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## HOW THE PM MISLED PARLIAMENT ON GRAMMARS

**Exclusive, page 2**



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NEWS

PM's claim was not in report

JOHN DICKENS  
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Exclusive

Prime minister Theresa May has been accused of misleading MPs by “over-spinning” an independent research report that she claimed had said reintroducing grammar schools would be “potentially transformative”.

May used a report, commissioned by the Labour-run Knowsley borough council, to rebut concerns raised by former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell that the government’s focus on grammar schools was hindering social mobility progress.

May claimed during prime minister’s questions (PMQs) last month that the report, produced by think tank ResPublica, said “reintroducing grammar schools is potentially a transformative idea for working-class areas”.

However, the report did not say this – May was repeating a line taken from a statement attributed to the think tank’s director Phillip Blond and included in a press release issued with the report.

Just one of the full report’s 33 recommendations referred to grammar schools. It did not specifically mention Knowsley.

A row has now erupted over that recommendation, which Knowsley council claims was later added to the report to “capitalise” on May’s grammar plans, insisting it was not in a version of the report it saw in June.

A council spokesperson said both its chief executive and council leader “fundamentally disagreed” with the grammar findings.

ResPublica said the June report was a draft. A spokesperson said the council had signed off and “welcomed” its version published in October: “It is a pity that Knowsley, for entirely political reasons, chose to repudiate an independent report because they didn’t like one recommendation out of 33.”

Powell said it was “clear” the report had been “amended and over-spun” to “chase an easy headline” following the grammar proposals.

“From the PM down, Conservative grammar school cheerleaders have tried to use this report as a way to talk up grammar schools when it is now clear that Knowsley don’t want a grammar school and the initial report from ResPublica didn’t even contain this recommendation.”

She supported the council in “taking a long hard look” at how to improve results in the area, but added: “Rather than focusing on the headline gimmicks offered to them in this amended report, local leaders must look to tackle the deep-root causes of education failure.”

The line May used during PMQs was seemingly taken, word for word, from a quote issued by Blond, who has been labelled by *The Telegraph* as a “Red Tory” and a “driving force behind David Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ agenda”.

*Schools Week* understands Powell may now use a procedure in the Commons to report May’s comment as misleading.

Recommendation 4:

Government should in addition to the conditions outlined in the Green Paper ensure that any future grammar schools target the most disadvantaged areas, where there are no existing local schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. They should be in places that offer the best chance of future economic growth, addressing both opportunities and need. Importantly, any system of selection should identify – based on means - and meet a quota of children from poorer backgrounds, before offering places more widely.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS OVER-SPUN THE REPORT

SO WHAT DOES THE REPORT ACTUALLY SAY?

The one recommendation in the ResPublica report that relates to selective schools (see above) urges the government to ensure any future grammars are in areas in which no school is rated good or outstanding.

“Importantly, any system of selection should identify – based on means – and meet a quota of children from poorer backgrounds, before offering places more widely.”

In terms of evidence backing support for the recommendation, a spokesperson for the think tank pointed *Schools Week* to a paragraph highlighting recent research by Education Policy Institute (EPI).

It was a finding from the EPI’s grammar schools and social mobility study that,

the think tank report claimed, said free school meal pupils with high prior attainment performed higher (by almost 10 percentage points) in grammars than the same pupils in non-selective schools.

The ResPublica report concluded that overall the selective system did not address social mobility, as too few disadvantaged children attended grammars to make a “significant difference”.

But in a later section, headlined “conditions for success”, the report said that grammars in Knowsley could provide an “economic magnet” that would help to reverse the current flow of pupils out of the borough, and attract new families in.

CONTRACT AWARDED WITHOUT TENDER

*Schools Week* can also reveal Knowsley did not run a tender competition for the research report and paid £45,000 for its completion.

The council, in response to a freedom of information request from *Schools Week*, said the think tank was directly awarded the commission because of its “known influence and connections with government”.

The council said this was in line with rules that contract procedures could be waived for such reports.

ResPublica said it was commissioned to write a report on how to improve education provision and followed due process.

Think tank sources

said the £45,000 contract was more than double the going rate for similar reports – normally about £20,000.

For example, the Careers and Enterprise Company is currently tendering for a literature review of evidence around careers interventions in schools. Funding is set at about £20,000.

Knowsley later said the report alone cost £15,000, with the other cash paid for a “range of other services” that formed part of the project.

Extra services included helping to appoint council education commission members and helping to run an education summit.

# IMMIGRATION

## Schools told to get ready for 'hundreds' of child refugees

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools are being told to prepare for the arrival of hundreds of child refugees over the coming months following the closure of the Jungle camp in Calais.

According to councils, more than 200 unaccompanied young refugees arrived last month after the camp's closure in October.

But local government leaders have called for better support and information for schools after being told that "hundreds" of unaccompanied child refugees are due to arrive in the next few months.

"The Home Office has said we are expecting numbers in the high hundreds in the next few months, depending largely on the actions of the French government," David Simmonds, the deputy leader of Hillingdon council and chair of the Local Government Association's refugee task group told *Schools Week*.

"In my view, there often isn't enough support or information for schools, particularly for children who might arrive in circumstances in which their back story isn't known," he said. "We would like to see a lot more rigour at the point of entry to the UK, so schools can have a better idea of what is going on."

Efforts to find homes and school places

for refugees are made through a national transfer scheme, but MPs are frustrated about how long this is taking.

Councils do not have to take the refugees, which leaves those that have opted in to the scheme bearing the brunt of the influx. As of May, 103 local authorities had signed up.

Politicians say that many of the refugees are still in France, with Labour MP Stella Creasy (pictured) telling parliament on Monday of her concerns about nationality being one of the criteria for accepting children.

She was referring to a Home Office decision to prioritise, among other factors, children belonging to nationalities most likely to qualify for refugee status in the UK.

"It cannot be in the best interests of a child to put nationality before need," Creasy told parliament on Monday, warning that goodwill had "slowly ebbed away", with the scheme failing to match MPs' "desired" outcome of seeing refugees transferred quickly.

The camp in Calais, once home to thousands, was closed by the French authorities on October 26, prompting an acceleration in the numbers of vulnerable

children arriving in England.

On top of a pledge made by David Cameron last year that the UK would resettle 20,000 vulnerable adults and children from Syria by 2020, unaccompanied children are also expected to make up a proportion of 3,000 refugees admitted under the EU's Dublin III regulation.

An amendment to the law by Labour peer Lord Dubs earlier this year also commits the government to taking unaccompanied minors stuck in camps in France, Greece and Italy, although there is no official target of how many should be allowed in.

Edward Timpson, the children's minister, said on Monday that all children aged 12 and under, those assessed by the French government as being at high risk of sexual exploitation and those nationalities most likely to qualify for refugee status in the UK were eligible to be transferred from Calais.

"As the Dubs amendment makes clear, children transferred should be refugees, and the best interests of the child are established in every case as part of the process," he said, adding that a method was needed to ensure that children "at greatest risk" were prioritised.



Southfields academy principal Jackie Valin with pupils from the school's international group

The international group usually has about 150 children supported across five classes, with pupils grouped on their grasp of English and not their age.

Numbers vary throughout the year – the school had 20 pupils start in its international group in September, and now has 120, including pupils from Somalia and Eritrea.

The school has so far taken two children from the Calais camp this year, and is expecting a further 20, but leaders have no

idea whether they are yet in the country.

"We don't know where they are at this moment. I am still expecting 22, it's just that most are not here yet," Valin said.

She praised Wandsworth council for the "vision" that established the international group 10 years ago, and called for the model to be replicated across England.

"Wandsworth may be unique," she said. "If other authorities had had that vision we probably wouldn't have as many problems. I think the model would work well elsewhere."

## BUY SCHOOL SITES IN HIGH SEGREGATION AREAS, SAYS REPORT

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A landmark report that was supposed to provide a "major review" of the impact of migration on schools has made just three recommendations on education.

The Casey review into opportunity and integration, published on Monday, demands more weight be attached to the teaching of British values, laws and history in schools, and recommended compulsory registration of pupils outside mainstream education.

The report's author, Dame Louise Casey, also called for schools in some areas to become more diverse, with the government told to buy sites in areas of high segregation.

Casey also said multi-academy trusts should be encouraged to have a "diverse range of provision", but gave no further detail.

A review into the effect of migration on England's schools was first mooted by former education secretary Nicky Morgan last spring, but delayed and rolled into Casey's inquiry earlier this year.

In her recommendations on Monday, Casey said schools should promote British values "within the core curriculum" to help to build "integration, tolerance, citizenship and resilience in our children" – and advocated for it to form part of the way schools were quality-assessed.

She also said that all children outside mainstream education should register with local authorities, a controversial move among home educators.

A high ethnic minority concentration in schools and residential areas increased the likelihood of children "growing up without meeting or better understanding people from different backgrounds".

One striking illustration of such segregation came from a non-faith state secondary school in which a survey revealed pupils "believed the population of Britain to be between 50 per cent and 90 per cent Asian", she said.

The review also found that in one ward in Sheffield, the number of children of EU nationals had increased from 150 to 2,500 in five years.

Casey highlighted "growing concerns" around unregistered faith schools that she said her researchers found in areas highlighted in the report.

Responding to the report, the Muslim Council of Britain said it welcomed the recommendations around tackling inequality and segregation in school placements, but warned the review could be a "missed opportunity".

Harun Khan, the council's secretary-general, said: "We need to improve integration, and it needs to involve the active participation of all Britons, not just Muslims."

"The report has little discussion on white flight (the migration of white people from inner-city areas), and could have delved deeper into the economic structural barriers to integration."

The Accord Coalition, an inclusive education campaign group, said the review has identified the need for the government to "reappraise its current approach to faith schools policy", which it said was "helping to entrench division for future generations".

