewpoints delights me. More than that, he uses the concepts of narrative as powerful tools to disrupt that once-popular notion.

Evans looks beyond the surface of the super-school improver to give other leaders their due consideration – all those bit-part heroes without whom the grand edifices of all educational leaders would fall apart.

But the main point of this blog goes beyond that. Evans encourages us to see school improvement as a series rather than

a serial (or worse yet, a single episode). Thus stretching the narrative timescale, he reasserts our role as custodians rather than owners, whose duty is to pass schools on to those who come after in good condition.

Recovery from toxic leadership @HughesHaili

An excellent contrast to Evans's blog about custodianship, this post sees Haili Hughes reflect on her experiences of the devastating impacts of toxic leadership cultures on those unfortunate enough to work in them. Here, she outlines the short- and long-term effects of the manipulative behaviours that characterised a leader she worked for and also comments on the responsibility we all share to out such behaviours and their consequences. SLTs, she argues, are accountable for the behaviours they allow through inaction. And colleagues, too, have a duty to ensure senior leaders know what goes on in the shadow cultures of their departments.

Now an author and leadership consultant, I'm glad Hughes hasn't allowed her suffering from that toxic culture to cause her light to fade. Too many of our colleagues simply undergo it and disappear from the profession. And still we wonder at our retention problem.

On beauty @stoneman_claire

This is a blog to rejoice in as we crawl to the end of a hard and challenging term. Claire Stoneman reminds us of the beauty of our work, that despite the barriers and challenges we can face in our schools, our work is about "the power, luminosity and beauty of thought".

This is no mere esoteric musing on beauty, but an honest and reflective account of the beauty of knowledge and the power of curriculum. It reminds us that our job brings new joys for our students, and that knowledge illuminates them and us in equal measure.

An inspiring read to take us through to the summer holidays.

Research

Harry Fletcher-Wood reviews the evidence on a school-related theme. Contact him on Twitter @HFletcherWood if you have a topic you would like him to cover

What do we know about the hidden lives of learners?

Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean, Ambition Institute

If we are truly to meet students' needs, then we must never lose sight of what they think, know and believe. One researcher understood this profoundly, and his work offers us the closest glimpse we have of the "hidden lives of learners".

Graham Nuthall's approach to understanding students' experience was exacting. He and his colleagues worked with a class teacher to specify everything they hoped students would learn in a unit, and conducted a pre-test to discover what they already knew. Selecting four focus students in each class, they observed and recorded everything each student did and wrote and every word they spoke and heard. At the end of the unit, the researchers tested students and interviewed them about what they recalled. Finally, they returned a year later to repeat the test and interview.

I want to share two examples of Nuthall's work. The first was published alongside his longtime collaborator, Adrienne Alton-Lee. In this paper, they examined what it means for students to remember something, testing the suggestion that remembering is a relatively simple process.

They found that correct answers on the end-of-unit tests reflected classroom experiences. Students recalled the content, the context – "Tony put up his hand and said..." – and their own thoughts:

"I thought, you have got to be wrong." A year later, however, students were much less likely to remember the original learning experience, and more likely to deduce the right answer from related knowledge.



Nuthall and Alton-Lee conclude that remembering can require complex and substantial intellectual effort, combining the learning experience, students' thoughts, and the concepts to be learned.

Nuthall is often cited, accurately, as stating that students must be exposed to new ideas at least three times if they are to learn something new. But he is not advocating bland repetition. He found that students who answered a question correctly were far more likely to report "multiple ways of arriving at the answer".

So learning depends on multiple exposures to new ideas and varied classroom experiences across those exposures.

The second paper I want to share was his last. In it, Nuthall narrated a 45-year research journey that led him to believe that much of what teachers and students do in schools is "a matter of cultural routines and myths". All students learn the same way, he had found. But much of their experience is "either self-selected or self-generated, even in quite traditional classrooms".

So the crucial distinction between higher- and lower-

attaining students is that the former create more opportunities to learn – asking relevant questions, for example – while the latter depend on teacher-designed activities.

Nuthall emphasised, however, that teacher-designed activities may not give students the opportunities they need to learn. Teachers tend to evaluate lessons based on their students' reactions. So "the criteria for successful learning", in many teachers' eyes, "are the same as the criteria for successful classroom management".

Often, teachers keep students "busily engaged in activities that produce some tangible product". But these may not produce learning. Much student and teacher attention is applied to resources and timings: how long an activity should take, whether headings should be underlined, what should be done for homework. For most students, the goal is to get things done quickly and easily.

