



SEEN OFF: THE FALI **HEALTH SERVICE PAGE 21** 

SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK FRIDAY, DEC 2, 2016 | EDITION 86



# THE RISE OF THE TICK-BOX **TEACHER**

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**BRIGHT** 

- > Four hours' observation, no training, and that's it
- > 'If it's a backdoor way to get people in, it's a worry'

Continues on page 7



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## RSCs in talks over expert advice

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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**Exclusive** 

Schools commissioners will not create additional spaces on their advisory boards for members from post-16 or special needs settings, but will be expected to consult experts when making decisions about them

Schools Week understands the eight regional schools commissioners (RSCs) are in talks over improved access to specialists who will "offer specific advice when they need it", following criticism that certain parts of the education system are not represented on the headteacher boards.

The boards, established in 2014, are made up of between six and eight members. They advise commissioners on the groups that can open schools, including specialist 16 to 19 and SEND provision.

But only two boards include leaders of specialist SEND trusts, and only a handful are from trusts that run post-16 provision.

Academy trust leaders have told Schools Week of their concern that decisions are being taken on advice from groups unaware of best practices in post-16 or SEND education, and who may have a conflict of interest if their own schools were affected by the new provision.

One source said senior Department for Education staff were encouraging

commissioners to call experts to attend meetings as guests to help with decisions on specialist provision, but they did not want the boards to "get too big" with more permanent members.

Board elections are due next summer. Schools Week understands these will follow the same format as the inaugural elections, with four elected places available on each board. Other members are appointed or co-opted.

Heads of local authority maintained schools will continue to be barred from standing

The Sixth Form Colleges Association confirmed it is involved in discussions about having a named 16 to 19 leader available in each region to "contribute to discussions directly affecting sixth-form provision".

But deputy chief executive James Kewin said the association ultimately wanted to see a representative from a 16 to 19 provider on every board.

"These boards are making important decisions about new sixth-form provision. It is important that the voice of dedicated 16 to 19 providers is heard in that process," he said.

Jarlath O'Brien, head of Carwarden House community school and a writer on SEND and leadership issues, agreed it was important boards were "representative of the schools they work with.

"It is vital that special schools and other types of specialist provision are not left behind or forgotten in the move to a system that is heavily or entirely populated by academy trusts.

"Local authorities, for all their critics, were responsible for all schools and all children in their communities.

"The same is not automatically true for multi-academy trusts, or groups of trusts in local areas, who are unlikely to represent the full age and ability range of the communities they are located in."

A Department for Education spokesperson said headteacher boards contributed "local knowledge and professional expertise" to aid RSCs in their decision-making.



## But are they still being judged on academisation rates?

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The academies annual report – expected in the summer but released on Tuesday afternoon to little fanfare – shows the government carried on using a contentious key performance indicator (KPI) to judge its eight regional commissioners during 2015-16, their second year of operation.

Since the commissioners took on their roles in 2014, their performance has been judged on a series of measures: most controversially, the number of schools they forcibly convert to become an academy.

Critics say this creates a conflict of interest, in which schools might be forced into a takeover by an academy chain, even where the trust was weaker at oversight than the local authority. A senior government minister has also accepted that the indicator needs to change.

In this week's report, the Department for Education said it planned to "revisit" the KPI in relation to this academic year, which started in September, but officials were unable to tell *Schools Week* whether or not it had been removed ahead of the beginning of term.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, accused the government of "confusing means and ends", saying that RSCs should be judged on the number of good schools in their region, not how many they

converted to academy status.

"Converting may be right for some schools, but not others," he told Schools Week. "When it is a choice it can be a positive change that empowers school leaders

"Done under duress it can merely be another structural change without really addressing issues behind improvement – the need for good quality teaching, good quality leadership and the right support.

"School leaders need to know that RSCs are striving for school improvement, not looking to push towards academisation to tick a box."

Baroness Evans, the former head of the New Schools Network and now leader of the House of Lords, told peers last year that a review of the KPIs would lead to the removal of the requirement.

She said the government had recognised it was important RSCs used their "judgment" and that their decision-making was "not affected by other factors".

Parliament's education committee also recommended the KPI be removed to avoid any risk it could "prejudice the decisions made on academisation and changes of sponsor" after saying that it constituted a conflict of interest.

But commissioners continued to be judged throughout last year on the percentage of eligible schools issued with academy orders and the percentage of approved sponsors active in a particular region, among other things.

The annual report also revealed the government banned 14 academy trusts from taking on new schools between August 2014 and July 2015.

But the names of the trusts were not listed and the department refused to name them.

In the same period, 29 sponsored academies were transferred to new sponsors following concerns about the pace of improvement.

And during the academic year, commissioners issued 43 pre-warning notices about academy performance and seven warning notices.



# Empty free schools owe £11m

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

**Investigates** 

The government needs to claw back £11 million from more than 100 free schools after they failed to recruit expected numbers of pupils.

New free schools are initially funded on anticipated numbers for the upcoming year. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) then reviews how many are on roll at the end of that year and retrospectively retrieves or hands out extra funding.

Schools Week can reveal the agency has now drawn up recovery plans to claw back £11.7 million from 106 free schools that failed to recruit estimated numbers.

Some of those schools are already under investigation over financial problems, and the cash will be docked from future funding.

Connell sixth form college in Manchester has a £1.2 million recovery bill, according to figures from the 2015-16 academic year obtained under the Freedom of Information act.

That compares with just £1.3 million extra funding handed out to the 32 free schools that recruited more pupils than expected.

Critics said the opportunity for free schools to negotiate their repayment packages gives the impression they get "special treatment and extra funding" and leads to questions about how much is repaid and how much is written off.

Schools are expected to pay back the cash, according to a Department for Education (DfE) spokesperson, but recovery plans can be extended for those in financial trouble.

## THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THE DFE NEEDS BACK

FREE SCHOOLS	MONEY CLAWED BACK
Connell sixth form college	£1,206,868
Discovery school	£949,306
Bolton Wanderers free school	£566,207
Parkfield school	£493,655
Seva school	£491,862
Perry Beeches III the Free School	£462,085
North Somerset enterprise and technology college	£354,450
Robert Owen academy	£315,496
Falcons primary school	£300,300
Compass school Southwark	£270,803
Route 39 academy	£254,595
Nottingham University academy of science and technology	£253,927

Connell, which opened three years ago and which is run by Bright Futures trust, owes the most of any school.

Bright Futures was issued a financial notice to improve in March and ordered to pay back the funding within a set timeframe or face further action.

The findings of a financial review included in the trust's latest accounts, state that the sixth form is the "main area of concern with student numbers not achieving targets set".

The trust refused to comment, but chief executive Dame Dana Ross-Wawrzynski has previously criticised how the EFA manages school finances.

She said the EFA owed the trust more than £2 million for the expansion of its academies – which they have been negotiating, she said, for more than year – but this has not been taken into account.

Twelve schools that face repayments of more than £250,000 each include the

Bolton Wanderers free school, which owes more than £500,000 and which was rated as inadequate by Ofsted in October.

Inspectors said a failure to recruit sufficient numbers of pupils led to "financial difficulty" meaning the school's future was under "serious threat".

Seva school, in Coventry, owes £491,862. The Sevak trust's 2014-15 accounts show it held back £156,902 for "clawback provision", as a result of a shortfall in pupil numbers.

The trust opened on a temporary site in 2014, which led to reduced primary school numbers. It also had to defer opening its secondary provision for 12 months.

The Perry Beeches academy trust, in Birmingham, owes £736,882 for three of its free schools.

Micon Metcalfe, director of finance at Dunraven school, south London, and a specialist leader of education, said "better due diligence about actual need [of free schools] so that recruitment better fits actual numbers" was needed.

But Toby Young, incoming director of the New Schools Network said: "Like many new schools, some free schools have opened under roll, but they've quickly proved themselves popular.

"In 2016, free schools were the most oversubscribed type of state school in England, with more than three applications per place on average."

A spokesperson for the DfE said free schools were "increasingly popular. We work closely with schools each year to review estimates and to help minimise the likelihood of significant adjustments."

# Former education spokesman leads Ukip

## FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Paul Nuttall, a former history lecturer who served as the UK Independence Party's spokesperson on education for two years, is its new leader.

The 39-year-old, from Merseyside, led on education policy for the party between July 2014 and this September while also serving as its deputy leader.

A big fan of grammar schools, he was widely mocked last year after he appeared in a photograph in the party's general election manifesto posing in front of a selection of books that appeared to have been edited. Several appeared twice elsewhere in the picture.

As the party's education spokesperson, Nuttall has argued for a return to "a more traditional primary education with the three Rs". He also wants sex and relationship education scrapped for children under 11 and a

grammar school in every town.

He also advocates massive reform to the exams sector, with one board for both GCSEs and A-levels offering one course for each subject.

He has also spoken about "ending the option for schools to choose the easiest syllabus available".

Other proposed policies include Ofsted inspections triggered by a petition of 25 per cent of parents and governors, a suggestion in the wake of the Trojan horse scandal in Birmingham.

He has also pledged to "reverse the trend to shut special schools".

Nuttall is the party's third leader in several months. His election with more than 62 per cent of the vote comes after Diane James, who was elected earlier this year to succeed Nigel Farage, stood down after just 18 days.

He beat fellow MEP Suzanne Evans and party activist John Rees-Evans to the top job.

## Call for new members

The Royal Society Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education

The Advisory Committee provides advice to inform policy related to mathematical and quantitative education for 3 – 19 year olds and transitions into further or higher education and employment.

The Royal Society is seeking proposals for new members from mathematics teaching, education research, the mathematical sciences, higher education admissions and industry. The term of membership is up to three years, with a flexible starting date. Members will be expected to attend three meetings per year and may be invited to chair expert panels. Teacher supply cover is available.

Register your interest by emailing acme@royalsociety.org, including a CV and cover email setting out your suitability.

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THE ROYAL SOCIETY

## **NEWS**

## TRENDS IN MATHS AND SCIENCE: 2016

## Stable and solid, but could do better

England is still a solid performer in maths and science for year 5 and 9 pupils, although there has been no improvement since 2011.

The latest international data from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) showed that pupils in England have strong maths and science achievements compared with Europe, but not compared with east Asian countries.

Pupils aged 9 to 10 and 13 to 14 were tested in maths and science.

While there was a strong performance this year in year 9 science, that age group has not improved over the past 20 years.

For maths in year 5, England held 10th position, behind Northern Ireland, Russia, Norway, and Ireland, with east Asian countries dominating the top places. It remained well ahead of the US in 14th place, Denmark at 15th, and Germany at 24th.

In both science and maths, improvement in the year 9 group is more stubborn.

However, there has been an improvement over the last 20 years in year 5 science and in year 5 maths.

However, improvement in maths has slowed, after improving for both age groups in the TIMSS tests for the first 15 years.

This rise over the long term, and stability in the short term, either shows "a resilience of the system" in the face of much educational change in England, or that various recent policy changes have yet to have any effect, experts told Schools Week.

Meanwhile, the much-lauded Finland, in 12th place, was seven points behind England in primary maths, a fall from 8th place four years ago. Results for Germany and the Netherlands also fell.

However, Finland came 7th in year 5 science. The country did not enter the year 9 science and maths data set.

Ben Durbin, of the NFER, said "education policy tourism" was likely to be travelling elsewhere in Europe in the coming years.

"Certainly the drop in Finland is notable, given so much attention has been given to it in the past. Other countries such as Poland, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic and Slovenia have all seen strong improvement.

"As we've seen Finland's rise and drop, it's likely in years to come that we'll give more attention to those other countries".

## The pupils' verdict: 'We love our lessons'

**JESS STAUFENBERG** 

@STAUFENBERGJ

Pupils in English primary and secondary schools rank their enjoyment of maths and science teaching more highly than the average pupil internationally – especially those who outperform them academically.

Most pupils in years 5 and 9 said their lessons in maths and science were "engaging" or "very engaging", with younger pupils most positive, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) shows.

The study assessed 57 countries on their performance between 2011-15, and their long-term pattern since the first study 20 years ago

And while 97 per cent of year 5 pupils in England reported their maths teaching to be engaging or very engaging, pupils in the highest-performing countries in TIMSS – Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan – reported lower levels of enjoyment.

Yet the data also showed pupils in England were more likely to be taught in schools in which posts for maths and science were hard to fill.

About 94 per cent of year 5 pupils ranked their science teaching highly; by year 9 about 80 per cent said the quality was still high.

The results suggest that England is striking a "good balance" between academic achievement – with England ranking between 10th and 15th in various science and maths tests run by TIMSS analysts at Boston College in Massachusetts – and not causing pupils too much stress.

Ben Durbin, head of international education at the National Foundation for



Educational Research (NFER), said: "Although our achievement isn't among the very top countries, what we can say is we have very good performance among pupils in enjoyment of learning.

"There are good results in safe schools and low levels of disruption in terms of behaviour.

"With child mental health becoming more of a priority, there may actually need to be questions over where our priorities lie."

But a mental health expert has warned about the unreliability of studies that ask children to self-report their attitudes, saying the drive to address pupil well-being in schools should not be abandoned.

Natasha Devon, a former government adviser on mental health in education and co-founder of the Self-Esteem Team, which offers PSHE lessons to schools, said boys were less likely to accurately share their school experiences.

"We mustn't conflate pupil happiness in learning with mental health and real

happiness, which some studies seem to.

Mental health is so dependent on other
things, many of which do happen in schools.

"For example, bullying – you can enjoy your learning in class, but then be miserable for rest of day as you're being bullied.

"Also, any scientist will tell you the most unreliable piece of data about effectiveness of lesson is to ask the child if they liked it. They'll just say yeah."

According to TIMSS, bullying is worse in primary schools, with 15 per cent of year 5 pupils saying they experienced bullying every week. This contrasted with 6 per cent in year 9.