## Wandsworth's solution for new arrivals

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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While schools and councils across the country deal with the challenge of mid-term arrivals, officials in the London borough of Wandsworth can call upon the expertise of one institution thanks to a scheme set up a decade ago.

At Southfields academy, an "international group" takes responsibility for all child refugees who arrive in the south London borough. All the 22 children from the Calais camp allocated to the area will go to Southfields, which specialises in teaching foreign pupils.

The group was set up to allow the school to easily accept additional pupils at critical points in their education, regardless of when in the school year they arrive. This solves the problems faced by other schools when, for example, year 11 children arrive shortly before their GCSEs.

"It's a bit different for us," said principal Jackie Valin. "We're a bit of an anomaly in that we have an international group and we take any child who comes into our authority whenever they turn up."

"We became the designated school for pupils from abroad, and we have quite a lot of experts in teaching them."

"We don't call them refugees. We don't call them '[Calais] Jungle children'. They are the international group in our school."

# NEWS

## Perry Beeches gave £5,000 to Labour group

An academy trust already under fire after its chief executive paid himself a second salary through a third-party organisation has also been found to have broken rules by making a political donation.

A second Education Funding Agency inquiry into the Perry Beeches academy trust, which runs five schools in Birmingham, revealed a donation to the Labour Party.

The investigation carried out in March and April this year found that Charity Commission regulations were breached by a £5,000 sponsorship of the Labour finance and industry group – a Labour Party affiliate – in January 2014.

Labour has since repaid the money to the trust.

The trust was issued with a financial notice to improve in March after it was investigated over payments of £1.3 million to a private firm called Nexus, which then paid the trust's former chief executive, Liam Nolan, a "second salary".

Nolan stood down in May.

The second investigation also found that Nolan's nephew was employed by the trust as an academic mentor. The agency was not able to determine whether this broke any rules because Nolan was "not available for interview".

A joint statement from Perry Beeches chair of trustees Pam Garrington and acting chief executive Paul Wheeler said the report related to "historical allegations" and new management have been in place since May this year.

# Durham schools scramble to find sponsor

**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

**Exclusive**

A trust has pulled out of sponsoring two struggling schools in the north of England – despite being given extra cash by ministers to help in such circumstances.

Bright Tribe has walked away from taking over Fyndoune community college and Durham community business college, which form a federation in north-east England.

The secondaries were put in special measures in September 2014, although Fyndoune has since been rated as requires improvement. A fourth monitoring inspection report on Durham college said leaders were taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local schools commissioner, Janet Renou, is now searching for a new sponsor, while the schools join a growing list of those waiting for support, despite being identified for intervention by the government.

The sticking point mainly relates to financial difficulties linked to issues such as private finance initiatives (PFI).

Bright Tribe, named as the preferred sponsor for more than a year, said it was not financially feasible for the schools to join the trust.

A spokesperson said that after extensive due diligence the "level of financial support required to subsidise the operation of the two schools across a split site is not viable".

Bright Tribe was labelled "top performing" by ministers last year and handed a slice of £5 million to improve standards in schools in the north of England. However, it said these schools did not fall under the extra

funding remit.

The disclosure comes during a turbulent few weeks for the trust. A government investigation published last month revealed how the trust was breaking rules over payments to trustees.

*Schools Week* also revealed how staff at Whitehaven academy, in Cumbria, issued a vote of no confidence in the trust after the school was put in special measures. The Ofsted report, published last Friday, said outcomes for pupils have been poor since Bright Tribe took over in January 2014.

The Durham schools received an academy order after falling into special measures. Both were previously rated as outstanding.

Minutes from the headteacher board meeting, which decided on Bright Tribe as the preferred sponsor, show advisers highlighting the financial position of the two schools.

It was agreed officials would arrange visits to the school's sites to assess the need for an environmental improvement grant to cover external refurbishment.

The trust did not provide further comment about whether this funding was granted.

*Schools Week* has previously revealed how



trusts are walking away from sponsoring struggling schools in financial difficulty.

Ofsted-rated outstanding St Joseph's college 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 being approved in principle and the council offering the school an "unprecedented" £1.5 million sweetener.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it was "disappointed" that it could not find a sponsor for the Durham federation "at this time". An interim executive board is in place at the schools.

The DfE spokesperson added: "We are now working closely with Durham local authority and the Durham federation interim executive board to formulate a new plan for the schools."

# Flagship scheme runs aground with 24 teachers on board

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

After six months media coverage, two freedom of information requests and the involvement of the Information Commissioner's Office, the government has finally admitted just 14 teachers were recruited on to the flagship National Teaching Service by its closing date.

Documents released by the government in response to a parliamentary question by the former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell also show that 13 of the scheme's participants withdrew their applications in the doomed project that cost more than £200,000 to run.

The government has now confirmed it will scrap the programme, a move widely expected across the schools community.

Originally launched as a flagship proposal before the 2015 general election, *Schools Week* revealed in June (see front page, right) that it was having difficulties in recruiting teachers willing to be parachuted into struggling schools across England, starting with 100 in the north west.

The scheme was delayed several times, with the Department for Education (DfE) pushing back its start date from September

to January.

Now, the department has revealed that of 116 applications, just 54 job offers were made, and only 14 had accepted by the official closing date. A further 10 were accepted after the August deadline.

In a letter to Powell, Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said teachers would continue to be matched with schools involved in the pilot, but that further roll-out would not go ahead.

His letter also revealed that the government has so far spent £205,000 of its £1.43 million budget for the pilot. It is not known if there will be further costs.

Powell told *Schools Week* that the scheme was a "laudable aim", but accused ministers of "taking their eye off the ball".

"Getting the best teachers into poor performing schools is vital to close the



attainment gap and boost social mobility," she said. "However ministers do not have the courage of their convictions to see it through, which is disappointing."

In the letter, Gibb said the department had been "pleased" with the level of interest in

the pilot and the calibre of candidates.

His disclosure follows a lengthy battle to get the DfE to reveal recruitment figures for the scheme.

As reported this month by *Schools Week*, the department had sought to avoid disclosing the figures by claiming that it had plans to publish them in the future.

The Information Commissioner's Office was asked to intervene over the department's reluctance to answer the questions in a timely manner.

*Schools Week* understands that teacher training organisations expected the government to put out a contract for an external group to run the programme – and had been preparing to bid during the autumn term. It is not yet known if the NTS will be scrapped, or if the government will seek to have an external agency provide it.

Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the scheme had always been a "sticking plaster" for recruitment problems, and was "under-resourced and not attractive to teachers".

## NEWS

# Who should we believe on data?

After months of covering stories on new rules requiring schools to collect information on pupils' nationality and limits on researcher freedoms, new information came to light last week providing new perspective. Reporters John Dickens and Freddie Whittaker teamed up to find out more.

## Nationality checks were a compromise

**LIES!**

Controversial rules requiring schools to collect pupils' nationality data were introduced as a compromise to curb plans for teachers to carry out immigration checks and "deprioritise" immigrant pupils.

The disclosure – revealed in leaked cabinet letters obtained by the BBC – shows the government lied to schools over its real motive for introducing the troublesome checks, first revealed by *Schools Week*.

The government previously said the duty for schools to collect nationality and place of birth data, part of this year's annual census collection, was to help target support to such pupils.

But the leaked letters show it was introduced as a compromise struck by former education secretary Nicky Morgan to fight off proposals for schools to help to reduce immigration.

Then home secretary Theresa May wanted schools to withdraw places offered to children of families found to be living in the country illegally and to check passports before accepting new pupils.

But the plans were scaled back after Morgan wrote to David Cameron about her "profound concern".

The compromise explains why official guidance over the new duty was vague about what schools needed to collect.

*Schools Week* previously revealed how the confusion led to schools wrongly demanding copies of pupils' passports and

asking parents to confirm if their children were asylum seekers.

When asked about the leaked papers by *Schools Week*, Sir Michael Wilshaw, the outgoing Ofsted chief inspector, said: "If somebody had asked me as a headteacher to check on whether somebody was an illegal immigrant, or demand their passports from them, I would have said 'I've got better things to do with my time, thank you very much.'"

He added that the duty to ask for pupils' nationality and country of birth was a "daft idea".

Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner also said that denying "innocent children" a place at school due to their parents' circumstances was "disgusting and not a British value".

A government spokesperson told the BBC it was "only right the government looks at a range of options when considering policy options, but ultimately it is for ministers to decide which policies are taken forward".

Critics believe the plans could be revisited now that May is prime minister.

Publication of the letters came days before a report from Mumsnet and pollster Ipsos MORI ranked politicians and government ministers bottom of the table as the most trusted profession.



Michael Wilshaw

## Reasons for research embargo are a dud

The government justified a new diktat ordering education academics to show civil servants their research 48 hours before publication by claiming it was to make sure "no breaches of protocol" took place.

But *Schools Week* can reveal that, despite more than 600 applications to access pupil data over the past three years, there has not been a single instance of someone "breaking protocol".

The disclosure questions the Department for Education's (DfE) official line about why it introduced the tougher measures on publishing research from the national pupil database (NPD).

It also lends support to the argument that the controversial measure was brought in because of recent analysis

shooting down claims the government's grammar school plans boosted social mobility. An email sent to researchers said the change made sure that policy officials and press officers were not "caught off guard" when data was published.

Academics petitioned education secretary Justine Greening after being told of the new rules, which they feared would shut down rapid scrutiny of government policy.

*Schools Week* revealed the DfE had rowed back on the policy last month – stating academics must now only provide a notification of intent to publish "where possible" and must only provide a

**FUDGE!**

summary of their work, rather than full findings.

The DfE, in a freedom of information response sent to *Schools Week*, said the 48-hour rule was brought in to "ensure consistency".

"Our previous guidance was unclear and the NPD team want to provide clear assurance to the department that any publication is within the permitted uses of the original application for NPD data, an essential aim to maintain the trust of those whose data are supplied."