Helping 30 students learn at once is hard. The "ritualised routines of teacher-student interaction," Nuthall concludes "appear to have evolved to solve this problem". We must look beyond these rituals, learning what students are really thinking and what they have understood if we are to help them.

I find many aspects of Nuthall's work powerful and rewarding. And I'm moved by his effort to share his findings with teachers. He was still working to complete his book, *The Hidden Lives of Learners*, the week before he died. I'm impressed with how many contemporary debates he anticipated, offering nuanced and thoughtful answers.

Most importantly though, I find his method compelling. It's easy to claim we should focus on students. But arguably, no one has done a better job of it than he.

The Hidden Lives of Learners is published by NZCER Press



WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

Given how popular he and his department are, we were astonished to hear the education secretary cancelled an interview with regional press this week.

The editor of *The Yorkshire Post* reported Gavin Williamson had been due to speak to the paper during a visit to Bradford on Monday, "but the interview was cancelled, amid mounting criticism over the schools catch-up funding fiasco and a lack of opportunity for young people in the region".

Williamson still seemed keen to promote his visit though, but only in his own words, by issuing a series of social media posts.

So the government will be "levelling up" by ignoring important newspapers in the regions they are promising to help. Got it.

WEDNESDAY

Williamson did, though, have time to speak at the Festival of Education, giving up nearly an hour for not only a speech, but also a question-and-answer session. See: WiW DOES give kudos when it's due!

Anyway, we got a pretty big hint that a schools white paper could be coming later in the year. The education secretary also sounded almost human as he spoke of his "regret" about last year's exams fiasco.

But other answers were more classic, ambiguous Gav.

Asked about plans for exams next year, he pointed to how the government had "laid out very clearly at the end of last

year as to what an exam season would look like" in 2021.

"We gave people a clear indication of some of the key mitigations that would be put in place in order to be able to help children and we would be expecting to do a very similar approach for next year as well."

Pressed on whether Williamson was saying the approach to mitigations would be similar to last year, the Department for Education clarified that he was just saying that he would update the sector on his plans later.

Clear as mud, as ever. We only hope he doesn't intend to leave it until December, as he did last year.

We know Williamson can be pretty crafty when it comes to dodging interview questions, but we were particularly disappointed when he couldn't come up with an answer to something very simple.

As is traditional at the Festival of Education, Williamson was asked at the end of the interview what fictional or historical figure he would compare himself to.

Suddenly the ed sec was at a loss for words, telling delegates he'd never really thought about it and would send his answer in later "on a postcard".

Was Gav really unable to come up with an answer, or was he worried he would accidentally default to a somewhat unkind likeness used in the education sector: the hapless Frank Spencer from *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (see cartoon, page 18).

THURSDAY

The Department for Education seemed keen this week to get in on England football fever, with a social media post about how the team's stars found their love for the game at school.

The tweet was sent out to promote the fact the DfE has finally confirmed that the PE and sport premium will be funded for another year.

It's just a pity ministers waited until a few weeks before the end of term to confirm the funding, prompting warnings that uncertainty was leading to a "scaling back of initiatives and of jobs" among groups that support schools to use the cash.

More "own goal" than "back of the net"?



TRAINER (HOME-BASED, 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 Bell Foundation has a rewarding opportunity for a full-time, home-based online Trainer to work within a growing, dynamic team to develop EAL training and resources for schools and teachers on both its UK-based EAL Programme and its Language for Results International Programme.

Trainer: £29,217- £33,913 per annum

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This is a home-based role with one day per month from The Bell Foundation Cambridge office.

To apply

To download the application form please visit:

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

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: 17:30 on Thursday 8 July

Online interviews: Thursday 15 and Friday 16 July 2021



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Applications by email to: **info@sixthformcolleges.org.uk**

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For an informal discussion regarding the post and Humber Education Trust please contact Rachel Wilkes, CEO Humber Education Trust on 01482 755674 or at rwilkes@het.academy

Visits to the school are welcomed and can be arranged via the

school office on 01472 230110. Further information about the school can be found on the school website www.cambridgepark.co.uk

Application forms, job descriptions and person specifications are available from **Sharon Herrick**, Human Resources, Humber Education Trust at sherrick@het.academy

You can find out more about our Trust at www.humbereducationtrust.co.uk and can follow us on Twitter [@HumberEdTrust](https://twitter.com/HumberEdTrust)

Electronic, signed application forms or a hard copy must be returned to Sharon Herrick in line with the timetable shown below.

- **Closing Date 21st June 2021 12pm**
- **Short listing will take place w/c 28th June 2021**
- **Interviews will take place w/c 5th July 2021**
- **You will be interviewed by members of the HET Trust Board and local governors from the school.**

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