But year 9s were less enthusiastic and less confident in maths and science compared with primary pupils. Almost double the number of year 5 pupils (70 per cent) viewed science to be very engaging compared with year 9s (38 per cent). And whereas 80 per cent of year 5 pupils said they were either very confident or confident in maths, only 65 per cent in year 9 said they were.

## Gender gap at year 5 widens - in boys' favour

Girls in year 5 performed "significantly" worse than boys in maths in England, amid a mixed global picture for closing gender gaps in attainment.

Whereas "nothing much changed" in England's relatively solid performance for maths and science among 9 to 10 and 13 to 14-year-old pupils since the last study in 2011, there was an unexpected drop among younger girls.

Despite data in England repeatedly showing boys behind girls in reading, maths and writing on entry to primary school – with lower literacy rates persisting into secondary school – the TIMSS study showed girls in England performed worse than their male counterparts in maths at year 5.

The Department for Education's (DfE) report on the TIMSS national data for England said: "In 2015, year 5 boys performed significantly higher than girls in maths, indicating the reopening of a gender gap that had almost disappeared by 2007."

There were no gender differences in the



subject for either of the age groups tested in 2011 or 2007

But the government document said that, according to separate national analysis, when the same age group moved into year 6 "there were no differences by gender in boys' and girls' maths attainment".

Based on "provisional 2016 data", 70 per cent of both boys and girls achieved the expected national standard at the end of key

stage 2, raising questions about differences in the way TIMSS and national tests evaluate pupils.

Ben Durbin of the NFER said the result was a "leftfield" finding.

"If you look at the trends, there has actually always been a marginally better performance of boys than girls in maths, and that gap appears to have opened further in 2015 to significant difference."

There was no significant gender gap between boys and girls in maths in year 9.

As such, younger girls coming through to secondary level would need to be carefully watched in four years, he said.

England's results followed a global trend of narrowing gender gaps, although boys still led in maths with higher scores in 18 countries. England's three-point gap between the sexes was smaller than the study average.

There was no difference in gender achievement in 23 countries. Girls overtook boys in eight countries by an average gap of 18 points.

## **NEWS**

## GCSE grade rule cuts early years' specialists

#### **JESS STAUFENBERG**

@STAUFENBERGJ

The low number of pupils achieving a GCSE in English and maths has been blamed for a recruitment crisis in early years education.

Experts say that rules introduced in September 2014 that require early years' educators to have a C or above in GCSE English and maths have caused a "cliffedge drop" in the number of young people entering the sector.

And changes to the proportion of pupils expected to get a "good pass" in English and maths under the change to a 1-9 grading system next year could make the situation

The Department for Education (DfE), is now consulting on allowing an equivalent functional skills qualification to count in place of the GCSE until more school leavers get the required grades.

The consultation document says the government is considering "allowing functional skills qualifications for an interim period until the number of school leavers gaining GCSEs in English and mathematics increases."

Yet figures show that GCSEs in English and maths are not set to pick up over the coming years, with one in four pupils currently gaining a C grade - a "good pass" - expected to get a 5 grade next year, which



slips under the gold standard.

However, pupil attainment could spiral downwards if more skilled early years educators are not recruited. Statistics from the DfE released last week show 31 per cent of under-fives are already behind in communication, maths and social skills when they start primary school.

Laura Henry, vice-president of the British Association of Early Childhood Education, a charity that supports early years practitioners, said: "Rather than penalising the sector, which is already seeing a

recruitment crisis, why aren't we asking why these individuals are leaving secondary school without those GCSEs? This could have an ongoing ripple effect."

Ken McArthur (pictured), a member of the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), a charity that provides guidance to the early years sector, said he welcomed the chance to reinstate functional skills as a qualification and switching back to a GCSE requirement in future might be unnecessary.

"In children under five, you don't need to be able to do GCSE-level algebra.

"I've had people come from university doing a degree in early years who don't know one end of a baby from the other. Of course we want highly skilled staff, but it's a hands-on industry, not just an academic one.

"The GCSE requirement has caused a cliff-edge drop in the number of teenagers leaving school to do early years at college."

As a result, parents wanting to access the government's proposed 30 free hours of childcare were being turned away, he said.

"With the current recruitment crisis and the very low wage levels, which are mainly due to historically low levels of support and funding for early years, the problem of children not being 'school ready' will only be exacerbated. A solution to both these issues needs to be urgently found."

## TWENTY PER CENT OF **BLACK PUPILS ATTEND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Pupils in Catholic schools are the "most ethnically diverse in the country", proving that a religious ethos is "not divisive", says the Catholic Education Service (CES).

The Catholic Church, the second largest provider of education in the country, said its annual census showed more than one fifth of all black pupils attended one of its schools.

A similar proportion of pupils from minority white backgrounds, such as eastern European, also attended a Catholic school.

A spokesperson for the National Secular Society said comparisons to national averages did not offer the best insight "as they mask where schools are unrepresentative of their local areas".

Catholic schools educate 21 per cent more pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds "compared with other schools", according to the CES census.

Paul Barber, its director, said: "It is easy for secularist campaigners to claim that religious ethos schools segregate communities, but the evidence doesn't back

Over the past five years there has been an 8 per cent increase in the number of pupils in Catholic schools in England and Wales. They now account for one in every ten pupils. EPI report, page 10

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## **NEWS: Academies watch**

# ISOLATED ISLAND SCHOOL LOOKS FOR ACADEMY TRUST

#### JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The only secondary school on the Isles of Scilly has been placed in special measures and told an academy order will now be triggered, raising the question of how to find a new owner within reach of a remote island.

Five Islands School, a 5 to 16 through-school with boarding facilities, has been downgraded by Ofsted from "requires improvement" in 2014 to "inadequate" in a report published last Thursday, triggering the government's duty to make an academy order.

Yet at 28 miles off the south-west coast of Cornwall, the school occupies the "geographically isolated" position that has led other multi-academy trusts into difficulty.

Lord Nash, minister for schools, has said before that schools in trusts ideally would be within an hour's drive of each other – but the sea crossing to Scilly from Penzance takes two hours and 40 minutes.

A 15-minute helicopter flight costs about f 100 each way

Other academy chains have been caught out by this rule, including AET, the largest chain in the country, which had to hand several of its schools to local sponsors last year because they were "geographically isolated" from the trust's other sites. CfBT Schools Trust has also handed back a number of isolated schools

Talk of converting Five Islands School to academy status is not new.

In a 12-page report, former education secretary Michael Gove recommended that the school "actively and strenuously" investigate conversion following the suspension of its former headteacher three years ago. He said that conversion should happen within 18

The report said the school, which is run by the local council but as a voluntary-aided school with governors from the diocese of Truro, should seek an existing multi-academy trust on the mainland.

The current headteacher, Linda Todd, said in February last year that changes based on the 2014 Ofsted report were already making a difference, according to *Scilly Today*.

But last week a special parents' meeting was called, after the most recent Ofsted report said: "The capacity of leaders and governors to improve the school is inadequate."

The report also found pupil progress "slowing", while teachers were "insecure" in assessment, and safeguarding at the boarding sites was said to be insufficient.

Jo Osborne, the diocese of Truro's director for schools, said a "new improvement partner" had been found to work with the school and they were committed to assisting all partners.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said: "We are aware of Five Islands School's Ofsted rating and are considering next steps."

## PFI school in special measures waits for sponsor

#### **JOHN DICKENS**

@JOHNDICKENSSW

A school whose academy conversion hit the buffers over its controversial PFI deal has been put in special measures.

Noel-Baker school, in Derby, has been rated inadequate in every category with inspectors blaming "messy" talks over academy status having a "negative impact on vital school improvement work".

The local authority-maintained school was built as part of a £64 million Building Schools for the Future refurbishment paid for under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding.

Issues over its costs held up the school's conversion to join the established LEAD Academy Trust.

Previous Schools Week investigations have revealed how other PFI schools were denied transformative takeovers because trusts did not want to take on their hefty PFI liabilities.

The Ofsted criticism further questions the government's claim that academisation is a vehicle to deliver rapid improvement. Last week another school left in limbo as sponsorship talks drag on was also rated inadequate.

Baverstock academy, in Birmingham, faced closure before a volte-face from former regional schools commissioner Pank Patel. The school was awaiting an update in October – but is still in the dark.

Malcolm Trobe (pictured), the interim general secretary at the Association of School and College Leaders, said schools



that needed "rapid and accelerated" intervention were being left stranded.
"These complexities have made the school cituation werea."

Inspectors said leadership and management at Noel-Baker was "inadequate in many respects".

Safeguarding was ineffective, with outcomes for pupils "unacceptably low for far too long and showing little sign of improving".

The school consulted on academy changes last year and had hoped to convert by September this year.

However, negotiations have dragged on. A spokesperson for LEAD told *Schools Week* this was down to "complexities and affordability issues" surrounding the school's PFI agreement.

"The trust has done everything it can to support an efficient conversion process. However, some issues have been beyond the trust's control."

But they said the schools would join the trust in January.

In an academy conversion document published on its website, Noel-Baker said: "Additional monies have been sourced from the DfE to support any extra costs – this is normal for PFI-funded schools."

However, the trust said it had not received extra cash.

Schools Week revealed in July how Ofsted-rated outstanding St Joseph's college had pulled out of taking over a struggling nearby school in Stoke-on-Trent because of its costly PFI.

Governors said the deal was "too risky", despite the takeover already having been approved in principle and the council offering the school an "unprecedented" £1.5 million sweetener.

Trobe said: "It's extremely disappointing and sad to hear that PFI has caused other complexities to a school that obviously needed the support of a trust.

There was an "urgent need for the DfE to look at PFI-related issues and their conversions to ensure they are not protracted".

After extensive investigations by Schools Week, the government announced in March it would include funding for PFI schools under its new fair funding formula.

However, the new funding will not now be introduced until at least 2018.

The DfE did not respond to a request for comment on Noel-Baker and said that it did not provide a running commentary of sponsorship talks. Baverstock did not respond to requests for comment.

## Ofsted criticises Plymouth CAST performance

### JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

A trust qualified to be a "system leader" under government plans to rank academy chains has been criticised for a significant decline in its schools' performances.

Ten of the 36 academies run by the Plymouth CAST trust were visited as part of a focused Ofsted inspection in October after concerns about the trust's performance. Six of the ten were judged as requires improvement or inadequate.

Senior staff did not have a "sufficient understanding" of performance with some schools having a "significant decline" since joining the trust, said the inspection report.

Until recently there was also no strategy to monitor safeguarding procedures.

Schools Week reported in March that
Plymouth CAST would qualify as a "system
leader" under schools commissioner Sir
David Carter's (pictured) new plans for
larger academy chains to help others grow
and be accountable directly to him.

The report could also prove a test case for the special relationship the government has with religious trusts if schools are forced to leave an under-performing chain.

Schools Week also previously revealed chief executive John Mannix's £85,000 salary was the lowest among large academy chains leaders. A spokesperson for the trust

said Mannix was now on leave.

Ofsted said that more than a third of Plymouth CAST's schools had now been inspected since the trust took over and more than half were "not providing a good quality of education".

The trust's primary schools also scored "significantly below the national level".

The trust has received more than £2 million of additional funding, but the report says that no one in the trust could "explain how this funding has been used and what difference it has made to improve the achievement of pupils. The answer is, not nearly enough."

The findings could now test a recent memorandum of understanding between the government and religious school trusts.

Trusts with religious character have more of a say about any new sponsors for their schools, should they be deemed in need of a takeover.

Plymouth CAST, whose directors are appointed by the Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, took over 34 schools that converted en-masse in April 2014.

It is now responsible for 36 schools across seven local authorities in the south west.



Bishop Mark O'Toole, from the diocese of Plymouth, said: "Catholic schools have a reputation for excellence and supporting students to achieve their best. It is clear that Plymouth CAST has not been reaching that benchmark in some schools and we must move quickly to put things right."

Sandy Anderson, chairman of Plymouth CAST, said the trust was taking "swift and robust action to turn around this situation".

Lisa Mannall, chief executive of The Learning Academy Trust and an adviser to schools commissioner Rebecca Clark, is providing leadership support, with a new chief operating officer being recruited.

## Whitehaven staff want Bright Tribe replaced

#### JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

One of the schools in an academy trust given extra government funding after being lauded by ministers is now in special measures, with staff issuing a vote of no confidence in the chain.

More than 50 staff at Whitehaven academy, in Cumbria, have written an open letter criticising academy sponsor Bright Tribe and revealing the school has been given an inadequate Ofsted judgment.

The report has not yet been published, but the "disappointing" inspection was confirmed by the trust.

It will prove awkward for ministers who lauded Bright Tribe as a "top performing" sponsor last year and handed it a slice of £5 million government funding to drive up standards in northern schools.

Bright Tribe has had Whitehaven

academy since January 2014. Staff said that in that time it had had six headteachers and called for a new sponsor, threatening to initiate a formal protest until Bright Tribe was removed.

The trust, in a letter sent in response to the staff, said it could not comment

detail on the inspection as it had not yet been published.

But chief executive Kathy Kirkham said it was "disappointed with the

The Ofsted report was, however, said to "highly praise" the work of new principal Warren Turner, who Kirkham said had "rigorous rapid school improvement plans in place".

The trust has been under investigation for breaching rules over payments to its founder, Michael Dwan. Despite an investigation ruling that it is still breaking rules, it has

not been issued a financial notice to improve.

It was also revealed that the government asked Bright Tribe to "take over three schools" – despite the investigation.

Clare Feeney-Johnson, cabinet member for schools and learning at Cumbria county council, said the school's standards were "clearly not acceptable".

The council would be "making representations to the regional schools commissioner to impress upon her the urgency of the situation in Whitehaven".