However academics said the exact procedure was still up in the air – with a current draft version of the new rule deemed "ambiguous".

*Schools Week* understands the department is still liaising with researchers over a final version.

When asked whether its original statement on the motive for introducing the changes was correct, a DfE spokesperson said: "Our processes are continuously reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose."

"We take confidentially very seriously and when reviewing our processes will always look for future risks."



## Home Office agreement still shrouded in secrecy

The government is still refusing to release a key agreement it claims is in place blocking the Home Office from accessing details of pupils' nationality collected by schools.

The refusal comes despite leaked cabinet letters last week (see story above) showing the controversial new data collection was brought in as a compromise to Home Office plans for schools to help the government to reduce immigration.

Then home secretary Theresa May wanted schools to check passports before accepting new pupils and withdraw places for children whose families were living in the country illegally.

The Department for Education has insisted there is an agreement in place with the Home Office to stop this information being shared, but has refused to release further details.

A response to a request to see the document from *Schools Week*, made using freedom of information laws, was 18 working days overdue as we went to press (on Wednesday).

The case has been reported to public data regulator the Information Commissioner's Office.

Jen Persson, from campaign group Defend Digital Me, has said the situation now

requires the "utmost transparency, oversight, and safeguards".

The DfE said it had nothing to add to previous statements on the matter that said the data "has not and will not be shared with the Home Office or police" and insisted that there was "an agreement in place to this effect".

A spokesperson said that only limited data, such as a pupil's address and school details, may be requested when the police or Home Office have "clear evidence of illegal activity or fear of harm".



NEWS

PEARSON TAKES ON A-LEVELS DITCHED BY AQA

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

A-levels in statistics and history of art will continue to be offered for the next five years after Pearson agreed to continue the qualifications.

The exam board announced it will develop new AS and A-levels in statistics and a new A-level in history of art for teaching from September next year.

The board’s move follows AQA’s decision to stop offering the subjects because of concerns over the availability of markers and a decline in their popularity.

Just 839 people sat AS-level history of art this year, while 800 took A-level statistics.

The move will be particularly beneficial for sixth forms, which often encourage pupils to take statistics if they are not interested in “pure maths”.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, which represents more than 90 post-16 institutions across England, said that AQA’s announcement not to offer statistics was “something of a body blow”, especially in the wake of a decision to get rid of the “use of maths” A-level.

“This left A-level maths as the only maths qualification at level three,” he said. “This would have resulted in fewer students following maths courses in the sixth form, threatening the government’s ambitions to increase the numbers.

“Having spoken to senior staff at Pearson about the benefits of statistics, and having pointed out the potential pool of candidates who would previously have studied use of maths and who were now waiting in the wings, I am delighted it has stepped forward.”

Rod Bristow, Pearson UK’s president, said the response from the public, teachers and children to the decision showed “a real passion for these subjects.

“We’re happy to help make sure they remain available.”

Pearson has said it will build on its expertise in maths and art to develop the qualifications.

*Schools Week* understands the board approached the Department for Education to take on the qualifications. They will be initially accredited for five years, but can be extended.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the government believed there was “value in having a broad range of high-quality choices available to A-level students” and said it had always been his intention that there should continue to be A-levels available in the two subjects.

Russell Group sticks by its ‘informed choices’ guide

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN

The Russell Group has continued to advise pupils to take a group of “preferred subjects” at A-level to help them to get into top universities, despite research suggesting that they are not necessary.

The higher education group, which represents 24 “elite” universities such as LSE, Oxford and Cambridge today released the fifth edition of its informed choices guide aimed at helping pupils to make better A-level choices.

Its list of “facilitating subjects” recommends one or more of the government’s new EBacc subjects at A-level as those most often wanted by universities, and as being good for “keeping options open”.

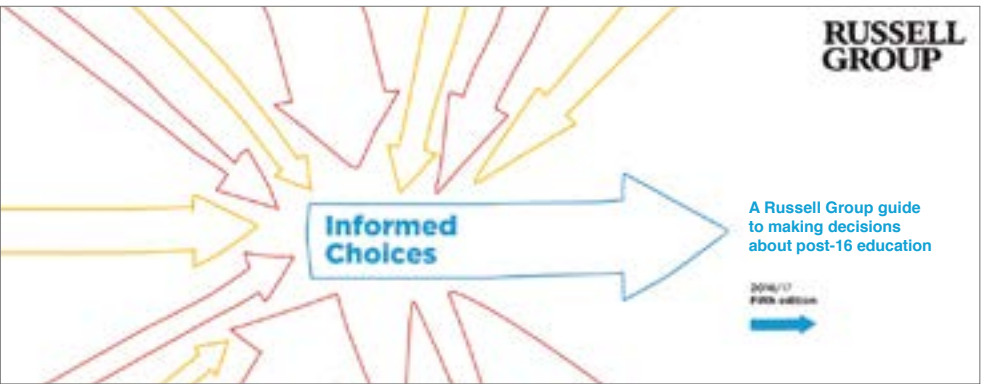
This is despite former chair of the education select committee Graham Stuart asking the group to produce research to back up its belief about “facilitating subjects”, after it was questioned in a study by think tank LKMco.

The subjects include maths, further maths, English literature, physics, biology, chemistry, geography, history and languages.

*Schools Week* editor Laura McNerney carried out the research for LKMco in 2013, finding that some subjects not on the list appeared to help applicants to get a place ahead of those on the list.

The research involved asking Russell Group universities for data on the number of people applying to popular courses with a particular A-level subject, and what proportion got in.

The research found that drama and economics were good predictors of entry



to an essay-based subject at a Russell Group university, even though they were not on the list, suggesting the facilitating subjects were not truly “preferred”.

Graham Stuart, chair of the education committee at the time, said applicants should not be “short-changed by incomplete or inaccurate advice”.

The Conservative MP asked the group what research it had done on the issue and said if none existed, it should commission some.

Three years later and the group has still not carried out specific research, yet still included the list in its new informed choices guide.

A spokesperson, however, said the guide was constructed with input and guidance from the group’s admissions tutors, and was evidence of what the top universities specifically looked for in applicants.

He told *Schools Week*: “Facilitating subjects are those that are most commonly required for entry on to degree courses at Russell Group universities.

“If a particular subject is not listed as

a facilitating subject, this is because it is not generally required for entry. This classification does not imply any judgment about the importance of the subject per se; it merely reflects typical university entrance requirements.”

The spokesperson said that computer science, for instance, was not a facilitating subject but the group included it as a “useful subject” for courses in sciences, engineering and economics when the informed choices guide was updated in December 2013.

However, *Schools Week* found that to study a degree in geography at the University of Oxford, students did not have to have a geography A-level, for example, but for a music degree they were expected to have studied music.

The spokesperson added that the group would direct “students, parents and teachers in the direction of admissions teams at our universities who can give specific information about the subjects required for particular courses”.

Trust runs sessions on how to restructure staff

JOHN DICKENS @JOHNDICKENSSW

A leading academy trust is running £300-per-head sessions to advise school leaders on how they can restructure staff to deliver a “fit-for purpose” curriculum in the face of crippling budget pressures.

Outwood Grange academies trust (OGAT) will host the “curriculum access day”, which will include staff restructuring advice, in March next year for business managers, headteachers and trust chief executives.

The trust is known for giving away its successful method of curriculum planning free on a pen drive, and is now planning further ways to help leaders to cope with squeezed budgets while maintaining a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.

However, the inclusion of staff restructuring as part of the sessions could prove controversial.

School Partnership trust academies (since renamed as Delta academies trust) announced a curriculum restructure to balance its books in June, just months after forming a “landmark partnership” with OGAT.

The move threatened up to 88 jobs at seven of its schools and led to the threat of industrial action.

But Sir Michael Wilkins, the founding chief executive of OGAT who retired in September, told *Schools Week*: “Money is getting tight



and people are having to look at other ways to meet that duty [to provide curriculum for all pupils].

“Of course this is a painful process because it affects staff. But [falling finances] are happening everywhere – education is not immune from this.”

He said the courses were a positive example of collaboration, with OGAT already handing out its curriculum financial planning formula free on memory sticks to hundreds of schools.

The model is based on what the trust believes are sustainable ratios between teaching and non-teaching staff (contact hours), and the number of periods and class sizes (curriculum bonus).

A trust spokesperson said the long-established tool has been used by the trust and others to secure “effective and efficient use of finances to support children’s outcomes”.

Matthew Wheeler, business manager at Bordesley Green girls’ school in Birmingham, said sharing knowledge was always to be welcomed, but said he was “wary of a one-size-fits-all approach”.

He was supportive of balancing curriculums to meet budgets, but said the

OGAT approach would not work for all schools.

He urged schools to hold back on making job losses before details of the new funding formula emerged, due to be implemented in 2018. The government has repeatedly said they will be released before Christmas.

*Schools Week* has previously reported academy trusts contemplating cuts as a result of a budget squeeze.

Leaders said the mixture of flat funding and increasing costs left them no choice but to save on staffing costs.

Wilkins warned: “If they [school leaders] don’t get a balanced budget, they are waiting for somebody to come along, give them a financial warning and take away their right to decide how they spend money.”

The trust, which runs 21 schools, is rated as one of the top performers in the Department for Education’s trust league tables at both key stage 2 and 4, and was one of five trusts awarded a slice of £5 million last year to improve school standards in the north of England.

Wilkins said the £300 charge was to cover the cost of running the sessions – which include professional development from senior trust staff.

The trust’s human resources team will also explain how they support principals to carry out a “teaching staff/and or support staff restructure (where necessary)”.



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# NEWS

## SEX EDUCATION ‘A PRIORITY’, SAYS MINISTER

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Ministers have suggested that sex and relationships education could be made statutory early next year.

Edward Timpson, the children’s minister, told MPs this week that officials would be ordered to “accelerate” work on proposals for changing sex education so they can be circulated in the near future.

Timpson was speaking during a debate on the government’s children and social work bill, which campaigners criticised for failing to include laws compelling the teaching of sex and relationships education (SRE) in all schools.

His comments suggest new rules could be added to the bill as it makes its way through the Commons.

The speed-up follows an unprecedented intervention by five parliamentary committees, which last week demanded changes in sex education after the women and equalities committee published a report on sexual harassment in schools.

Local authority-maintained schools must teach elements of sex and relationships education as part of science for all pupils over 11, but academies do not have to follow the curriculum. Campaigners want the rules extended to cover all school-age children at all institutions.

In parliament, Timpson praised the “powerful” speeches of the committee chairs, and said he “recognised the importance” of SRE.

“This matter is a priority for the secretary of state, so I have already asked officials to advise me further on it. But I will ask them to accelerate that work so that I can report on our conclusions at a later point in the bill’s passage, when everyone in the house will be able to look at them and have their say.”

Maria Miller, chair of the women and equalities committee, who argued earlier in the debate that the bill “must make sex and relationships education compulsory” if it was to achieve its aim of promoting welfare for children, tweeted that Timpson’s response was “great news”.

Labour MP Stella Creasy also indicated she would try to amend the bill to include sex and relationships education if the government failed to act.

Campaigners have been hopeful of action on sex education and PSHE since education secretary Justine Greening told the education committee in July that she was willing to look again at their status.

Her predecessor Nicky Morgan has since said she had considered making the subjects compulsory in all schools, and that she would back laws extending the requirement to academies.

A separate bid from the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas to make PSHE compulsory was due to be heard again in parliament in January.

# PISA

## PISA results test legacy of Coalition reforms

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

The legacy of the Coalition government’s education policies has been shaken by unimproved and markedly unequal PISA results that previous education secretaries said should be used to judge their reforms.

Last January, when asked by a parliamentary committee how the government would assess the success of its reforms, the then education secretary Nicky Morgan (pictured) was vague in her answer, but pointed towards international tests.

A written response from the Department for Education (DfE) confirmed that it intended to measure the impacts of its school reforms “as a whole by reference to international tables of student attainment, such as PISA”.

However, the average performance of England’s 15-year-olds in the maths, science and reading PISA tests, which are delivered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) every three years, has not improved in the five years since reforms began.

In this year’s tests England came 26th in maths out of the 72 countries surveyed; 13th in science and 17th in reading. Scores had not significantly changed for pupils on any of the tests since 2009, suggesting reforms since then have yet to show any evidence of improved pupil learning. The results of the tests were released this week.

During his tenure, former education secretary Michael Gove also gave weighty credence to PISA data, saying after the last results in 2012: “When people ask why [...] we need to press ahead with further reform to the system, then today’s results make the case more eloquently than any number of speeches.”

Coalition reforms included expanding the academies and free schools programme, the separation of AS from A-levels, introduction of the EBacc, and changes to curriculum content.

Jonathan Simons, head of education at right-leaning think tank Policy Exchange, said the commitment to show improvements in international tests was a “risk” given “the outcomes aren’t entirely in the control of schools and pupils and government in England.

“However, the government is entitled to continue with a series of reforms that it believes will produce a better education system overall.”

Neither Nicky Morgan nor Michael Gove have tweeted about this year’s results in England, with Gove only saying the results showed Scotland’s education system needed “fundamental reform”.

He added in the tweet: “Honesty about past failings is a precondition of progress.”

The DfE’s report on the PISA results also struck a blow for the government’s grammar plans, stating that the data “provided little support” for arguments that academic



selection boosted the progress of the most disadvantaged pupils.

But in a statement accompanying the report schools minister Nick Gibb said: “Today’s findings provide a useful insight as we consider how to harness the expertise of selective schools in this country in the future.”We know that grammar schools provide a good education for their disadvantaged pupils, which is why we want more pupils from lower income backgrounds to benefit from that.”

The government report also said the data showed England had “some of the best young scientists in the world”, with only nine countries significantly ahead, but the high-performing cohort was drawn disproportionately from independent fee-paying schools and selective grammar schools.

## Bigger differences within schools than across schools

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

England streams pupils “more than anywhere else in the world” and ought to target interventions at a classroom level rather than through “school types” such as selective grammars.

At the launch of the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data, the director for education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Andreas Schleicher (pictured), said the “high premium” England placed on parental choice of type of school – such as grammars, independents or comprehensives – was not backed by data that showed pupil attainment varied more within single schools than by school type.

England has one of the least selective school systems in the world, but it also has more streaming than anywhere else, making differences in pupil performance within single schools more pronounced, he said.

“As soon as you zoom into schools, there is more streaming going on in England today without the grammar schools than in any other country for which we have comparative data.

“So actually if you’re looking just at grammar schools it’s a surface issue, but there’s a lot of separation between students



and between classes. In fact, in England less than 30 per cent of the performance variation lies between schools. The rest is within school.”

He said entry to different schools through aptitude tests was not proven, anywhere, to increase outcomes for disadvantaged pupils – rather, the opposite held true.

“One of the things we see clearly and consistently across the PISA cycle is that the more academically selective you are, the more socially selective you inevitably become.

“The pattern on that is very clear; the more you select students, the more profound the impact of social background.”

He warned the drive to give parents more “choice” – which education secretary Justine Greening has used to defend the grammar schools policy – missed the “big story” of within-school differences.

“That’s where the performance gap really lies.”

Brett Wigdortz, chief executive of Teach First, told *Schools Week* that streaming was not necessary for strong pupil outcomes.

“Less streaming would be best, because there’s evidence to show even the top children do well in a comprehensive – the children at the bottom are pulled up and those at the top do not do any worse.

“But for that you need the very best teacher to be in the classroom.”

He said it would be interesting to hear of instances where “streaming was done intelligently”.

Germany – which is often pointed to by grammar advocates as an example of a system in which school selection works well – has now altered its selection policies in an attempt to achieve better outcomes for all pupils, Schleicher told journalists.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), said the data showed that future government interventions should focus on “pupil-level” interactions with teachers to raise attainment, rather than expanding school types such as academies and grammar schools.

“It is often the fact of unfair allocation of resources in terms of teachers and low expectations that is the issue with streaming people into ‘lower ability’ classes. We need to do it the other way around.”

# The 11 things you wanted to know about PISA – but never thought to ask

Education nerds geeked out this week at the release of the PISA tests – a set of data showing how English pupils scored in tests completed by 15-year-olds across England and in more than 70 other countries.

In sum, pupils were strongest in science, just above average for reading (with girls outstripping boys) and at risk of leaving low achievers behind in maths.

But the results of the tests taken by 5,194 pupils from 206 schools also gave some more intriguing conclusions. Jess Staufenberg trawls behind the statistics

## 1. ENGLAND HASN'T IMPROVED ITS SCORES FOR ALMOST A DECADE

Despite some respectable scores, PISA shows there has been no significant change in England's average maths, science or reading score since 2006.

Other countries have seen a downward trend in science over that time, including Finland, Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands.

For the first time this year, owing to changes in other countries' scores, we are significantly, but only just, over the OECD average for reading.

Maths also remained the same, but Italy, Portugal and Russia caught up since the last round.

## 2. SCIENCE IS OUR STRENGTH, ALTHOUGH IT ISN'T EVENLY DISTRIBUTED

Our 15-year-olds scored 10 points or more ahead of 52 other countries in science, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Only nine other countries were at least 10 points ahead in their average science scores.

England has always been strong on science "since 2006", according to a government note, so this isn't that much of a surprise.

The spread of strong performance is far from equal, though. The government's national report notes that top-achieving pupils are "more likely to be white or mixed ethnicity and are disproportionally clustered in selective state or independent schools".

## 3. WE REMAIN BEHIND SOME COUNTRIES IN MATHS, BUT AVERAGE FOR THE OECD

Eighteen countries have a better average maths score at least 10 points ahead of us, and we remain 20 points or more behind seven east Asian countries: Singapore, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Japan, China and South Korea. These are the top-performers internationally.

A number of European countries also outperform us in maths, including Estonia, Finland, Slovenia, Poland and Ireland.

## 4. THE MATHS SCORES OF OUR "LOW-ACHIEVING" PUPILS ARE NOT IMPROVING

In maths, our lowest-achieving 10 per cent of pupils got a score more than 20 points below their low-achieving peers in several other European countries, including Poland, the Netherlands and Germany.

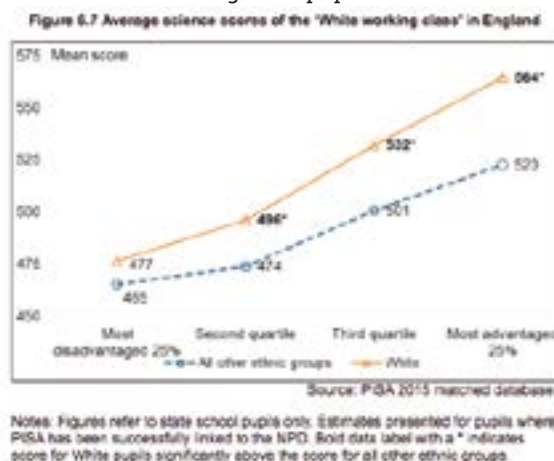
Low-performing pupils in Northern Ireland and Scotland also do "significantly better" than their peers in England, despite similar average maths scores overall.

## 5. WHITE WORKING-CLASS PUPILS ARE NOT DOING WORSE THAN ETHNIC MINORITY WORKING-CLASS PUPILS

White pupils in England score between 25 to 40 points more in PISA's science, maths and reading tests than their black and Asian peers.

This is at odds with GCSE results, where Asian pupils get similar if not higher grades than their white peers.

The government's report notes that while a "prominent issue in English education policy concerns the performance of the white working class", the results from PISA in science show working-class white pupils perform at similar levels to working-class pupils of other ethnicities.