A Department for Education spokesperson said it was aware of the issues and the regional schools commissioner was working with the trust to address "historic challenges of underperformance". Further action would be taken if it was "not satisfied with these improvements".

# Ridings must repay £1m deficit

A trust with two academies and a £1 million deficit has been given a financial notice to improve, with a threat of its funding being terminated unless it can resolve the problem.

The Ridings Federation of Academies – which runs
Winterbourne International academy and Yate International
academy in Bristol – must submit a plan to the Department
for Education (DfE) by early next year outlining how it will
"achieve a balanced budget" and repay its £1 million deficit.

A DfE letter to Claire Emery, chair of Ridings governors, said there had been a failure to ensure "robust governance arrangements" as well as good financial management and internal controls.

The notice is the most recent sent to an academy trust following a significant upswing in the number of financial notices to improve sent out in 2016.

Government data published last week revealed 25 financial notices to improve had been issued to trusts this year, compared with just seven in 2015.

Schools Week approached the trust for comment, but was pointed to a previous statement from Ms Emery that said: "The federation is dealing with a financial deficit, and the trustees are looking at various ways to reduce this."

## **Teacher recruitment** 3-page special

# THE TICK-BOX ROUTE TO QTS: IT TAKES FOUR HOURS AND NO FURTHER TRAINING

**JESS STAUFENBERG** 

@STAUFENBERGJ

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The number of teachers gaining qualified status (QTS) through an "assessment-only" route – involving about four hours of lesson observation and no further training – has more than doubled in the past three years.

A Freedom of Information request reveals that the number of teachers passed by providers has risen from 429 in 2013 to 912

The Department for Education (DfE) launched the assessment-only route to becoming a qualified teacher in 2009, initially for experienced teachers in the independent sector or for teachers trained overseas wishing to gain a UK recognised qualification. But experts say that unless Ofsted "rigorously" checks providers, this could be qualification "by the back door".

Alan Smithers of the University of Buckingham says the increasing importance of qualifications in the independent sector, as well as uncertainty in further education, could explain the rapid growth of the assessment-only route.

"As the name suggests, it is assessmentonly, without any training. I would not be concerned if it is being inspected rigorously. I would be concerned, however, if it is becoming a relatively soft way into teaching and a cash cow for the assessors."

Providers who spoke to *Schools Week*, including private companies, said that they made no profit from delivering the assessment-only route.

However, financial arrangements differ. Several charge extra if applicants have a third-class degree – or if they do not have a degree, but have an
A-level, in the subject
they will qualify to teach
but do not provide
additional training.

e-Qualitas, a private company delivering teacher training in the south that signed-off 13 qualified teachers in 2013-14, rising to 28 last year, charges the applicant's school £2.500, plus VAT.

About 30 per cent of

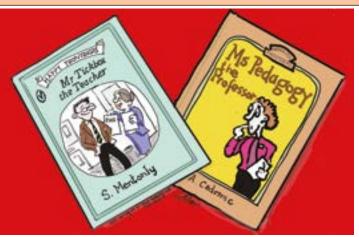
applicants to the assessment-only route are rejected or redirected along other training routes each year – with about 100 per cent of those accepted passing their assessment, a spokesperson for e-Qualitas told *Schools* 

Two hours of lessons are observed in an initial visit to see if a candidate should be accepted, and their portfolio of evidence reviewed. For that initial assessment and associated costs, e-Qualitas invoices the school £750.

Following the candidate's acceptance, the remaining fee is invoiced and a further two hours of observations as well as interviews are undertaken, according to the spokesperson.

Educate Teacher Training, a private company operating training hubs across the country, qualified one teacher in 2014 and four teachers last year through the assessment-only route. It charges £2,675, plus VAT, and a "non-refundable" deposit of £200 for the assessing interview.

While all applicants must have worked in at



least two school settings under government rules, the length of their experience can be set by providers – in the case of Educate Teacher Training "a minimum of three years' teaching experience is required".

Educate Teacher Training also charges applicants an additional £144 for a "GCSE equivalency test" in maths, English and sciences if they do not have the required C grade at GCSE. The equivalency test is designed by experts for Educate Teacher Training and is not checked by Ofsted, a spokesperson said.

Bedfordshire Schools Training Partnership SCITT charges £3,000 for each applicant, while the University of Worcester charges £2,250, as well as additional charges.

The university, for example, charges a 45p a mile petrol fee if an assessor has to travel more than 40 miles to an applicant's school, and £300 if applicants "do not have a specialist degree in a subject we offer".

Samantha Twistleton, director of the Sheffield Institute of Education, said: "If it's simply a way of validating expertise that exists and aids recognition, then it's valid. If it's a backdoor way to get people in, then that would be a worry."

She said all teachers should have academic training in pedagogy: "For me there is the importance of showing you can write, research and reflect on practice as well as show professional competence. Most countries in the world agree with me."

While all initial teacher training providers must be rated good or outstanding to deliver the assessment-only route, *Schools Week* found Educate Teacher Training was ranked as "satisfactory" in one category at its last inspection in 2012.

Titan Initial Teacher Training, a private company based in Birmingham, also said Ofsted "asked about our assessment-only route programme", but confirmed the route was not featured in its final inspection report.

Ofsted told Schools Week that where ITT providers offer an assessment-only route to QTS, they will be inspected against the assessment-only criteria – specifically, criterion A3.4, "that rigorous moderation procedures are in place to assure the reliability, accuracy and consistency of assessments of candidates against the standards for QTS".

Yet since assessment-only routes operate in a 12-week window, that period may not coincide with an inspection, *Schools Week* 

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said: "Like any route into teaching, assessment-only course providers are judged by Ofsted to make sure they are of the highest standard, meaning only the best teachers end up in our classrooms."

Turn page for more

## Teacher recruitment 3-page special

## SIX THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RECRUITMENT



TEACHER RECRUITMENT IS IN CRISIS, WITH GAPS IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSES AND VACANCIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IN SEVERAL EBACC SUBJECTS, INCLUDING MATHS, PHYSICS AND COMPUTING. IN A THREE-PAGE SPECIAL (HERE AND OVERLEAF) SCHOOLS WEEK LOOKS AT THE ANNUAL FIGURES ON TRAINING RELEASED BY THE GOVERNMENT LAST WEEK. THEY MAKE FOR SOBER READING, AS JESS STAUFENBERG DISCOVERS

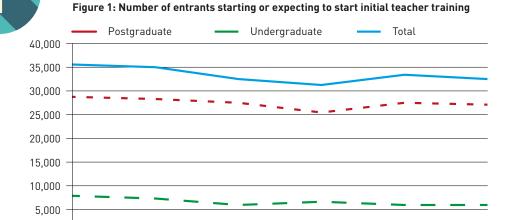
2011/12

2012/13

## FEWER PEOPLE HAVE STARTED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING THIS YEAR

While 27,761 postgraduates chose an initial teacher training (ITT) route for the academic year 2015-16, 27,229 – 532 fewer – signed up this year.

But this is a fall since 2011, when more than 35,000 joined ITT courses, even though Teach First applicants were included this year and in 2015. The percentage of applicants recruited for secondary school training did rise, from 82 per cent last year to 89 per cent this year (another 530 applicants), but the government's target was lower by 854 places than last year.



## POPULARITY OF SCHOOL-LED COURSES CONTINUES TO SOAR

There was a rise in the number of applicants choosing school-led routes – the government's favoured ITT model – up from 51 per cent last year, to 56 per cent this year

Most (7,470) were on unpaid School Direct routes, while slightly more than 3,000 took the salaried School

Direct route.

Teach First took 1,375 trainees, while school-centred initial teacher training (SCITTs) took 3,057.

There were about 300 fewer applicants for undergraduate teacher training.

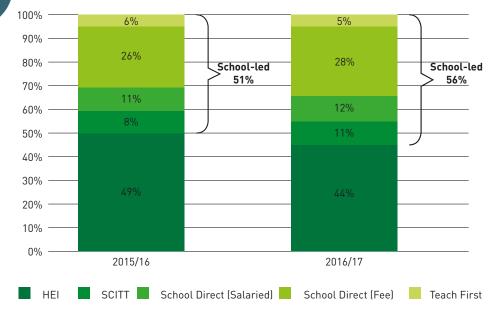
Figure 2: Proportion of new entrants to initial teacher training by route, for academic years 2015 - 2016 and 2016 - 2017

2014/15

2015/16

2016/17

2013/14



# SOME KEY EBACC SUBJECTS WERE UNDER-RECRUITED, AGAIN

Recruitment for maths against the Teacher Supply Model (TSM) was 26 per cent off target, with only 84 per cent of places filled – although the recruitment target for this year was increased by 521 places compared with last year.

In physics, only 81 per cent of places were filled, while core subject computing had the lowest recruitment level of all EBacc subjects at just 68 per cent; lower than the 70 per cent filled last year.

The government has recently announced funding for a "teacher returner engagement programme" aimed at bringing teachers back into the classroom for maths and physics, as well as modern languages.

Several other non-EBacc subjects, including art and design, classics and religious education, also missed their targets by about 20 per cent each.

Only 41 per cent of places were filled in design and technology.

Figure 3: E	ntrants to pos	tgraduate	e initial teacher to	raining by sub	ject	
		2015/16			2016/17	
Subject	Recruited	Target	Contribution to target		Target	Contribution to target
Mathematics	2,452	2,581	95%	2,605	3,102	84%
English	2,370	2,253	105%	2,207	2,253	98%
MFL	1,392	1,583	88%	1,487	1,583	94%
Biology	1,058	1,178	90%	1,356	1,178	115%
Physics	740	1,055	70%	851	1,055	81%
Chemistry	985	1,053	94%	1,038	1,053	99%
History	918	816	113%	910	816	112%
Geography	642	778	83%	904	778	116%
Computing	504	723	70%	495	723	68%
Other	902	1,777	51%	808	1,285	63%
Technology	513	1,279	40%	423	1,034	41%
Physical Education	1,235	1,227	101%	1,098	999	110%
Art	506	794	64%	522	633	82%
Religious Education	413	650	64%	435	544	80%
Music	353	481	73%	359	399	90%
Business Studies	200	313	64%	215	252	85%
Total Secondary	15,183	18,541	82%	15,713	17,687	89%
Primary	12,578	11,245	112%	11,516	11,489	100%
Total	27,761	29,787	93%	27,229	29,176	93%

## Teacher recruitment 3-page special



## YOUNGER TEACHERS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE ON A SALARIED SCHOOL DIRECT ROUTE

Just 20 per cent of those on School Direct salaried routes were aged under 25, but at Teach First, nearly three-quarters of all applicants on the course were under 25.

Just 15 per cent of all postgraduates on ITT courses were from an ethnic minority background, one percentage point more than last year.

Meanwhile, the number of male postgraduates choosing primary training continues to drop. While 23 per cent were accepted on to primary teacher training for 2013-14, that figure is now down to 20 per cent.

Figure 4: Demographics of entrants to postgraduate teacher training

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	Male	Aged under 25	Minority enthic group	Declared disability				
Postgraduate total:	32%	53%	15%	9%				
Higher Education Institutions	33%	61%	19%	11%				
School Centred ITT	33%	48%	8%	7%				
School Direct (Fee)	31%	51%	10%	8%				
School Direct (Salaried)	31%	20%	15%	6%				
Teach First	30%	73%	16%	9%				

Figure 5: Number of people from the European Economic Area awarded QTS

## MORE TRAINEES ARE FROM THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

There was a significant increase in trainee teachers applying from the EU, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

In 2014-15, 4,351 applicants came from countries across Europe, but that rose by 10 per cent to reach

4,795 for 2015-16.

Of those, the greatest rise (46 per cent) was from austerity-stricken Greece.

There was a 6 per cent decrease in applicants from Poland, and a 4 per cent increase from Spain.



1,977 QTS awards (4 per cent increase from financial year 2014 to 2015)

#### Greece

572 QTS awards (46 per cent increase from financial year 2014 to 2015)

## Poland

545 QTS awards (6 per cent decrease from financial year 2014 to 2015)

# TEACHERS WHO QUALIFIED VIA THE ASSESSMENT-ONLY ROUTE — FOR TEACHERS WITH EXPERIENCE — HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED IN THE PAST THREE YEARS

Teachers in the independent sector, or from overseas with unrecognised qualifications, who want qualified teacher status can use various assessments. They pay, or are paid by their employing school, to apply and undertake the route (see page 7).

While 429 teachers were recommended for QTS via this route in 2013-14, this number increased to 600 in 2015 and to 912 for 2015-16, according to figures released under a Freedom of Information request seen

by Schools Week.

Figures on the assessment-only route, which was launched in 2009, were not included in the government's other figures on initial teacher training, but it was acknowledged as a possible route.

A DfE spokesperson said: "There are more providers offering the route each year, and the bigger national providers have stepped up their marketing and targeting of candidates."

Figure 6: Number of teachers awarded QTS via assessment-only route for academic years 2013/14, 2014/15 & 2015/16

2014

2015

RECOMMENDING INSTITUTION*	TEACI ASSE	TOTAL		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	
Hibernia College UK Limited	n/a	32	153	185
University of Cumbria	26	38	45	109
Manchester Metropolitan University	23	19	30	72
Newman University	5	27	31	63
e-Qualitas	13	14	28	55
University of Worcester	16	7	9	32
Nottingham Trent University	6	6	18	30
Bedfordshire Schools' Training Partnership SCITT	1	5	3	9
The Pimlico-London SCITT	n/a	1	8	9
Educate Teacher Training	n/a	1	4	5
Titan Partnership Ltd	3	n/a	2	5

<sup>\*</sup> Illustrative sample of 11 of the 91 recommending institutions

RECOMMENDING INSTITUTION		IERS AWARDED QTS SSMENT-ONLY RO		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	TOTAL
All 91 institutions	429	600	912	1,941

## **NEWS**

# EXAMINERS 'NEED MORE INCENTIVES'

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

An awards scheme for examiners should be created to entice more teachers to take on the "unattractive" job, a veteran examiner has suggested.