## 6. OUR HEADTEACHERS USE DATA MORE THAN THEIR BEST COLLEAGUES ABROAD

PISA found that heads in England are much more likely to "regularly use pupils' performance results to develop their school's educational goals": 61 per cent versus just 18 per cent of heads on average across the top 10 countries.

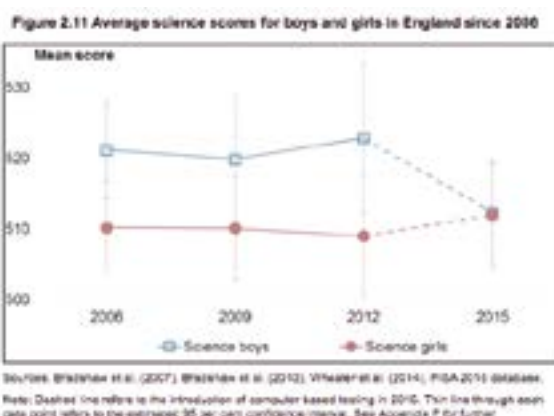
## 7. SCIENCE IS THE ONLY SUBJECT IN WHICH BOYS AND GIRLS ARE EQUAL

Boys and girls achieve almost exactly the same average score, 512, on the PISA science test, in contrast to science GCSEs, where a higher proportion of girls (72 per cent) achieve A\* to C grades than boys (67 per cent).

The same finding occurred in year 9 in the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), with boys and girls performing similarly, and is typical of most countries.

In contrast, girls consistently outperform boys for reading by a difference equivalent to nine additional months of schooling, a trend that has remained the same over time and is also similar to most other countries.

The gender gap in mathematics is less pronounced, with boys achieving an average 12 points higher than girls.



## 8. OFSTED JUDGMENTS CAN "PREDICT" HOW WELL PUPILS DO – BUT NOT AMONG LOWER GRADES

Pupils at outstanding schools get scores similar to pupils in some of the high-performing countries.

Their average maths, science and reading scores are also significantly higher than for young people who attend schools in the bottom two Ofsted categories,, requires improvement and inadequate.

That difference is equivalent to about two years of schooling, the government's national report said.

However, there was no significant difference in performance between pupils in inadequate and requires improvement schools.

## 9. LACK OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS A PROBLEM FOR HEADTEACHERS

Almost half of England's heads said a lack of "good quality physical infrastructure" was hindering learning, compared with just a third of OECD countries.

## 10. SECOND-GENERATION IMMIGRANT CHILDREN DO AS WELL AS PUPILS WITH PARENTS BORN IN ENGLAND

The achievement gap between pupils from immigrant backgrounds and native-born pupils "all but vanishes" once the second generation is born.

But the difference persists between native pupils and first-generation immigrants, particularly in science.

That gap is smaller in England than in some countries, including Sweden and Denmark, but some countries have no difference at all, such as Canada and New Zealand.

## 11. TEACHER SHORTAGES CONTINUE TO IMPEDE LEARNING

Recruitment, already highlighted by the TIMSS data last week, is repeated in PISA.

Of the high-performing countries, only two complain more than English heads of teacher shortages: Japan at 55 per cent and China at 64 per cent.

Our pupils are on average 15 percentage points more likely to be in schools where recruitment is a problem.

Nor is this a problem across all schools: heads who lead independent schools are much less likely to report teacher shortages as a factor hindering learning than in other schools.





Cover story, see page 2

EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

# What you see is not always what you get

If you're looking for good assembly material, it's worth showing pupils the greatest music video of the Nineties: Oasis's *Stand By Me*.

It shows a series of unconnected events over its five-minute riff. We see people stealing televisions; twin sisters pushing one another; a woman being mugged; a child being kidnapped.

Or, at least, that's what we think we are seeing.

For the first three minutes, these events are intersplined, randomly, in different orders, with shots of a motorcyclist.

What you don't see until the last minute is the entire story, told in the correct order, and at an angle where you learn that the motorcyclist is actually driving through each of these events.

Once you see the cyclist you realise the child isn't being kidnapped: she is being moved out of harm's way. The mugger isn't attacking the woman: he's saving her from being run over. The twin shoving her sister away is pushing her away from the bike. And the people stealing the televisions? They are removing debris from the cyclist's body after he's flown through a shop window, causing televisions to fall on top of him.

It's a triumphant metaphor of the way truth is relative to our vantage point. (All set to a searing guitar track and beautiful lyrics. Seriously. It's the best video.)

**What is the real story about nationality data?**

The video came back to mind this week when the BBC's political editor, Laura Kuenssberg, revealed she had seen letters showing the Department for Education's recent decision to collect information about children's nationality was not about targeting resources, as *Schools Week* had been told, but was the result of a compromise reached to try and to curb a plan by the Home Office to "deprioritise" the children of illegal immigrants and deny them school places (see page 5 for more).

For six months we have reported on the nationality data policy precisely because the way information had come to us made us believe something more was going on. A problem of journalism is that we are almost always working with the same information a viewer has in the *Stand By Me* video. We get different snippets, fed into us at random times, and somehow we have to make sense of it.

Our problem with the immigration data story was that we couldn't see the motorcyclist which, in this laboured metaphor, was the letter Kuenssberg eventually procured. Even though we suspected something else was under the nationality data collection, and we knew everything else would be seen in a

different light if it was reported, we didn't have the smoking gun.

So we reported what we had with all the seriousness that we could. When schools were demanding passports and sending out texts that would frighten away immigrant children, we made it front-page news. And since we have been told that DfE has created an agreement with the Home Office not to pass the information over, Freddie Whittaker, our reporter, has been relentless in asking to see it, to the point that he has now asked the Information Commissioner to intervene.

Of course, it is still possible for another twist to come. I still believe, in the optimistic recesses of my heart (yes, it still exists), that the DfE are the good guys in this. I believe they stood up to the Home Office and that there really is an agreement. I cannot wait to write that story. But first, we need to see it. Otherwise, we are still in the part of the video where all we have in front of us are people who look suspiciously like muggers and kidnappers, even if their motives are pure.

**Who should we believe on grammar schools?**

Having faced down the immigration issue, we then stumbled upon another issue of

conflicting information: this time about grammar schools.

A small enquiry about the cost of a report used by the prime minister to justify her plans to allow new grammar schools led to us finding out that the line she read out in parliament as coming from the report, isn't actually in the report. It is simply the opinion of a person quoted in a press release (see cover story).

This is mildly embarrassing for the government. Mistakes are annoying, but not enormously so. But it highlights a sloppiness around evidence in the grammar debate that's getting worse and worse.

As we reported online earlier this week, the DfE's own report into the PISA results states that selection makes no difference to achievement. If anything, it makes things worse. And yet, on the day the results came out, schools minister Nick Gibb was trumpeting how the data showed more selective schools were needed, even though it was the exact opposite of what the data said.

I guess some people cannot handle the truth even when shown the full video: motorcycle and all.



# ALDRIDGE EDUCATION



We are seeking outstanding senior leaders to join our growing trust for the following positions:

- **Executive Principal** - South East Cluster (Brighton/Newhaven)
- **Principal** – Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (Lancashire)
- **Principal** – Darwen Vale High School (Lancashire)

Aldridge Education is a charitable trust whose non-selective, entrepreneurial community schools and colleges help young people to reach their potential. We work in different regions across England where often the opportunities and prospects for young people are often most limited, and where the introduction of our entrepreneurial approach to education can have most benefit. To find out more about our academies, support and resources please visit [www.aldridgeeducation.org](http://www.aldridgeeducation.org).

We really want to hear from you if you are an experienced leader who is able to demonstrate passion, determination, creativity and outstanding team working skills. You will also be an excellent practitioner and looking for the next significant challenge in your career.

## Executive Principal Brighton

We will see the first three academies join our newly formed South East cluster in February 2017. The academies are based in the Brighton and Newhaven area – Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Portslade Aldridge Community Academy and UTC@harbourside. Each has its own substantive Principal.

We seek an Executive Principal to provide outstanding leadership of the SE cluster - building on the significant successes to date, securing benefits of working across academies, strategically growing the regional cluster and building strong relationships with key stakeholders in the area. You will actively promote Aldridge Education and be part of the development of not only the cluster but also the Trust more generally and be a key component of its senior leadership.

**Closing date: Monday 9th January 2017 (9am)**

**Interview date: Monday 23rd & Tuesday 24th January 2017**

**Shortlisted candidates must be available to attend on both days.**

**Salary** in the region of **£110-130K** negotiable depending on circumstances and experience.

## Principal posts Lancashire

The following two Principal opportunities are both based within our North West cluster and the successful applicants will be supported by the NW Executive Principal whose wider remit is to develop the cluster and secure improvements across the region.

### Principal Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA), Darwen

This exciting opportunity arises as a result of the founding Principal's promotion to Executive Principal of the North West cluster. This is a highly successful 11-19 school rated Good by Ofsted (2013) and with rapidly improving numbers (1340 students in 2016 from 735 in 2008) and a thriving sixth form. DACA is based in an iconic, state of the art building in Darwen.

**Closing date: Monday 9th January 2017 (9am)**

**Interview date: Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th January 2017**

**Shortlisted candidates must be available to attend on both days.**

**Salaries** in the region of **£70-90K** negotiable depending on circumstances and experience.

### Principal Darwen Vale High School, Darwen

This position arises due to the retirement of the previous Principal. This improving 11-16 academy currently has around 770 students and is based in a well-resourced and impressive building within Darwen which has impressive facilities. Vale converted to become an Aldridge sponsored academy in 2014.

## How to apply (all posts)

You can apply for more than one post in the same application. For job descriptions and application details please visit [www.aldridgeeducation.org/about-us/our-people/vacancies](http://www.aldridgeeducation.org/about-us/our-people/vacancies)

To apply please submit the documents below and clearly state which post(s) you are applying for in your covering letter:

- A completed application form
- A personal statement describing why you think you have the skills and experience for the advertised role (2 sides A4)
- A Curriculum Vitae

All posts are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

Please submit your application by the published deadline to [HR@aldridgeeducation.org](mailto:HR@aldridgeeducation.org).

## Further information:

Potential candidates can also speak informally to Chris Tweedale, Chief Executive of Aldridge Education, or Andrew Weymouth, our Education Director. Please contact [HR@aldridgeeducation.org](mailto:HR@aldridgeeducation.org) or call **0207 297 0340** to arrange a time.

# Apprenticeship Manager



**Salary:** £33,361-£45,872

**Location:** Euston, London

Academies Enterprise Trust is a national network of 66 primary, special and secondary academies. We firmly believe all young people deserve to become world class learners - to learn, enjoy, succeed and thrive in a world class educational environment, which has the best facilities, the best teaching and the most up to date resources available to them.

As a result of growth we are looking to appoint a committed, highly organized and dedicated colleague to become our new Apprenticeship Manager. We believe this is career making opportunity for the right person and you will be joining the Trust at an exciting time in our history.

We currently hold a large employer contract with the Skills Funding Agency to deliver apprenticeships across the Group. Our apprenticeship numbers are on target to hit 100 learners on programme by February 2017 and are set to increase further under the apprenticeship levy.

Reporting into the Head of Talent you will ensure the effective and efficient management of our Apprenticeship programme ensuring it meets delegated performance targets including Apprenticeship starts, retention, success rates, financials, and audit and quality assurance requirements.

Proven experience of working in the training and education sector and knowledge of vocational qualifications are all essential requirement of the role. Experience of managing a team of field based Trainers/Assessors and IQAs is also essential.

You will be required to visit our academies across England as the need arises.

To have an informal conversation with **Tanya Bentham**, Head of Talent please contact the recruitment team on **0845 453 0060**.

This position is required to start as soon as possible. Interviews will be held shortly after the closing date. **Closing date: Tuesday 13 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 and to make an application please visit: <http://bit.ly/2gPmylf>

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.

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://4ui.us/teacher-training-vacancies> for further details.

# Early Years Workforce Trainer/ Assessors



**Salary:** £23 per hour plus bonus payments and holiday pay

**Location:** Torquay

We are a national network of 66 primary, special and secondary academies. We are passionately committed to inspiring children and young people.

We firmly believe that all young people deserve to become world class learners - to learn, enjoy, succeed and thrive in a world class educational environment, which has the best facilities, the best teaching and the most up to date resources available to them.

We hold a large employer contract with the Skills Funding Agency and operate our apprenticeship programmes across the England within our academies.

We are looking to appoint Trainer/Assessor(s) to train/assess Level 2 and Level 3 apprentices for the Early Years Workforce. You will manage the delivery of individual Apprenticeship programmes including the planning and delivery of induction, learning and assessment, reviews and recording of progress ensuring timely achievement of qualifications. You will visit apprentices every four weeks in their workplace. The successful candidate will hold Level 3 qualification in relevant area of work and will hold CAVA, A1 or D32/D33 Award or be working towards this. Experience of using Smart Assessor or a similar e-portfolio system would be an advantage.

The positions are required as soon as possible on a casual basis.

**Closing date:** Wednesday 14 December 2016

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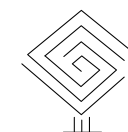
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|||



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## GCSE grade rule cuts early years' specialists

**Georgina Green, Hertfordshire**

Schools should be able to decide on a person-by-person basis who is capable of doing this job. Paperwork and statistics are only part of the story.

**Roger Titcombe, Cumbria**

This just shows the shocking state of early years' education. In much of Europe such teachers need a degree, not a GCSE in English and maths obtained from cramming for the exam with little deep learning.

In England, Labour and Conservative see nursery education more as "childcare" to "liberate" parents for employment, for which a BTEC in childcare is deemed sufficient. While Sure Start and the like help families economically, they have no effect on the later educational attainment of children.

Child development and the corresponding cognition are complex issues requiring graduate levels of study. Until this is recognised, as it is in more enlightened European countries, our young children will still miss out.

**Deborah Carr**

No, they should not need GCSE maths but I do think they need the English. Functional skills maths is enough if you are in early years.

## Isolated island school looks for academy trust

**@Andrew\_1910**

Well parachuting teachers in didn't work, so should we try windsurfing them over?

## The tick-box route to QTS: It takes four hours and no further training

**Lorena Arikamedoshika Woodfine**

This makes the rest of us who qualified through the usual routes look like complete dunces: 12 months of stress, essays that are seemingly pointless, and a never-ending parade of relationships failing (everyone that started my course was in a relationship. Only one person was at the end...)

Most of us had school experience as teaching assistants or unqualified teachers.

We spent 12 months without pay.

So the reality: we're chumps who worked free for a year when we could have spent £3,000, qualified the same day, and been earning a newly qualified teacher's salary the same day. This country, this government, this education system is a joke, because it has zero respect for the profession.

## Twenty per cent of pupils in Catholic schools are black

**Stuart, address supplied**

Twenty per cent of black pupils attend Catholic schools, I didn't realise there was a ban on black people being Catholic, or am I missing some religious agenda here?

## Examiners 'need more incentives'

**Adam Tettenborn, Dorset**

I examined for a number of years. We used to have overnight meetings, now replaced by tedious on-screen standardisations. While this will have saved the exam board money, it did not help me understand what exactly was required. It also wasted my time with errors, etc. The final straw came when they joined the responsibility fee with the per script fee. This meant I would have had to mark more for less money. Pay the examiners fairly and allow them to do a good job by training them and things will improve.

**John, address supplied**

The lack of examiners is a direct result of the increase in workload and pressure on teachers. When I started, the summer term felt like an opportunity to take part in planning and CPD opportunities, now it's stuffed full of assessments and evidencing.

## The crisis that no one is talking about

**LORRAINE PETERSEN, WORCESTERSHIRE**

I am the director of a teaching school alliance in Worcestershire based in a special school. We offer a School Direct primary/SEN route into teaching, working with the University of Birmingham. Now in its third year we have had 100 per cent success rate, with all our students getting jobs (most on first interview). They spend one term in a mainstream primary and two terms in a special school. Each year we have tried to increase numbers (there is a huge demand), but each year we have been knocked back by the allocation of student numbers – we have to be part of the primary allocation because there is no specific SEN allocation. We would love to be able to offer a pure SEN route accessible for both primary and secondary students, but this is not possible (secondary have to have a subject and SEN is not a subject!). We are seeing more and more vulnerable children with complex needs in mainstream and specialist provision, and yet we are still training our teachers to teach 20th century-children. We have to find a different way of educating the teachers of the future.

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## OPINIONS



## EMMA SHEPPARD

Lead practitioner in English and founder of the MaternityTeacher PaternityTeacher project

# Parental leave is a career opportunity

**A family-friendly culture shift in schools would help to stem the teacher retention crisis and improve wellbeing for all teachers, says Emma Sheppard**

In June this year, as I impatiently awaited the arrival of my son, I was forced to face the painful realisation that in choosing to become a mother, I had potentially sacrificed my ambitions to become a school leader. For many women like me, maternity leave is the first stumbling block on the slippery slope of career regression. At best, mothers teeter on the edge of burnout as they doggedly pursue leadership positions, constantly playing catch-up with their male counterparts; at worst, they leave the classroom for good, unable to find workable solutions suitable to the demands of teaching and parenting.

## We are cast adrift on the seas of maternity leave

Despite desperate drives to tackle the teacher retention crisis, anecdotal evidence I have heard whilst founding the MaternityTeacher PaternityTeacher project cites misguided school leadership as one of the most significant contributors to this negative culture. Ironically, in their attempts to retain valued members of staff, some school leaders alienate and disempower the mothers within their ranks by perpetuating social narratives that inadvertently continue to repress women.

Behaviour that purports (and no doubt often attempts) to be considerate towards women on maternity leave – such as disabling work email accounts, offering part-time hours and well-meaning comments about what it is to be a “good” mother, for example – result in teachers being cast adrift on the seas of maternity leave to drown in the joys of Jiggle and Jam. Their colleagues, waving from the shore, do so confident in the knowledge that this new parent is floating happily away from the stresses of marking, behaviour, bureaucracy and lesson planning, convinced that they are therefore more likely to return to the classroom, following the respite of parental leave.

But for many teachers, their self-esteem, identity, self-worth and intellectual wellbeing

is also abandoned on the sand and lost by the time they return to the dry land of the classroom. Whilst they are gone, policies and departments change; curricula and specifications are rendered unrecognisable – I even discovered new locks on the school gates!

Is it any surprise, therefore, that 27 per cent of teachers leaving the workforce are women between the ages of 30-39? The correlation between this figure, the detrimental impact of maternity leave and other prevalent issues such as the gender pay gap, gender inequality in leadership, the uptake of shared parental leave, and teacher wellbeing might seem obvious, but it is currently a research void. Everyone, it seems, is averting their eyes from the “problem” of maternity leave.

Rather than perpetuate this systemic failing by accepting it as unavoidable, however, how about this: parental leave is not a professional problem. Parental leave – for mothers and fathers – is a career opportunity.

Parental leave can offer the *choice* to use this time away from the classroom to reflect and complete self-directed CPD in a manner that fits around the new demands of family life. Teachers are at liberty to read, to complete online courses, to explore museums and sites, to be coached, and to attend conferences and networking. The empowerment of this choice will help teachers to gain, rather than lose confidence whilst on parental leave.

When teachers are out of the classroom, EdTech, in the form of live streaming, social media and video coaching, can provide invaluable access to professional learning. But CPD on parental leave doesn't have to be limited to naptime networking on Twitter: time and time again, I have been moved by the hospitality of organisers and colleagues who have been delighted for me to bring my son to events. All I had to do was ask!