Roger Murphy, an emeritus professor at the University of Nottingham, has been an examiner for about 40 years, but says the role is more bother than it is worth.

He said as a result exam boards were struggling to recruit enough teachers for a job once seen as "very appealing".

"Having been involved in exams for a long time I see now that most of what you read about examiners and marking is very negative," he said. "You always hear about the cases where you get it wrong or a school gets bad results."

He suggested that incentives should be introduced. "A real upbeat approach would be to have some sort of awards and prizes for people who are very good.

"Being able to assess pupil work and tell them how they are doing against a recognised standard is a vital bit of the job and one that doesn't get as much recognition as it should."

Michael Turner, director general at The Joint Council for Qualifications, which represents all exam boards, said each year more than 50,000 examiners marked scripts and each year exam boards recruited enough examiners.

But Murphy said boards only reached recruitment numbers because they outsourced some marking to student teachers or people outside the profession who did not have the necessary expertise.

Velda Elliott, an associate professor of English at the University of Oxford, agreed and said that when teachers and academic examiners hit a higher tax bracket the incentive of extra pay was "not worth it".

Examiners, on average, earn about £1,000 a year before tax. A-level marking pays the best at £5 a script while examiners mark "more for less" for other qualifications such as GCSEs.

"Being an examiner is very appealing as a young teacher because you get extra money," Elliott said. "But when I became an academic and hit the 40 per cent tax bracket, I stopped marking because it makes you a lot less tolerant of any issues that come with it."

Murphy also said the rise of academies had made examining "unattractive".

"Some heads of academies are not encouraging their staff to do examining and they're saying it is a low priority."

Elliott agreed and said schools needed extra incentives to allow their teachers to be examiners, as some saw it as "taking time away from what they are being paid to do".

## More faith schools 'unlikely' to boost social mobility

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A plan to boost the number of faith school places by changing prohibitive admissions rules on new schools is "unlikely to be effective" in increasing social mobility, warns the Education Policy Institute (EPI).

The think tank has found that pupils in faith schools seem to do "little or no better than in non-faith schools" once attainment and progress figures are adjusted for disadvantage.

The research, conducted in the wake of an announcement that the government wants to lift the 50 per cent faith admissions cap on free schools in over-subscribed areas, found that small gains in attainment could come "at the price of increased social segregation, with a risk of lower social mobility".

But Catholic education officials have argued that the research "bears no resemblance" to their schools.

The EPI research found that 83 per cent of pupils in Church of England schools and 85 per cent of pupils in Roman Catholic schools achieved a level four or above in reading writing and mathematics at key stage 2, compared with 81 per cent in nonfaith schools.

It also found that 60.6 per cent of pupils in Church of England schools and 63.2 per cent of pupils in Catholic schools achieved five good GCSEs including English and maths, compared with 57.4 per cent of pupils in non-faith secondary schools.

But faith schools educate a lower proportion of disadvantaged children: 12.1 per cent are eligible for free school meals at key stage 2 compared with 18 per cent in non-faith schools, and 12.6 per cent at key stage 4 compared with 14.1 per cent. Pupils with special educational needs were also less likely to attend a faith school.

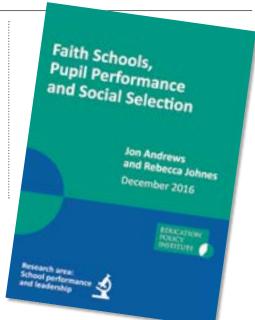
The report, Faith Schools, Pupil
Performance and Social Selection, concludes
that while raw attainment and progress
measures for faith schools suggested their
pupils did better, the gains "largely disappear
after adjusting for pupil characteristics".

It added that pupils in primary faith schools "seem to do little or no better".
Pupils in secondary schools had results "just one-seventh of a grade higher in each of eight GCSE subjects".

"However, given that the average faith school admits fewer pupils from poor backgrounds than the average non-faith school, there is a risk that such small gains would come at the price of increased social segregation, with a risk of lower social mobility."

A spokesperson for the Catholic Education Service said more Catholic schools would "answer the demand of tens of thousands of parents of all social backgrounds who wish for their child to have a Catholic education.

"This research bears no resemblance to the on-the-ground experience of Catholic schools, nor does it bear any resemblance to the facts," he said.



"The 2016 Catholic schools census, the most accurate representation of Catholic schools in England, finds that Catholic schools educate 21 per cent more pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds than the national average, and in Catholic primary schools, almost 40 per cent more pupils from the poorest households."

According to the Church of England, 15 per cent of pupils at its secondary schools are eligible for free school meals.

The church also says that the 2013 school census shows that 25 per cent of pupils attending C of E secondary schools came from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, one percentage point short of the national average.

## Schools struggle with rise in special provision requests

**BILLY CAMDEN** 

@BILLYCAMDEN

The Exams Officers' Association (EOA) is pushing for a consultation with Ofqual to review exam access for students with a learning disability or difficulty.

It follows association research that found school staff struggling to cope with a rising number of requests for special provision.

Andrew Harland, chief executive of the EOA, said the rise was in part down to confusion over "old" guidance that focused on disability – a "minority" of requests – and not enough on learning difficulties, now the "majority" of requests.

Current guidelines on access arrangements are published by The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Within the guidance it states: "Access arrangements allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment



51 % SAID THE
PRESENT ACCESS
ARRANGEMENTS WERE
UNSUSTAINABLE

without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and braille question papers."

Harland said the current JCQ documents "do embrace learning difficulties", but their original focus was on disabilities. There was now a need to "update how other needs are being referenced and interpreted by centres.

"We want stronger, clearer JCQ documents so all students who need this sort of support,

Access arrangements can include extra time, supervised rest breaks, and the use of assistive technology such as reading, writing and speaking software.

An EOA report published earlier this year highlighted "grave concerns" over the increase in the number of special provision requests.

The report surveyed nearly 300 schools and colleges and found they all reported an increase of up to 20 per cent, but budget constraints left them struggling to meet the additional costs and resources.

Most requests were for extra time and could be easily accommodated in main halls, but those for more "severe" disabilities and learning difficulties were "proving more challenging", with 18 per cent of schools concerned over finding enough accommodation, such as rooms for students who needed scribes and readers.

Fifty-one per cent said the present access

arrangements were "unsustainable and need a comprehensive review", while 82 per cent asked for "more effective consultation on changes to JCQ publications because of the impact they have on centres".

Harland said the number of requests had also gone up because of the move towards a linear grading system.

"We now have a one-exam period system, there is no opportunity for people to retake exams. So it could be that people on the edge of a learning difficulty are seeking to use access arrangements as a way of trying to . . . . get through the exam system.

"That may be seen in a cynical way, but if I am a person struggling with maths or English and I have a special educational need tendency, such as dyslexia, but I might not be eligible for access arrangements, I will apply for it because of the new emphasis on those subjects at GCSE."

Stephen Hall, chief executive of Dyslexia Action, said he would welcome a review of exam access that "enables a greater range of learners with learning difficulties to gain necessary support".

An Ofqual spokesperson said the exams regulator had offered to meet with the EOA "to understand more about its concerns" but it "does not have a consultation planned" on the JCQ document.

The JCQ said it did not recognise the EOA's concerns



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## **NEWS**

# RSCs: where are we now?

## **West Midlands: Christine Quinn**

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

hristine Quinn is the newest regional schools commissioner, filling the shoes of Pank Patel who presided over significant growth in the number of academies in the region.

Quinn, the former executive principal and chief executive of Ninestiles academy trust in Birmingham, has been in post for less than two months. She was given the job after Patel left to become headteacher of George Salter academy in West Bromwich.

Thirty per cent of the region's 2,742 schools are now academies, a nine percentage point rise on 2014 and two percentage points ahead of the national figure of 28 per cent.

This growth has been in both urban and

In Staffordshire, the number of academies has increased 141 per cent from 54 to 130, while the numbers have gone up 81 per cent in Cheshire East – from 36 to 65.

In Birmingham, there are now 168 academies, 38 per cent of the total number of schools and an increase of 37 per cent on 2014

Stoke-on-Trent has had the smallest growth, with the number of academies going up from 37 to 42 in the past two years, an increase of just 14 per cent. *Schools Week* previously revealed how the city's schools

were caught by high repayments for buildings procured over a decade ago, making them unattractive to academy trusts.

The headteacher board Patel assembled remains mostly intact.

David Seddon, from Baxter college in Kidderminster, left last July, but the 2015 co-option of Kate Brunt from St Clements Church of England primary in Worcester keeps the membership at seven.

Elected members Mike Donoghue, Billy Downie and Sally Yates remain in place, although Yates is no longer a head.

Appointees Sir Mark Grundy and Linda

Davis also continue to serve, as does co-opted

member Peter Rubery.

Speaking about her role earlier this year, Quinn said she "relished" the opportunity of being the region's commissioner, having "worked in schools in the West Midlands for 25 years.

"The richness and diversity of the region makes the role of the commissioner in this area a particularly attractive one." she said.

"I look forward to working with schools and academies, with their leaders and governors, to secure the best possible experience for students and pupils."

Pay details for Quinn are yet to be published, but as of September last year, Patel was paid a basic salary of between £125,000 and £130.000.



**30**%

OPEN ACADEMIES

## Headteacher board

#### 2014

Chair Pank Patel (RSC)

### **Elected**

Mike Donoghue (John Taylor high school) Billy Downie (The Streetly academy)

Sally Yates (Deanery Church of England primary school)

David Seddon (Baxter college)

### Appointed

Sir Mark Grundy (Shireland academy) Linda Davis (Wistaston academy)

#### Co-opted

Peter Rubery (Fallibroome academy trust)

#### 2016

**Chair** Christine Quinn (RSC)

#### Elected

Mike Donoghue attended 32 of 25 meetings Billy Downie attended 31 of 35 meetings Sally Yates attended 32 of 35 meetings

#### Appointed

Sir Mark Grundy attended 32 of 35 meetings Linda Davis attended 34 of 35 meetings

#### Co-opted

Peter Rubery attended 22 of 35 meetings Kate Brunt (St Clements Church of England primary school) attended 20 of 23 meetings

## WEST MIDLANDS

0	OPEN SCHOOLS OPEN ACADEMIE		
	2016	2014	2016
Birmingham	447	123	168
Cheshire East	155	36	65
Cheshire West and Chester	162	19	22
Coventry	126	21	39
Dudley	108	10	19
Herefordshire	99	30	33
Sandwell	120	24	32
Shropshire	152	16	26
Solihull	83	19	24
Staffordshire	398	54	130
Stoke-on-Trent	99	37	42
Telford and Wrekin	74	9	12
Walsall	121	27	32
Warwickshire	243	55	71
Wolverhampton	113	18	40
Worcestershire	242	55	70
Total			
West Midlands	2742	553	825
England	21,932	4,419	6,189
		1	

It's been two years since the first regional schools commissioners and their headteacher boards were appointed. To keep you up to date, *Schools Week* has run four updates in which Freddie Whittaker has looked at two RSC areas each week. Who's new, who's still there – and how they are doing on those all-important academisation rates. In his final review, he looks at West Midlands and the North of England

## The North of England: Janet Renou

Then Janet Renou gave her first interview to *Schools Week* in 2014, just 13 per cent of schools in her region were academies, well below the national figure of 20 per cent.

More than two years later, that proportion has sneaked up to 19 per cent, still well short of the new national figure of 28 per cent.

In North Yorkshire, there are now 36 academies, a 177 per cent rise on the

In Cumbria, the number of academies rose 55 per cent from 33 to 51 over the same period.

Renou, a former headteacher of Skipton girls' high school, warned when she took on the job two years ago that the geographical isolation of schools in her region could present a barrier to academisation, and said she planned to build the north's pool of academy sponsors.

In Durham, the number of academies has risen from 25 to 29, a lift of 16 per cent.

In Sunderland, the number of academies went up 19 per cent, from 36 to 43.

All four members of the headteacher board elected in 2014 to support Renou remain in place, although Zoe Carr now represents



the Wise academies trust, rather than an individual school.

Appointed member Andrew Bayston is still there, with two co-opted members, Elizabeth Horne and Sir Michael Wilkins, joining this summer

Wendy Heslop, from Cramlington Learning Village, also served on the board between October 2014 and July 2015, and guest attendees at meetings have included Jim O'Neil and Matthew Robinson from Future Leaders, and Duncan Baldwin from the Association of School and College Leaders.

During a recent education select committee hearing, Renou described her preference for a "family of schools" approach to

28% NATIONALLY

multi-academy trust development.

"The family approach takes away the issues we have in transition [of pupils]," she told MPs.

"If you go into a staffroom in any school they are always talking about transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3, or from key stage 4 to sixth form. If you have that family of schools the staff can work across the age range.

"Also it gives the chance for the community to have the one entity that they work with. They can get to know that trust and the trust can get to know the community and take the career of that child right the way through."

But she said her team was "slowing down" the academisation rate in her areas to focus on quality.

"We are taking more time for each MAT that comes in and we take a look at," she said.
"If they come in and the material is not there and the names are not

the trust, we are wanting

there on

to go back and make sure that we know the people that they are pulling together

to lead those trusts."

According to Department for Education data, Renou was paid between £125,000 and £130,000 as of last September.

## Headteacher board

## 2014

Chair Janet Renou (RSC)

#### Elected

Zoe Carr (Town End academy)

Chris Clarke (Queen Elizabeth school)

Nick Hurn (Cardinal Hume Catholic school)

Lesley Powell (The Academy at Shotton Hall)

#### **Appointed**

Les Walton (Norther Education Trust, EFA advisory board) Andrew Bayston (Harrogate high school)

#### 2016

Chair Janet Renou (RSC)

#### Elected

Zoe Carr (Wise academies trust) attended 28 of 30 meetings

Chris Clarke attended 25 of 30 meetings

Nick Hurn) attended 28 of 30 meetings

Lesley Powell attended 29 of 30 meetings

### **Appointed**

Andrew Bayston (Northern Stars academies trust) attended 25 of 30 meetings

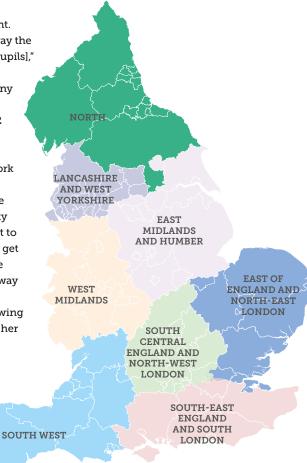
#### Co-opted

Elizabeth Horne (Horizons specialist academy trust)

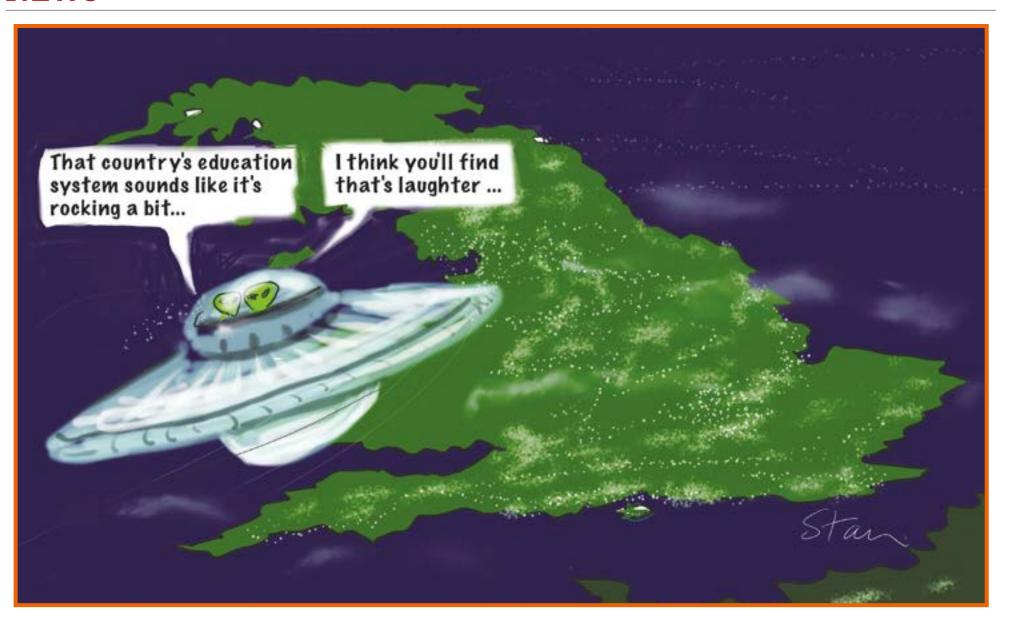
Sir Michael Wilkins (Former CEO, Outwood Grange academies trust)

## NORTH OF ENGLAND

	OPEN SCHOOLS	OPEN ACADEMIES	
	2016	2014	2016
Cumbria	322	33	51
Darlington	42	29	35
Durham	271	25	29
Gateshead	84	11	11
Hartlepool	38	6	11
Middlesbrough	55	17	32
Newcastle upon Tyne	99	13	16
North Tyneside	78	3	3
North Yorkshire	373	13	36
Northumberland	172	15	21
Redcar and Cleveland	58	13	21
South Tyneside	63	7	8
Stockton-on-Tees	78	17	32
Sunderland	119	36	43
Total			
North	1852	238	349
England	21,932	4,419	6,189



## NEWS



## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinerney|laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk

## What a right mess we're in. Still, the kids are all right, aren't they?

While the news headlines have been dominated by how clever (or not) England's children were revealed to be in this week's international maths and science league tables, our reporter Jess Staufenberg noticed something different.

As revealed on page 4, she noticed that while England's pupils may not achieve most highly, they nevertheless enjoy school more than children in many high-performing nations.

Some people will sniff at this. What's the point of enjoyment if it doesn't come with great maths skills? But it surely takes a strange nation to eschew happiness among children in favour of a league table ranking that doesn't actually mean anything. It's not as if the top-performing country is automatically granted a better economy or immunity from war.

But let's accept the view, for the purpose of this editorial, that our ranking on international league tables is actually telling us something about how smart children really are. If that's true, we're in a bit of a pickle. Because while the kids are happy, it turns out they are also plateauing.

Despite growth in maths and science

results for the first 15 years of the TIMSS studies, this last round has seen little change.

By and large, kids are about as clever now as they were four years ago.

Ordinarily I wouldn't think stagnant results were a problem. After all, it could be that our schools are already pumped up to 11, and getting the maximum out of pupils, given the resources provided by the government.

But here's the thing: the government has spent the past five years reforming everything that moves.

The paper this week is a testament to the flux the schools community still finds itself in.

Here's just a few of the structural ways we are all over the place:

- Free school funding: The way new schools are funded is chaotic. They are paid on the basis of expected numbers and then, as they expand, are penalised in the following year for the pupils they didn't have. This leads to huge clawbacks at times when schools are trying to move forwards, causing instability in the system.
- School commissioners signing off on new free schools without the required expertise: The system

of having regional commissioners advised by tiny headteacher boards has always been bonkers, but it's even more so when you learn that commissioners are making decisions about new special schools and 16-19 schools without any input from people who know these areas well. I understand that the government wants to keep the groups small. No doubt this is because they hope to continue the shroud of secrecy that hangs over them and keeps decisions from the public. But doing so at the detriment of expertise is silly.

expertise is silly.

• Some schools are simply unattractive to academy sponsors – so who is going to look after them? We have been flagging the issue of "toxic" schools for over a year now. Simply put, these are schools which, for whatever reason, academy sponsors do not want. A lot of the time it is down to PFI building costs. For others, it is location. The stories this week on page 6 showing schools that no one wants or, in the case of Five Islands school, no one can easily get to, should give

the government pause for

thought. How, exactly, is it going to get groups to take on these schools? Until there is an answer to that question, the whole system is going to keep shuddering.

These are nerdy technical problems, but they also matter for children's learning. When leaders are worried about these sorts of issues, they cannot easily get on with the day job of ensuring top-quality learning in each classroom.

It also misses out a plethora of other issues that need to be resolved: teacher shortages, problems with training, the ridiculous primary testing situation, the botched reception testing, the everchanging GCSE specifications, and so on and so forth.

There will be many theories about the cause of pupil stagnation in maths and science in international tests. Truthfully, we don't know why it happened. But

what I do know is that it's pretty
dispiriting that results haven't
moved, given the flux of the past
few years and the holes we now find
ourselves in.

Still, at least the children are happy. That counts for something, right?

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Goodman Masson

## **Head of Financial Reporting**



Location: London

**Salary:** £65,000 - £70,000

Permanent appointment, to start As soon as possible

Ref: FCPS22092016

For more information or to apply, please contact

**Phil Southern:** 

**Telephone:** 020 7019 8866

**Email:** phil.southern@goodmanmasson.com

A fantastic Multi Academy Trust are looking to recruit a Head of Financial Reporting to become part of their dynamic team, based in London.

The Head of Financial Reporting will report in to the Chief Financial Officer, managing a team which runs the central reporting function with links to the nationwide network of schools. This will be a role where you will need to build strong relationships with external stakeholders including the Managing Director, Operations Director, Principals and Finance & Resource Directors.

In order to be considered for the role you will need to be a fully qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA), with excellent technical knowledge, experience of managing teams and the ability to develop relationships. Experience or exposure to schools or academy trusts would be beneficial.

#### Specifics of the role include:

- Working with the Finance and Resources Directors at all the schools, developing effective relationships to ensure implementation of academy finance policies, systems and reporting
- Completing year end accounts for central body and its related charity and subsidiary trading companies
- Evaluating proposals for new projects to ensure a joint understanding of financial implications
- Reviewing and sign-offing Project Approvals, involving capital expenditure
- Ensuring that DfE returns and HMRC filings are accurate and on time

Ш







CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Competitive salary package









The mission of Ninestiles Academy Trust is "to be nationally and internationally acknowledged as a high achieving, innovative and exciting group of schools which recognise and respect the richness and diversity of their communities." Inclusion, high achievement for all and celebration of the diversity amongst our learners and communities are all central tenets of our work. Ninestiles is a unique Trust, seeking to empower all learners and members to achieve their best in everything they do.

Trustees are now seeking to appoint a new Chief Executive, following the appointment of the previous post-holder to the role of Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the West Midlands. The new Chief Executive will have the proven skills, knowledge and experience in the education sector to shape and drive forward the future education landscape across the Trust and have the capacity and ambition to lead the growth of the Trust in a carefully planned and sustainable way. You will be an outstanding and innovative leader; a creative and forward-thinking practitioner; a colleague who is capable of not only consolidating but building on the Trust's, and the constituent academies', achievements.

The new Chief Executive will co-create and lead the conditions for the Trust's continued success, championing and leading the work of the Trust and developing relationships across the city and beyond. This is a high-profile role, at the leading edge of the sector, so you'll need to bring a deep understanding of how academies improve at pace, alongside the personal skills to influence, persuade and negotiate at the highest level.

So if you're passionate about making education better and ready for a new challenge in a high-profile role, visit **www.leadninestilesacademytrust.co.uk** or talk to Jo Fish or Rachel Singer at Navigate on **0113 287 8445** or **0203 637 5007**.

Closing date: Monday 12 December 2016. Long-list interviews: 12 January 2017. Final panel interviews: 24 & 25 January 2017.





## SIMS / MIS Data Manager

**Salary:** £140 - £175 day (PAYE /

Umbrella / Ltd.)

**Location:** near Epsom, Surrey **Interim cover / short-term contract** 4 – 8 weeks (possible temp to perm option).

Our client a mixed secondary school and Sixth form have an urgent requirement for an experienced SIMS / MIS Data Manager to cover an interim period, while they look to recruit in to the permanent position.

To be considered for this position you must have experience working as the Data Manager in either a college or secondary school, with extensive knowledge using SIMS and its various modules including Assessment.

Any experience of Nova T and / or 4Matrix is also highly desirable.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Application to the Disclosure and Barring Service.



## **Finance Officer**

Salary: Circa £14.83 PAYE or £18.69

**Location:** East London

**Contract** – part time 20 hours per week to start possibly rising to full time - to start ASAP

On behalf of an East London based primary school we are recruiting to a Finance Officer contract to start as soon as possible.

Using SIMS FMS you will be required to support the School Business Manager with day to day finance tasks such as processing orders, sales invoices, monitoring best value and ensuring timely collection of debts, BACs and Cheque runs, allocating invoices to departmental/nominal codes, dealing with supplier queries, petty cash reconciliation and school dinner money.

#### The Package

This is a part time three days a week contract to start paying circa £14.83 PAYE or £18.69 via an umbrella company. The contract could rise to full time but this is not guaranteed.

### **Job Requirements**

it is essential you hold previous school finance experience using SIMS FMS and can be available to start work as soon as possible.

If you feel you have the necessary experience and skills in order to apply for this role please forward your CV for immediate consideration.

If you have any queries or require any further information regarding this position please call **Carly Wootton** on **020 8559 2077**.

It is essential you hold experience of heading up a Learning Resource department with responsibility for library services and technical equipment/associated consumables.services and technical equipment/associated consumables.

## School Business Manager

**Salary:** £41,493 - £54,381 per annum

**Location:** South London

Full time permanent - all year round

- to start ASAP

The School Business Manager is an integral post within this individual academy, and the academy federation it sits within. As part of the SLT team you will be responsible for the control and efficient operation of the academies non-academic functions namely managing academy Finances, HR, Administration, IT, Estates, Catering, Health and Safety and compliance.

You will be responsible for leadership of staff in order to work towards academies strategies and objectives, management of school staff, staff induction, performance management and professional development of non-classroom staff

Other duties include budget planning, delivering agreed budgets and consistently inputting finance policies, you will be required to oversee the planning and execution of capital build projects and building developments.

It is essential you hold experience of working within a finance/operational position within an education setting – experience of complex building projects/academy education building projects and school design is desirable however not essential.

If you feel you hold the necessary experience to be considered for this position please forward your CV for immediate consideration. CALL 02081234778 OR EMAIL JOBS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP YOU ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCIES

Avlward Academy

# Curriculum & Assessment Manager

Salary: £43,380 - £46,146

Hours: 36 hours per week, 52 weeks per year



We have a fantastic opportunity for a Curriculum and Assessment Manager to play a crucial role in the migration of the school's MIS system from SIMS to Progresso as part of a full scale roll out across the Academy chain. You will work alongside the exams team and the data assistant to ensure that the aims of the Vice Principal for Curriculum are delivered and the MIS is moulded to best suit the needs of all stakeholders.

The successful candidate will have excellent knowledge of ICT applications linked to data tracking and manipulation (in particular Excel), and will have broad and flexible administration experience with attention to detail and accuracy. Previous experience of working in a school environment would be an advantage but is not essential.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin. Further details can be found on our careers page. AET is recruiting for School Direct placements.

Please visit our website: http://34.gs/AETjobs for further details.

This position is required to commence January 2017. **Closing date:** Thursday 8 December 2016.

**Interviews** are scheduled to take place week commencing 12 December 2016.

We reserve the right to close this vacancy early should we receive an overwhelming response. All candidates are advised to refer to the job description and person specification before making an application.