Now we need the same open-mindedness when parents go back to school. We need flexible working hours, on-site crèches, paternity leave packages that rival those offered to women, co-leadership positions. These are just a few of the many creative solutions that could mobilise and retain a currently overstretched section of the teaching workforce. Not only would this family-friendly culture shift help to stem the teacher retention crisis, parents' collective voice could improve wellbeing for all teachers.

@maternityCPD [www.mtpt.org.uk](http://www.mtpt.org.uk)



## BILL WATKIN

Chief executive, Sixth Form Colleges Association

# We must protect the place of AGQs

**Bill Watkin makes a plea to leave applied general qualifications where they are: sitting alongside A-levels in an academic sixth-form curriculum**

Sixth forms tend to offer a primarily academic curriculum to prepare students for higher education. Only a few engage in technical and professional education; most do either all A-levels or a blend of A-levels and applied general qualifications (AGQs) that encompass BTECs and other level three diplomas.

The government's current post-16 skills plan, which grew out of the recent Sainsbury review of technical education, sets out an intention to review the place of AGQs. While it makes little mention of them overall – largely because it recognises they are part of an academic curriculum and not designed to be part of the technical education option – it also says: “We plan to review the contribution of these qualifications to preparing students for success in higher education; what part they can play in a reformed system; and the impact any reform would have on the government's ambitions on widening participation.”

This is a cause for real concern.

AGQs are critically important options for sixth-form students:

1. They are valuable for those students who are capable of accessing a sixth-form education and progressing to higher education, but who do not see themselves doing A-levels. If a sixth form were to offer only A-levels, a number of students would disengage from sixth-form aspirations.
2. AGQs are invaluable for students of all abilities who learn different ways of working that will stand them in good stead in the workplace and in higher education: teamwork, problem-solving, independent and extended study, reflection and the application of learning represent an important skillset for all, including the most able.
3. They not only offer an alternative way of getting into university, but they also provide a more secure skillset that acts as a foundation for surviving and thriving there. AGQs have been reformed and are aligned to the new more rigorous standards in A-levels. Universities, including those in the Russell Group, welcome applicants with AGQs.
4. If students have a clear idea of their preferred career path, applied general qualifications are often a better choice

than A-levels. Those studying applied qualifications in art and design, for example, will have a full portfolio of work, giving them a better chance of receiving a university offer.

Sixth forms often offer a blended curriculum of A-level and AGQs. As things currently stand, there is nothing to stop learners continuing to take a mix of sixth-form qualifications. But if after a government review, we fail to protect the place of AGQs in an academic curriculum, we will be losing a key lever for social mobility (disadvantaged learners tend to make excellent use of AGQs); we will be losing a rich and diverse curriculum that stimulates learners of all abilities; and we will be losing the skills and experiences that are so useful in university and the workplace.

Sixth-form colleges represent only 11 per cent of 16 to 19-year-old learners. But one in five A-levels is taken at a sixth-form college; they are specialist experts in sixth-form teaching and they do it very successfully. But they do it by offering a broad curriculum, with a variety of courses and qualifications at an exceptionally high standard. Schools, too, make good use of an A-level-AGQ blend and it is vital that this continue.

Students, parents and policymakers need to properly understand that an academic and aspirational curriculum should not be limited to A-levels. As the former Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel said recently, there is rigour in vocational qualifications and rigour in academic qualifications. It may take different forms, but A-levels and AGQs are valuable and valid qualifications in an academic journey.

## It is vital a blend of A-levels and AGQs continue

The hope is, of course, that the pre-16 focus on EBacc subjects will not deter schools from offering a range of vocational qualifications to students of all abilities at key stage 4, to prepare them for advanced applied qualifications. In this respect, a government review of AGQs could make an important case for vocational pathways as rigorous, demanding, valued and relevant components of an aspirational and high-level curriculum.

**As the Casey review warns of the risks of culturally isolated schools, Mashuda Shaikh shares her experience of helping to foster integration, tolerance and citizenship in her local community**

My work involves engaging the community to become more cohesive and resilient in times of uncertainty and change by using heritage and history in fun ways.

Creating social cohesion requires a balance of creativity, openness to change and risk; I try to create projects that are relevant to people's experience, but are also thought-provoking and challenging.

Our projects encourage young people to be proactive, to take steps to create the change they want to see, which benefits the whole community. For example, if they see litter in a local park as a key issue, they might organise a litter-pick, a campaign to prevent people from dropping litter, or persuade the council to put in more bins.

I recently participated in a debate hosted by LKMco in which I outlined how schools can help to make society more cohesive, without the need for dramatic curriculum change or vast expense. The first step is to create "safe spaces" in which people can talk openly and discuss what is important to them, without being judged or reprimanded. This is a crucial foundation for tackling serious issues, since everyone has their own view and it is better to air these in safe spaces rather than in other settings or bottling them up.

Practical learning opportunities are also



# MASHUDA SHAIKH

Community heritage officer,  
Kirklees council, West Yorkshire

## Creating social cohesion can be a risky business

useful as they allow pupils to take ownership of projects and test out what works best in their particular context. In one case, I helped to run a project called My Country My Vote, which introduced students to political participation through running a campaign on a local issue. The project helped students to learn about voting, democracy and rule of law and, as a result, they will be well equipped to face the issues they encounter in their communities.

Of course, as the Casey review highlights, building cohesion can be particularly tricky when communities are segregated. We have tackled this in Kirklees by helping "monocultural" schools to link up with other schools or community groups.

In one case we ran a project called Bloom and Grow Together, in which diverse schools and groups worked together to create gardens. As a result, when MP Jo Cox was murdered, children decided to plant a tree with a plaque

reading: "In memory of Jo, she would have loved this". Children and young people also need to be challenged by different perspectives and it is important not to shy away from potentially uncomfortable encounters, once a safe space has been established.

One highlight of my team's work was a visit to a predominantly Muslim girls' school from a conscientious objector and activist from Israel. Issues around Palestine and Israel are often very emotive, and adding nonviolence into the mix adds yet more complexity.

However, taking risks under the right, well-moderated conditions can often maximise impact. In this case, the speaker, Sahar Vardi, explained how in Israel and Palestine, education and the military are deeply entwined – with statehood, security and patriotism taught from a young age. The girls were in awe of Sahar's commitment to nonviolence as she explained how she had

broken the mould in becoming a non-violent conscientious objector. According to the girls, Sahar's testimony opened their minds, challenged their perceptions and dispelled myths about young Jewish people in Israel.

## The first step is to create 'safe spaces'

We are lucky that our schools and local authority are passionate and proactive about social cohesion. However, I believe that if more local authorities followed their example communities could come together around a common vision, making Britain stronger and more resilient.

Some encounters may be thorny, but they push people outside their comfort zone, allowing them to be curious.

Ultimately, discussions like these can change lives. I am convinced that more investment in citizenship education is needed to help schools to take an innovative approach.

Teachers also must have dedicated time for programmes. Citizenship education shapes pupils into the citizens we need. If we get this wrong, then we cannot be surprised if this is reflected in our communities.

**Can Schools Make Society More Cohesive?**  
is published by LKMco and available at  
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# PROFILE

CATH MURRAY  
@CATHMURRAY\_NEWS

## Sarah Wild, headteacher of Limpsfield Grange secondary school, Surrey

Sarah Wild does not want to be known as the crazy lady with the goats.

So let me put the record straight: Sarah Wild, headteacher of Limpsfield Grange secondary school in Surrey for autistic girls (of ITV documentary and book-writing fame), does not particularly like goats. In fact, the only reason the school has animals (sheep, goats, alpacas, dogs...) is because of a rash promise made to her site manager – even before she got the job – which went something like this:

Mr Bunn (collaring Wild in the corridor): “Do you like alpacas?”

Wild: “Yes, they’re great.”

Bunn: “If you get the job, will you get some alpacas?”

Wild: “Of course!”

Thus, as she says with a rueful smile, “learning the first rule in headship: never agree to anything in a corridor when you don’t know what you’re walking into!”

In retrospect, however, it was probably a good move. As head of a local authority-maintained partial boarding school that accepts girls from all over England (there are about 100 on roll from years 7 to 11), Wild not only has to be creative with how to stretch funds – they sell bacon butties to Saturday swimmers to pay for animal feed – but also with her approach to the staff who put so much into running the place, “I’ve got a team of really amazing people here, and I think you just really love it, and so you give your life to it, and the Grange gobbles your life up.”

It’s clear that she’s a firm convert to running the school’s grounds as a kind of “smallholding”. For girls who arrive at school “you know, ‘up’ and really anxious, then feeding the animals and helping Mr Bunn with the animals in the morning is a really good way to start their day. We’re like *The Good Life*, but a bit more bonkers.”

It also helps to broach self-care conversations: “If you’ve got a girl who is self-harming and not eating, but she loves animals, you can start a conversation about self-care by talking about, ‘Would you not feed a goat? Would you hurt a goat on purpose?’ It’s about them making a link between the care that they feel for something else and the care that they can feel for themselves.”

Wild, 44, who worked her way to headship through a long teaching and school leadership career – she trained initially as an English teacher and teacher of the deaf (a job she describes as her “first love”) – clearly cares deeply for her pupils. In fact, it was her story of how the mental breakdown of one of her former pupils led to a redesign of the school’s progress measures that first prompted my visit.

The young woman had been one of the Grange’s top students, but after three years of college “she just stopped functioning”. It shocked Wild into action: “I remember thinking, ‘How could we have possibly got this right if it’s gone so wrong for you? We’ve clearly valued the wrong things here.’”

How can you hold yourself responsible? I ask. “She’s somebody’s *daughter*,” Wild says, still deeply affected. “She’s really high functioning, and she absolutely should have a place in society.”