For further information on this position please contact: Clea Holmes - 020 8803 1738 Ext 220 or email recruitment@academiesenterprisetrust.org for an application pack

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts. This post will be subject to enhanced checks as part of our Prevent Duty.

## Head of Programme Management



**Salary:** £54,212-£75,063

The position is due to commence as soon as possible

Closing date: Sunday 11 December 2016

Are you an experienced programme manager who prides themselves on their ability to deliver programmes/projects timely, within budget and without major business disruption? Do you want to be part of an organisation that is passionately committed to inspiring children and young people? If so, the role of Head of Programme Management Office could be the one for you.

AET, England's largest 'multi-academy trust', is embarking on a programme of strategic change to put in place an operating model that will enable better pupil outcomes in its 66 academies and ensure its long term financial sustainability.

Based in London you will be an experienced self-starter who will be responsible for leading the PMO team, and for setting-up and running the overall change programme, managing all elements of the strategy programme to ensure that the expected benefits are delivered, working closely with the Chief Executive, Group Finance Director and executive team.

This is an exciting opportunity to make a difference and impress in a new influential role. We're looking for someone who has a proven track record in a similar role and is able to quickly deliver good results.

All candidates are advised to refer to the job description and person specification before making an application.

You can contact **Tanya Bentham**, Head of Talent for an informal discussion about the post on **07990 538911** or email **tbentham@acdemiesenterprisetrust.org**.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts. This post will be subject to enhance checks as part of our Prevent duty.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin. Further details can be found on our careers page.

This is an exciting opportunity to make a difference and impress in a new influential role. We're looking for someone who has a proven track record in a similar role and is able to quickly deliver good results.

AET is recruiting for School Direct placements. Please visit our website: http://aetnationalteachingschoolalliance.org/ for further details. Sir William Stanier Community School

## Director of English

Salary: L7-11

Required: April 2017 or earlier

**Accountable to:** Senior Leadership Team

Sir William Stanier School seeks to appoint an experienced, outstanding, enthusiastic, committed and inspiring classroom teacher and Director of English who will be required to teach students of all ability at Key Stage 3 and 4. At Key Stage 4 we currently deliver the AQA English GCSE specification; knowledge of this specification is desirable but not essential as training will be provided. A successful candidate will be instrumental in the planning of this future curriculum and embedding the knowledge and skills from Key Stage 4 into the Key Stage 3 curriculum collaboratively with the faculty. This is a post suited to an individual with experience who aspires to leadership in curriculum and teaching.

If you are passionate about teaching English; keen to collaborate within a dynamic and forward thinking faculty and you are committed to being an outstanding practitioner then we would welcome your application.



Application packs and further information can be obtained by emailing our Hays Recruitment Partner, **Holly Currie**, at **holly.currie@hays.com** 

To find out more about working at Sir William Stanier Community School, please visit:

http://www.hays.co.uk/jobs/sir-william-stanier-community-school

Closing date: Monday 12th December 2016

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Successful candidates will be subject to pre-employment screening including an Enhanced check via the Disclosure & Barring Service.

## SCHOOLSWEEK

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He will advise you on the best formats and channels to get your recruitment opportunities seen by people working in schools and the wider education sector.

Wallace joined the team in January 2016, having worked as a sales and marketing executive for leisure and hospitality company, Eclectic PLC.

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Searching for the right candidate with the right calibre, can be both challenging and time consuming, alongside trying to work towards a budget.

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Email: wallace.williams@schoolsweek.co.uk

I'm here to make recruitment that bit easier

# **READERS'**



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### **School cancels Trump** supporter's speech

Tarjinder Gill (address supplied) There is no gender wage gap, there is an earnings gap that is not the same thing. Therefore putting this as a fact that he considers to be a conspiracy is spurious on your part.

He is not an extreme right-wing commentator by any definition as he is not a white supremacist, fascist or nationalist.

You can deliver the news or be activists it's clear that you have not learnt the lessons that all newspapers should have done over the past few months. Being the latter is not helpful.

Mark Watson, Gloucestershire Personally I find Milo Yiannopoulos to be an attention-seeking narcissist who will say anything to make himself more famous, and the more controversial the better. However, you don't deal with odious views by trying to sweep them under the carpet - he should have been allowed to speak at the school, but they should have also invited someone to speak who could have acted as a counterpoint to his spoutings.

### Pupils prepare to go the extra mile

**Andrea Pattinson** Shawshank Redemption comes to mind. Why do we need to spend £14,000 on a path to get children active? I despair of our education system.

### Online service launches to connect schools with volunteer governors

**Lesley Brennan** Most people would only be interested in being a governor at a school they have an interest in. Otherwise where would the motivation for all those unpaid hours come from?

### Having data on children can only be a good thing



### Deborah Carr

Depends on the data and how it is used/ interpreted.

Lorena Arikamedoshika Woodfine Data informs every single decision of our lives. Data from birth that a midwife or GP collects tells us if the child is growing normally, is progressing normally. Data collected by ALL relevant persons permits us to make RELEVANT decisions about what is in the best interests of the child, from birth

right through school and even in employment. If teachers do not understand our children, if we only have half a picture, then we cannot help them.

### Little in the mini-budget for schools



#### **Dave Crathorne**

£200 million for grammar schools just shows how out of touch politicians are.



#### **Becky Blades**

Disgraceful, creating a two-tier education



#### @vicgoddard

EXPANSIONS meaning they can bring in more selection without having to get anything through parliament! Very clever

#### **@EllenerLaura**

How is this even allowed - I am amazed and know not what to say!

### Charge parents £500 to plug school funding gap, says leading head



## Sarah (address supplied)

The government needs to cover the additional cost pressures faced by schools that are not of their own making. Schools are facing financial deficits even when governors and school leaders have been doing everything in their power to balance budgets. At some point they will need to face this or see hundreds of schools close.

### GCSE resit changes cost schools £6 million



#### @Willowman66

Time to employ a census reporting manager: £40,000 salary would pay for itself in the first couple of months!

## Charge parents £500 to plug school funding gap, says leading head



JOE EVANS, BRISTOL

As a school business manager I can see the logic here. £500 from each parent would make a huge difference to the immense financial struggle that we currently have – we don't get enough money to run a school that meets the expectations of parents and indeed of the DfE/Ofsted. But as a parent and as a citizen, I'm horrified. My sense is that this is the year in which the funding crunch hits schools. I know of a number that have been running deficits for a few years, but which will not be able to keep going down that road for long.



## Contact the team

To provide feedback and suggest stories please email news@schoolsweek.co.uk and tweet using @schoolsweek

To inform the editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication, email

laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk with Error/Concern in the subject line.

Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

## PROFILE

**@MISS MCINERNEY** 

#### Lucy Crehan, author of Cleverlands

ver the next fortnight, education geeks will be wetting themselves with excitement as the results from this year's World Cleverest Kids competition comes to its climax. TIMSS and PISA are two global studies in which thousands of schools in scores of countries take the same test so the world can work out - in the fairest way possible - which kids are the best.

Among the many hot-takes and comments, however, Lucy Crehan stands alone. Annoyed with politicians (mostly Michael Gove) selling his education policies as being a version of what happened in "top-performing nations", Crehan decided to see if they were telling the truth, and has now written Cleverlands to describe

Her quest began in 2013 after three years teaching at Longford community college, west London, on the Teach First programme. She found it gruelling - "my personality changed. My mum was scared that she had lost me, which is a dramatic way of putting it, but she thought that I'd become really cynical" – and looked instead to

Finding herself at the end of a Masters with "some money from working, no house, and no children", she set off to see the reality of places such as Shanghai, Canada

"I had this crazy idea that I'd go and live with teachers and teach in their schools," says the 30-year-old as we sit in the coffee shop at the Royal Society of Arts, which she has just joined as a fellow

She admits that she didn't take the basis of her trip "entirely seriously" as she thought most countries would refuse her offer. "But I thought I might as well ask and, even if it doesn't work, I can go to these places, make a sign that says 'Hi, I'm Lucy, I'm a teacher from England interested in learning about education, please come and talk to me', sit in coffee shops with the sign up and just hope that people would talk to me."

She did just that ("except in Shanghai where I wasn't on the right visa and there were police everywhere and I didn't think sitting in a coffee shop with a sign was going to help my cause"), but for much of her travels she staved with teachers, working in schools and jotting down her thoughts along the way.

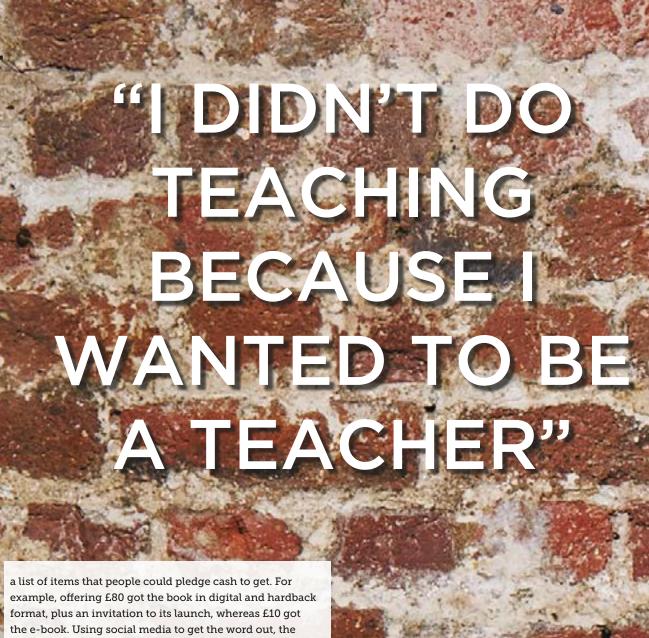
Things didn't always go well. In Finland, she contracted rabbit fever, a rare disease that is so good at incapacitating people that the US cultivated it as a potential biological weapon. In Singapore she was admitted to hospital after her leg swelled to twice its size - "we still don't know why".

For the most part she learned a bunch: how Canada's autonomy isn't matched by high-stakes Ofsted inspections (as we are often told), instead working in tandem with less formal checks and learning conversations. In Shanghai she found that under-performing schools got "enhanced administration" – where staff from nearby good schools are paid to go and help in those that are struggling.

She visited six countries - Finland, Japan, Singapore, China, New Zealand and Canada – and by country three had decided to write a book. Returning home she pondered how best to go about it. A publisher friend told her the idea "wasn't very interesting" as it wouldn't be "attractive to a businessman on his way through Sainsbury's", which is what the book would need to take-off.

Crehan was undeterred: after all, said businessman ought to know if politicians making education policies on the back of ideas about other countries were doing so truthfully or not.

She sought the help of Unbound, a publishing outfit that helps writers crowd-fund their book in advance of its writing. Crehan had to make a video and come up with



book was fully funded within eight weeks, with almost 400 people signed up to receive a paid copy. The only thing left for Crehan was to write it.

At this point I ask if there's anything she thinks I should ask her about. She looks surprised, "You haven't asked me about my own schooling! And you should . .

"I went to an unusual independent school called St James (in west London), which doesn't sound unusual. but is based on ancient Indian philosophy. It's tiny. By the sixth form I only had 12 people in my class."

That philosophy is Advaita Vedanta, and Crehan's schooling involved daily meditation, learning Sanskrit GCSE and long skirts only – no trousers – for girls.

It sounds like a cult. I say.

"It is a bit like that, except cult brings up ideas about human sacrifice and very weird things. It was a place, a community of people that were - and are, it still exists interested in learning ancient philosophies."

She doesn't seem enormously fond of the lifestyle that went with being in the community, but she is positive about one aspect. Daily meditation helped her to stand back and watch her emotions - and it's something that she believes ought to be taught in all schools.

"It's a way of stepping back from whatever crazy or sad thing is going on your head and realising that something will pass, like everything else . . . I'm basically doing cognitive therapy on myself."

Based in England, for now, Crehan is using her knowledge of other countries as a consultant for the Education Development Trust, which works to improve schools across the world.

She is cov about going back into the classroom. Both her parents, her aunts and uncles, and her beloved grandma were teachers, so it runs in her blood.

"But I was constantly stressed. Waking up in the morning and getting that sick feeling in your stomach that you

have to go to school. Just not really going out and seeing friends. Being guite closed off to offers of support from friends and family and my boyfriend at the time.

"Plus, I didn't do teaching because I wanted to be a teacher. I have always wanted to go into education policy and I think it's better to go in having done three years' teaching than to go in having done no teaching."

Would it not be better for people with 20 years' experience to be in teaching policy? "Yes! In Singapore the government has an attractive career structure with

different options and opportunities, and one of those is to do sabbaticals and work for a year or two in the Department of Education, designing curriculum or assessment policy."

She sighs. "I'm certainly not saying I'm never going to teach again. It's just good to mix it up," she says. Cleverlands: The secrets behind the

success of the world's education superpowers, by Lucy Crehan (Unbound, £13.55)









## ROD BRISTOW

President, Pearson UK

# Why it's vital to put testing in its place

Testing and assessment worry parents and teachers, although both are integral and critical to good teaching, says Rod Bristow. He explains why his company now plans to talk to "all stakeholders" to bring about positive change

eachers understand better than anyone that good assessment is part and parcel of good teaching. But 2017 will be a landmark year in how we assess the progress our children are making in schools. The government will consult on primary testing, and in secondary schools we will see the first results of the new GCSE, A-level and vocational exams.

In recent years, attitudes towards testing and assessment have become polarised. The heavy weight placed on exams has led teachers and parents to challenge the amount and the nature of testing. But it would be

# Testing should spur learning on, not terminate it

wise to challenge the weight that is placed on assessment as much as the assessment itself.

Earlier this year, a survey we commissioned of parents, teachers and headteachers confirmed negative attitudes to testing. Parents complain that the main thing teachers care about now is test preparation and test results, while teachers don't seem to disagree. They are concerned that high stakes assessment is distorting the curriculum and leads to pressure to teach to the test, rather than improvements in teaching and learning.

The polling, just before GCSEs and A-levels last summer, showed testing and assessment as a top teacher and parental concern – second at 32 per cent after workload for teachers; second at 30 per cent after funding for parents.

There was worry about the impact of the culture of testing on teachers and students (56 per cent among teachers, 60 per cent among heads). And 91 per cent of teachers polled thought teacher evaluation was too reliant on student performance.

My own view, in common with most

teachers, is that qualifications, assessments and the feedback they provide are important. They are an integral and critical part of good teaching, just as they have always been. But tests are just an indicator, a snapshot of knowledge at a point in time. They don't define everything a person knows, let alone someone's worth. They need to be treated as such.

I hope that the debate over testing next year will be helpful, but I worry that significant changes will not be well understood. Of course, it's our job to make sure they are, but assessment itself must not be discredited if they are not. Perhaps the best we can hope for longer term is that exams are placed in context. Testing provides an important indicator of progress; but it is not the "be-all and end-all" in describing what someone knows and can do. Testing should inspire great teaching and spur learning on, not terminate it.

My fear is that if tests carry more weight than they should, we may continue to see a reaction against them, and against the important work that teachers are leading across the country to raise standards.

While government-devised systems of accountability need to acknowledge unintended consequences, teaching needs to do the same

Strong leadership plays its part in putting testing in its place. The best schools I visit make a point of telling their students to do just this. That's sometimes easier said than done, but we need to debate how we ensure that assessment underpins, not undermines, effective teaching and learning.

We are going to convene a conversation about these issues and will be working with LKMco, the education and youth think and action-tank, to consult on views about assessment with teachers, parents, government and everyone with a stake in the future of testing and assessment.

At Pearson we recognise that while we can facilitate discussion and lend our expertise in this field, it is the opinions of teachers that count the most.

Over the coming months we will solicit opinions, engage with teachers and promote any resulting new thinking to bring about positive change in how assessment is used for the benefit of young people. We will publish a report on the results of this consultation in the spring.



## ELIN DE ZOETE

Managing director, PLMR, a specialist education PR agency

# Let parents see beyond the headlines

Elin de Zoete gives basic steps in how to boost your school's public image. It's worth it, she says, as it makes all the difference when it comes to parental choice

t is not the done thing in education to talk about a competitive schools landscape. Our education institutions are keen to be seen to collaborate and share best practice, but when it comes to pupil and staff recruitment, schools need to stand out locally to parents and teachers.

In a funding environment in which resources are largely determined by the number of students on roll, it is essential for schools to proactively market themselves to their local community to ensure that they fill their classes and have the means to invest in teaching and leadership.

Pupil and staff recruitment is easy if a school has an outstanding Ofsted and great exam results, but for many schools those headline indicators aren't as compelling and don't tell the whole story. Many schools are living with an old Ofsted grading that isn't representative today, or no grading at all if they are a free school. Or perhaps SATs results have dived, as a result of changes to the test.

Without extra public relations to put context around the accountability measures, schools that fall into those latter categories run the risk of losing local parents who read the headlines and get put off. These are the schools that need to ensure they are getting out there with their story and regularly showing and telling the community about progress and achievements.

Here are some pointers for schools to build their own positive PR activity:

#### Work out an overarching message

What message do you want to get through to local parents and teachers? Decide this at the outset, ensure that it is something you can evidence and then build your PR plan around it for the year ahead. For example, if the message is that you are a "rapidly improving school" this becomes the theme that all of your PR activity should bring to life

#### Think about what you do every day that demonstrates you are delivering against your main message

Don't underestimate what seems very normal

and run of the mill for you; people will be interested. Your local audiences want to read about individual student successes, they will be interested in new staff appointments and the ideas that person will bring, and they definitely want to see lots of pictures of children engaged in activities that are stretching them, or participating in new experiences they otherwise wouldn't have had. Aim to capture at least one positive story a week that you can share more widely, and always think how you can link it back to the main message that you are trying to convey.

# Parents read **5** the headlines and get put off

#### A picture is worth a thousand words

It is becoming harder for cash-strapped local media to send out their own photographers to cover events, but pictures are such a powerful communication tool. Allocate a member of the school team to take photographs of all of your planned activities and send them on to your local press; a high-resolution iPhone image is good enough for print. Journalists receive many emails in a day, but a note with a brilliant picture attached will jump out. Take pictures close up, ensure you have consent and always label images with the students' names. A phone call to check that a journalist has received your message never goes amiss either.

### PR isn't just about the press

Schools should consider their relations with the public in a broader sense. Think about other ways you can communicate your messages, pictures and stories. Look at your website content, set up social media channels, film short videos, start a newsletter and ask to distribute copies in your local library or GPs' surgery. Think about indirect PR too, and open up your school to community groups to showcase it. Get the endorsement of others – build partnerships with local businesses that can help to champion and support you, or invite MPs and councillors to visit and share their photos and experiences.

Recruitment for special schools is way tougher than in the mainstream, but there are steps that the government and schools can take, says Marc Rowland

f you have just joined a special school, alternative provision (AP) setting or pupil referral unit (PRU), you are more likely to have a temporary teacher (or no teacher at all) compared with your peers in mainstream education

This is a chronic problem that should not surprise ministers, the Department for Education (DfE) or its executive agencies. But little action has been taken. Professional associations and the media are quieter that Rachel Carson's environmental science book *Silent Spring* in highlighting the challenge.

It is more difficult for special school leaders to recruit and retain the high-quality, bright, talented teachers that vulnerable pupils need the most. Yet the importance of routine, relationships and rigour cannot be overstated; the impact of recruitment and retention difficulties on special school pupils can be profound. Special educational needs does not equate to low ability; many pupils can achieve high grades, but they won't get there without great teachers to guide them towards a university or college place.

Despite having the highest proportion of vacancies of any phase, there is no special education element to the DfE's *Get into Teaching* campaign. The most memorable recruitment campaign to date has to be the *No one forgets a good teacher* adverts fronted by Tony Blair, but they entirely failed to



## MARC ROWLAND

Director, policy and research, National Education Trust

# The crisis that no one is talking about

mention that pupils in alternative provision don't forget a good teacher either.

The government could do much more to help; schools minister Nick Gibb could, for example, highlight the excellent things going on in our special schools, PRUs and AP schools. Many times I have toyed with walking around our city centres wearing a sandwich board saying: "SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS DOES NOT EQUAL LOW ABILITY."

There is a gaping need for a fully funded, two-year teaching assistant-to-teacher programme similar to the Premier Pathways route, to overcome the financial barriers faced by many who come into the profession later in their lives. A firm commitment to a better entitlement to post-qualification training and support is also needed.

Teach First's only foray into special

education to date (to the best of my knowledge) has been a handful of graduates working in PRUs, although many AP settings and special schools have high proportions of disadvantaged pupils. As a hugely influential and well supported organisation, Teach First could lead the way in supporting our most vulnerable pupils.

Rather than wait for government or third-sector organisations to deliver solutions, some special schools could also do better at collaboration with the mainstream sector. I suspect that the diversity of needs in mainstream provision will become increasingly complex in the coming years, and the need for partnership working and expertise to inform high-quality teaching for all is not going to go away. Both the current and previous government have made a significant commitment to challenging

educational disadvantage over the past seven years. But our most vulnerable young children not accessing the very best teachers is a different form of disadvantage. Less easy to measure, perhaps, but nonetheless important.

# Teach First could lead the way in supporting vulnerable pupils

Pragmatically, if we fail to develop young people who can live and work independently, then there are significant costs to the state. The dependency that is created is virtually irreversible once these young people leave school and the educational statement ceases.

Staff are the most important and most valuable resource in special schools. They need to be of the highest possible quality to give vulnerable pupils the best opportunity of a rich and fulfilling independent life. They should be both participants in and contributors to their local communities. Just 6 per cent of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with learning difficulties are in paid employment.

If we don't tackle this issue, too many of our most vulnerable young people will be left only looking on at the opportunities available to others, like a modern day *Lady of Shalott*.





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## **REVIEWS**

# TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews



## Gary Whitehead and why I won't differentiate for economic circumstance

By @bennewmark

This post is a remarkable reflection by a teacher about a successful school friend who came from a very difficult background. What did their school do to make a difference? "My school knew what it was doing. It neither made nor accepted excuse. I was treated, the child of two doctors, in exactly the same way Gary was...".

## **Own your room**By @FurtherEdagogy



New teachers are given advice here on how to set up their classrooms effectively and, particularly, to improve behaviour. The priority should be establishing that the room is the territory of the teacher, not the students, and it should be set up as the teacher wants before the students arrive. The writer also gives general advice on classroom management, warning against letting students work in large groups and advising teachers to make a recap of prior knowledge a part of the class's routine.

### Lions led by donkeys?

By @thingsbehindsun

unconvincing.

This teacher, now working in Australia, describes the narrative he has encountered in conference after conference. You know the one. Kids are being educated for jobs that don't exist yet. Schools are outdated knowledge factories and kids are demotivated. Project-based learning and less transmission of knowledge will motivate students and prepare them for the future. The author explains why he finds this story

## Reducing workload: the question of teacher autonomy

By @Mr\_Bunker\_edu

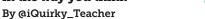
English teacher David Bunker raises some difficult questions about how free we should be to do what we want in our classrooms. For example, mobile phone policies. Where teachers have discretion over what happens when students use their phone, expectations become unclear and enforcement of rules becomes harder. A clear policy, to be followed by all, makes everyone's life easier. Are there other areas where teachers should have their actions spelt out?

## Blocked: Minecraft and the taboos in education

By @tombennett71

The best advice I can give to anyone facing a hostile backlash on Twitter is to write a full length blogpost describing what the backlash has been like, and explaining why the controversial opinion is right all along. Here, Tom Bennett, explains why he claimed getting students to use Minecraft in lessons is a gimmick and why no arguments against that position have changed his mind.

## Groupwork: like life, but not in the way you think



Getting kids to work in groups was once the most fashionable of pedagogies. Yet it never seemed to be particularly effective for many of us, even when demonstrated by the expert practitioners who told us we must use it. Now the tide is turning, but it is still often expected. This post tells us why we shouldn't feel that we have to bother.

## Leave it at the door: why soft skills have no place in my English lesson By @andrewwarnerkms

The author of this post describes his argument as follows: "firstly, traditional academic subjects should be taught purely, acknowledging their own specific set of knowledge and skills; secondly, this can only be done by subject experts". He adds to this by explaining that the teaching of workplace skills is not a good use of a subject expert's time.

### You are not Superman By @Miss\_Snuffy



A headteacher says that the best thing she can do for her students is to support her staff, and not to expect to be able to help every student. "It is the job of the teachers to be there for the kids. It is the job of the head to provide an environment where the teachers can do their jobs."

## BOOKREVIEW

The Thirty Years War: My life reporting on education
Author Richard Garner
Publisher John Catt Educational
ISBN-10 1911382055
ISBN-13 978-1911382058
Reviewer Laura McInerney



f you're ever invited to visit the

Department for Education's swanky
building in Westminster, look out for

the spiders. Having filled the atrium full of plants, a greenfly problem developed. The solution? Buying in hundreds of spiders. How do I know this? Because it's one of the tiny, almost insignificant, yet totally insightful and beautiful details in Richard Garner's memoir of his three decades as an education correspondent.

Garner retired earlier this year and wrote this book in a matter of weeks. He starts with his

formative period at *The Times Educational Supplement*, before he moved to *The Mirror* and latterly *The Independent*. His first education secretary was Mark Carlisle, in the early 1980s, and we are taken on a tour through all the big names that followed – Keith Joseph, Ken Baker, David Blunkett, Estelle Morris – through to the present day.

Garner writes with journalistic detachment. He notes that he never felt part of the education community: always at the side of it, glancing in and noting down what he saw. Because of this, stories focus on the facts, told at speed, zipping over sometimes huge controversies and boiling down to their essence.

What he adds, however, is the context that teachers might not see in terms of the way education news is made. We get a chance to glimpse inside the editor's room at The Mirror, as a young Piers Morgan is trying to decide if the paper ought to beat up New Labour MPs for sending their children to grammar schools or for the party's stance against grammar schools. (Garner advised the former – and won.) We see how chance conversations (for example, the spiders) become huge news stories. In one case, the reporting of a comment by a former head of the statistical service about the state of school buildings became a Mirror campaign, eventually resulting in the government

putting aside £500 million to help schools to repair run-down classrooms.

There are two places where Garner does allow himself to take a less objective view and give strong opinions.

The first is in a strange chapter near the end where he writes about his favourite education secretaries. Charles Clarke gets a particularly kind write-up, while he ruthlessly labels all the policies that the "gaffe-prone" John Patten failed to implement.

The second is where he talks about facing down dirty tricks from politicians and press

officers trying to get their way with stories. The most recent, and perhaps most famous example, was in 2013 when Garner became the focus of a national news story after one of Michael Gove's advisers. Dominic Cummings, sent an email to Garner copied to colleagues – stating he "should see a therapist" intimating that he had mental health issues. In response, The Independent printed the email and exposed Cummings' behaviour.

This resulted in Gove withdrawing a piece he was writing for the paper's Easter edition, printed during the teacher conference season. Garner simply replaced it with a two-page spread on a book by a former teaching union general secretary. "Talk about cutting your nose off to spite your face," he muses, before swiftly moving on to the next story. A metaphor for journalism if ever there was one.

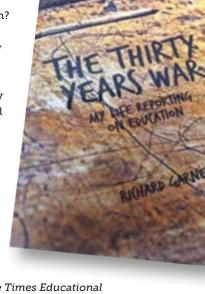
For the lay reader of education policy the pace is somewhat frenetic. Do not expect to come away with a deeper understanding of education policies over the past 30 years. What you will come away with is a sense of the sweep of time; how people, personalities, chance meetings, silly decisions, 3am emails, and backroom deals are what commonly directs education policy – far more than one might imagine without journalists such as Garner waiting at the side to scribble down the truth.

## Next week

Powerhouse

By Brian MacNeice

Reviewed by Ndidi Okezie



veryone in England is familiar with the concept of the National Health Service. But have you heard of the School Health Service?

A forgotten aspect of the 1944
Education Act is that it laid down duties on local authorities to look after the health of pupils. School medical officers were to be responsible for ensuring that every pupil received an inspection in their first school year, their last year of primary and the last year of secondary school

In *The Child At School*, written in 1950 by J H Newsom, we learn that inspectors were to check, among many other things: "Ears: hearings and discharges; Nose: obstruction, crusting and discharge; Lower Limbs: knock-knee, flat-foot or other deformities."

It was expected that abnormalities would be supported. Children found to have sight problems should be provided with glasses. Children with hearing difficulties given aids.

Dental inspections also were part of the service, with Newsom proposing an "ideal" of every six months for each child. (Though he admits that most only did one inspection during a pupil's entire time at school).

That this was taken seriously is evidenced by Newsom's discussion of the "chief medical officer of the Ministry of Education" who appears to have made pronouncements on the development of children and how schools ought to

### THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



THE BIRTH (AND DEATH) OF THE SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICE

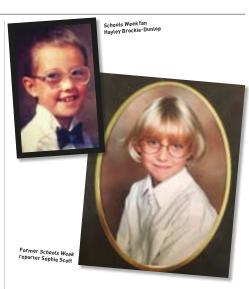
LAURA MCINERNEY

respond to any deviations.

Today, the education department no longer has its own medical officer. However, Professor Dame Sally Davies, the chief medical officer for England, on occasion still makes comments about education. For example, in her 2013 annual report she recommended personal, social and health education become compulsory so children were guaranteed lessons about healthy living

Compulsory lessons are a long way from a comprehensive in-school medical service, though. Why the shift?

Simply put, England in the 1940s had just been through two world wars in quick succession. In both wars young men were conscripted into the army, and their health came as a shock to many generals whose comfortable upbringings had shielded them from the woeful health of working people. Where other countries had devised thorough education systems, often with a focus on physical education (such as Prussia), England had barely scraped together an education system able to get people reading before putting them into factories. This was not only embarrassing, but when the



country was facing invasion, it was a serious liability

That the checklist focused on issues that caused problems for the military (for example, flat-footedness and poor eyesight) gives an indication that, in part, England was concerned to ensure that its young would – at any point – be ready to go into battle if needed. This was not an irrational fear given the previous decades.

Sadly, over the years, this focus on children's health seems to have broken down. Now, parents are expected to take their children to a GP when there are issues, and school nurse numbers deplete year-on-year. Funding structures simply didn't support the model in the end and the trend doesn't seem like it will reverse any time soon. Let's hope another world war isn't on the way.



## A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

A month after Schools Week wrote a story lamenting how Ofsted never does thematic reports anymore, Ofsted does a thematic report. This time it was about how schools will be inspected on preparing pupils for the workplace. We look forward to stories of schools where pupils are encouraged to fight over their Secret Santa picks.

## FRIDAY:

All eyes were on Michael Wilshaw and Amanda Spielman, as outgoing and incoming chief inspectors when they shared a platform at an event hosted by the Education Policy Institute.

Wilshaw's thinly veiled warnings against tinkering with his beloved grading system were met with an astonishing claim from Spielman that they aren't a particularly fair way of judging heads, further reinforcing speculation she might have it in for the outstanding grade. Although a birdie tells WiW that the way the law is written could make it difficult to abolish.

## SUNDAY:

The government's PR machine was hard at work today churning out more bizarre data to support plans for an expansion of selection.

This time it was a press release, with the subject line: "New figures lay bare number of towns out of reach of grammar schools"

Wait? You're saying that there are swathes of the country without grammar schools in them... STILL DO NOT HAVE GRAMMAR SCHOOLS IN THEM? Hold the front page!

We considered responding with a story headlined "SHOCK DFE FIGURES SHOW GEOGRAPHY STILL EXISTS" but we wouldn't want Nick Gibb accusing us of being misleading again - after all, it's not actually a shock.

## **MONDAY:**

Clearly not satisfied with the work of the independent Social Mobility Commission, we learned today that the Department for Education is setting up something similar

in-house which is likely to make its chair, the former Labour minister Alan Milburn very cross. But independence is over-rated anyway, isn't it. Especially when it leads to criticism of grammar schools.

## **TUESDAY:**

Former education secretary Michael
Gove tweeted one of our stories. With a
link to our coverage of regional schools
commissioner Dominic Herrington, Gove
called it an "interesting read" and said
Herrington was a "v v good civil servant".
This would be the Dominic Herrington
who was brought out to bat on a number of
parliamentary occasions over pretty dodgy
free school processes. No wonder Gove is
grateful. One wonders if Herrington would
return the compliment.

## **WEDNESDAY:**

Five parliamentary committees wrote to the education secretary today saying the case for statutory PSHE and SRE is "deafening".

It does seem that the evidence has perhaps blunted the government's ears and edusecretary Greening is, so far, silent on the issue. Do we think the pesky media grid is at work again? That there's a big whiteboard in government somewhere that prompts people to say things to get the best possible news coverage. If next week's PISA scores are a bit rubbish we'll probably see Greening run out with a huge banner saying "I heart compulsory PSHE".

A letter sent to multi-academy trusts by an organisation informing them of education policy has intimated that "wave 13 will be the last opportunity for a large number of free schools to gain approval".

Cue a series of rumours about the future. Could it be that new criteria will appear? Perhaps applicants might need to be offering to open a grammar school within a certain distance of a town that doesn't currently have a selective school? Our ears are to the ground.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

# School Bulletin with 3am King







## Prep school's STEM provision recognised

arsons Green prep school in west London has been recognised for its creative teaching in science, technology, engineering and maths.

Earlier this month, the Independent Schools Association (ISA) awarded the school its annual award for outstanding provision in STEM for projects such as growing rocket seeds, which astronaut Tim Peake then took into space on his most recent mission.

Judges also commended the school on its STEM ambassadors' scheme, in which professionals from industry talk at the school – with previous guests including zoologists, climate change scientists, engineers, geologists and nuclear physicists.

The school's headteacher, Helen Stavert, said: "We are a huge advocate of STEM, which are key subjects for securing positive opportunities and career paths for future generations. Primary school is the perfect starting point to encourage children to explore, understand and realise the links between these subjects and why we study them."

Alton convent school in Hampshire and Hatherop Castle school in Gloucestershire were shortlisted for the award.



## Wicked gets top marks in travel awards

he stage musical Wicked has been voted the best theatre production for schools in the 2016 School

Travel Awards

The awards, which are voted on by teachers and education visit coordinators, aim to showcase the best venues, attractions and companies for school trips.

Teachers nominated Wicked as a production that "excites, inspires and entertains". It was also recognised as having a message that students could relate to, as well as supporting subject teaching with drama workshops and downloadable lesson plans.

The production, now in its tenth year at the Apollo theatre in London, tells the "untold" backstory of the famous witches from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Christopher Warner, director of The ArtsLink, which manages Wicked's education programme, said: "We are honoured to accept this accolade. Going to watch live theatre is a really important educational experience in its own right. What Wicked offers students from key stage 2 through to A-level, is the opportunity to celebrate difference, as well as study incredible storytelling, stagecraft and performance."

## Westminster reception celebrates the work of heads

## **FEATURED**

Ps, policymakers and teachers recently joined forces to celebrate the work of headteachers across the country.

Speakers included the education secretary Justine Greening, the standards minister Nick Gibb and the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter.

The reception at Speaker's House was hosted by the London Leadership Strategy (LLS), an organisation run by headteachers to improve educational outcomes for children and young people.

Carter, who admitted that it was a "real relief" not to have to talk about "the benefits of multi-academy trusts", described his own leadership journey, from a pupil observing his headteachers, to being thrust "in at the deep end" as interim head of a school in Gloucestershire.

Greening praised the work of headteachers, attributing her surprise appearance to an invitation from LLS director Jacqueline Valin, principal of Southfields academy, a school in her southwest London constituency.

The managing director of the LLS, Anita Kerwin-Nye, spoke of what made a school world class. "The real test is that they are inclusive and – even in the era of league tables and competition – generous in sharing their resources to benefit all pupils, not just those in their own schools."



The event was organised to coincide with the launch of a new LLS publication, *Inspiring Greatness*, a collection of case studies showcasing individual areas of excellence in schools.

Each school featured is a participant in the strategy's *Going for Great* programme, led by Rachel MacFarlane, principal of Isaac Newton academy in east London, which works with Ofsted-rated outstanding schools to identify and share good practice.

The London Leadership Strategy was born out of London Challenge, which played a pivotal role in turning around the performance of London schools between 2003 to 2011.

Established in 2002, the challenge provided school-to-school support through consultant heads and helped to boost the capital's schools to the highest performing in the country.

## **SCHOOLS WEEK** EDITOR JOINS GRAMMAR DEBATE

Pupils at Townley grammar school in Kent grilled *Schools Week* editor Laura McInerney at a recent debate on the government's plan for more selective schools.

The Bexleyheath school uses the 11-plus to select pupils, with some travelling up to two hours each way to attend.

An eight-person panel, including pupils from the school, McInerney and headteacher Desmond Deehan, pondered the question: "Are grammar schools a force for good in society?"

Deehan argued there was "no evidence" that selective schools impacted on the quality of other schools, while McInerney said that "across the country literally millions of children don't worry about having to pass a test to go a great school".

Townley's head of humanities, Fabian De
Fabiani, who organised and chaired the event,
noted that every local non-selective school
had been invited to send parents, pupils or
teachers to the debate, yet none had attended.
Without a final vote, changes in the audience

were not counted, but a thunderous round of applause suggested lessons were learned.

## MOVERS SHAKERS



Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

laire Farmer is the new headteacher of Northease Manor school in Lewes, East Sussex.

She takes over the independent special school from Janet Felkin, who has been interim head since April.

Farmer taught English in London and Kent before joining the Future Leaders programme in 2011.

"I loved everything about Northease Manor as soon as I arrived," she says. "Every child has something they can be accomplished at, no matter how hard they may struggle, and what inspires me every day is having the chance to find that something and help bring it to the fore.

"I recognised the same passion among the staff at Northease Manor, which is why I'm so excited to be joining them."

Julie Toben, the school's chair of governors, says: "Northease Manor is well set to deliver for our children, now and in

Ammo Talwar has been appointed chair of the CORE education trust.

Its two schools in Birmingham, Rockwood academy and Nansen primary school, were both rated good in recent Ofsted inspections.



Claire Farmer

Talwar, who was awarded an MBE for

has worked as a founding board member at

He becomes the trust chair alongside his

roles as a governor of performing arts school

At CORE he plans to develop teaching of the

Birmingham Ormiston academy, and chair

at contemporary music touring network

Talwar is also the founder of music

development agency Punch.

his services to music and young people,

the trust since its incorporation in

March 2015.

Black Routes.







Ammo Talwar

performing arts. "Music and the arts should be an integral part of a school curriculum . . . I've seen first-hand how they have the power

to transform the lives of young people.

Mike Hamlin

"We have big plans for the future and there is a great deal of work to be done to continue to achieve our goal of creating schools that offer students the best opportunities available to them - no matter their background."

Mike Hamlin has been appointed chair of the Greenwood academies trust (GAT) board.

The trust has 31 academies in the East Midlands, educating 16,000 pupils across eight local authority areas that include Nottinghamshire, Leicester City, Peterborough, Lincolnshire and Central Bedfordshire.

Hamlin, a teacher for more than 40 years. taught at the Greenwood Dale school in Nottingham for 30 years until his retirement this summer.

"I now find myself with the time, the enthusiasm and the energy to, hopefully, make a success of this new role," he said.

"I intend to do everything I can as chair to ensure that the trust's family of schools continues to thrive and to enrich the futures of so many young people right across the East Midlands."

He plans to use the "accumulating strengths" of the school communities to help to overcome the "major challenges" currently facing education. "I am sure that we can face this future with confidence as we seek relentlessly to improve the life chances of all those we are responsible for."

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your school, local authority or organisation

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### SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

	4					6	2	
6		2	3		7			
9			1	2		7		
5	1							
		4	9		8	2		
							3	5
		3		7	4			2
			5		9	3		7
	9	7					4	

2

9

3

5

5 | 7

8 9

4 6

9

6

5

8

5 4

2

3 9

4

3

8

6

Difficulty: **MEDIUM** 

Difficulty: **EASY** 

making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

### **Last Week's solutions**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares

5	9	8	7	2	1	3	4	6
4	1	3	6	8	9	7	2	5
2	7	6	4	5	3	1	8	9
7	6	9	5	3	2	8	1	4
8	2	4	1	6	7	9	5	3
1	3	5	9	4	8	2	6	7
9	5	7	2	1	4	6	3	8
3	4	1	8	9	6	5	7	2
6	8	2	3	7	5	4	9	1

Difficulty: **EASY** 

4	9	3	2	7	8	5	6	1
6	8	2	1	5	9	4	3	7
1	5	7	6	3	4	8	9	2
8	4	5	7	9	1	6	2	3
3	6	1	5	4	2	7	8	9
7	2	9	3	8	6	1	5	4
9	1	8	4	2	5	3	7	6
2	3	6	8	1	7	9	4	5
5	7	4	9	6	3	2	1	8

Solutions: Next week

Difficulty: **MEDIUM** 

## Spot the difference

to WIN a **Schools Week** mug





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