Since then, Wild has made it her mission to redesign the curriculum and re-evaluate how the school defines success.

It seems she’s in something of a bind because academically, the girls at her school are “mainstream equivalent” so Ofsted will look at Progress 8. But “we’re not delivering Progress 8”, she confesses. Why not? “I could bang out eight GCSEs for these girls, but it wouldn’t give them enough time to do the stuff we need to do. I’m not jumping through hoops just because somebody says

they’ve got to do eight GCSEs. I know what they need.”

This is a theme I’ve heard in other special schools: the need to set their own criteria for success.

Wild, for her part, is working to develop a new kind of progress measure that will run alongside the academic measures, to track wellbeing. “When I first became a head I probably thought achievement was the most important thing; these are bright kids and I want them to get the best GCSE results they can, because that will buy them opportunities later on. I still believe that, but I think what the past 12 months has taught me is, if they are not well, they can’t use any of it.”

The school is now setting targets in the four “waci” areas (pronounced wacky – which, I can’t help thinking, reflects Wild’s sense of humour...): wellbeing, achievement, communication and independence, all of which she considers to be of equal importance.

Does any precedent exist? “No, not really.” So the school is planning to invent its own scale, based on “founding principles” from work done by organisations such as the Autism Education Trust.

While pioneering, the school isn’t out on a limb: it’s collaborating with the University of New South Wales and the University of Central London’s Centre for Research in Autism on quality-of-life measures for autistic people, as well as with Swalcliffe Park school in Oxfordshire.

“It’s about making sure I can evidence their academic progress from start points – which is usually very good – and then I can measure their progress in other areas from their start points. So how well were they when they came? Did they even know they had feelings?”

The drive to create new, tailored progress measures is “really ambitious,” Wild admits, “but it needs to be done.”

A recurring theme over the afternoon is the lack of resources for autistic girls: “There’s loads of autism-specific training, but it’s all boy-referenced and boy-normed”. To her knowledge, Limpsfield is the only school in the country with this specific focus; and it’s one that Wild fought to be recognised for.

On arriving at Limpsfield Grange in 2012 – then



SARA

classified as a school for girls with “emotional and learning difficulties” – after two years as a deputy head at a co-ed autism school in Lewisham, south London, she “started talking to people about the fact that [Limpsfield] had a large number of girls on the spectrum, and people said, ‘Well, girls don’t have autism, do they, so you must be wrong.’ I said: ‘Yeah, they do.’ Hence the crusade was born.”

The crusade involved not only obtaining a reclassification of the school’s status from the local authority, but also seeking out (or developing) resources for girls with autism and publicising their condition. It has led to an ITV documentary, *Girls with Autism*, and more recently the publication of two books: *M is for Autism*, followed by *M in the Middle*.

The book idea came from the girls themselves, Wild says. “They felt really strongly that when we went to events, there was a lot of discourse and it was boy-referenced. They really wanted to write a novel.”

Wild knew an author from her days in Lewisham, Vicky Martin, whom she invited to the school. Martin ran workshops with the girls, in which she would brainstorm scenarios, such as: “M’s going to the cinema, she’s going

# “I KNOW WHAT THESE GIRLS NEED”

# H WILD

on a date, how's that going to go?" The girls would give her lines, and tell her how M would behave – they also fed back on various drafts – refining the plot and dialogue together. They initially self-published with help from the National Autistic Society, but soon found a publisher.

Their second book is more "sophisticated" says Wild, to which I can testify; I tell her that my 11-year-old daughter is a big fan. "That's brilliant! We wanted to normalise this, you know, she's not a genius, she's just a teenage girl trying to get through life in a comprehensive. Every day. And that's really hard." The plan is to continue the crusade to normalise girls with autism: "we have a series of books in our heads."

As Wild poses for a photoshoot, Audrey Hepburn-style, outside the school's beautiful Victorian building, we joke that the only thing missing is the animals. This prompts our photographer – who by some bizarre coincidence is a lifelong goat devotee and even sponsors disabled goats at his local farm – to offer to photoshop some in.

Wild shrieks in protest; I reassure her: we're a serious paper – we'd never do anything like that...



Sarah Wild in her office at Limpsfield Grange



The school menagerie



Books written by the students of Limpsfield Grange, with Vicky Martin

## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

**If you hadn't gone into education, what career would you have liked to do?**  
Become an Egyptologist.

**What's your favourite non-work activity?**  
Listening to music or reading.

**Who would be your top three fantasy dinner-party guests?**  
My paternal grandmother at the age of 50, Agatha Christie and Elizabeth I.

**If you could read only one book for a year, what would you choose?**  
*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* by Hunter S. Thompson. I love the chaos and carnage.

**What's your favourite animal?**  
Seahorses. They do a little good morning dance to their partner every morning, which is so lovely. Although after meeting Ellis [the *Schools Week* photographer] I am tempted to say goats.



# REVIEWS

## TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit [www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews)



Our blog reviewer of the week is Emma Mattinson-Hardy, former primary school teacher and union organiser @emmaannhardy

### Grim up north?

@ReclaimSchools

In case you missed it, the chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw last week chose to hit to headlines with a damning description of life in northern schools. This blog presents a balanced analysis of whether it truly is “grim up north,” a much needed antidote to the Wilshaw click-bait soundbite.

“He was keen to talk about northern towns where schools are ‘less than good’ – bleak hopeless places such as Knowsley, Blackpool and Oldham. But the Ofsted annual report shows little difference between northern regions and the national average. According to Ofsted, 75 per cent of pupils in the north west, and similarly in Yorkshire and the north east, are attending “good or outstanding” schools. The national average is 81 per cent... GCSE attainment is not vastly different in northern regions. This year 56 per cent of students in the north west got five or more A\*-Cs with English and maths – against a national figure of 5 per cent. However, EBacc is mitigating against poorer students – only 10 per cent on free school meals pass.”

### The words people say

@sheep2763

In this season of goodwill, forgiveness, unrestrained consumerism and fights with Christmas lights, perhaps we all need to stop and think before we speak. In this blog Jill Turner recounts a situation in which a lie was told and it offers a sobering reminder of the need to protect yourself at work.

“There are those statements and comments that we’ve planned, prepared, rehearsed and the words and expression are such that their meaning and impact are exactly what we want. Then there are those conversations that develop and people come back to us and say, ‘You know you said... I’ve been thinking about

it and....’ Discussion ensues: no problem. Yet again there are throwaway comments, comments you didn’t really mean anything by but hit a nerve or have an unintended consequence.

“This week a child made a comment, he was trying to get himself out of trouble but the consequences are beyond anything he could imagine.”

### Intrinsic motivation in your students – have they got it?

@MissDCox

This blog stood out in trying to understand the complex reasons behind attainment that move beyond your postcode, income, individual teacher or gender. Why do some children have intrinsic motivation and can it be taught? Should we even try to encourage children to do everything well? Or should we follow the advice that head John Tomsett gives to teachers: “sometimes just good enough is good enough.”

Dawn Cox describes intrinsic motivation as being, “about the learning process that a student goes through, it isn’t about being motivated to succeed to do well because of a possible reward. It is about enjoyment of learning and what it has to offer ... a ‘failing’ student can have high intrinsic motivation.”

She describes various ways that teachers can encourage a child’s intrinsic motivation which, if followed, could have a huge impact on pedagogy. Research she points to suggests that students who were autonomous rather than controlled showed greater intrinsic motivation. Arguably then, it would be difficult for children to develop intrinsic motivation in a classroom that was predominately “chalk and talk” with an obedience-focused behavioural policy.

### The Road to Damascus: why we need more level heads

@josepicardoSHS

It seems fitting to finish a blog review column in December with a plea for understanding and tolerance.

“Recent years have seen the development of a new traditionalism in education that espouses the return to the more effective practices that were prevalent before a more progressive philosophy of education became widespread...resulting in huge damage wreaked on the life chances of poor children in particular...There is clearly a tension between the different approaches that may lead to a great education for children, and the ensuing debate can be very healthy, but I think it would be healthier if it were more moderate and balanced. At the minute, it seems as if the tenor of the debate and the policy agenda are being set by those who believe the most and shout the loudest, and I’m not sure that is good for anyone.”

# BOOK REVIEW

## Powerhouse: Insider Accounts into the World’s Top High-performance Organizations

Authors Brian MacNeice and James Bowen

Publisher Kogan Page

ISBN-10 0749478314

ISBN-13 978-0749478315

Reviewer Ndidi Okezie, executive director, Teach First



Any leader worth their salt spends most of their time seeking to gain insights into the successes and failures of those that have come before them. Books, speeches, interviews and research data gathered on leadership that achieve sustained results continue to be consumed on a mass scale. At this moment, not much can truly be regarded as new or revolutionary. It’s pretty much the same information packaged into different variations.

*Powerhouse* is the latest offering in this space and, as expected, there is nothing revolutionary in the concepts that sit beneath the authors’ stance on what high-performance leadership looks like. However, although the topic is unquestionably saturated, what is of note are the choices of organisations and journeys they choose to write about. *Powerhouse* captures the stories of organisations from across five continents and a range of very different industries, all in a refreshing, relatable and somewhat addictive style.

Once I started, I didn’t want to put the book down and, although they acknowledged that “there is no silver bullet” to achieving sustained high performance, they manage to tell the stories in a style that both rejuvenates and reminds you that you need to be intentional about the pursuit of excellence within your organisation. From the incredible achievements of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, to the beacon that is Southwest Airlines or the impressive New Zealand All Blacks; all the organisations studied shared a similar culture, where they clearly articulated what high performance meant and then supported their people to pursue it daily.

*Powerhouse* gives readers the option of dipping in and out of chapters, using each one as standalone research to support what might be a personal exploration into a specific sector. Those seeking a more

holistic review on the theme of high performance, however, should read it cover to cover.

Essentially the authors’ insights are grouped into “The What” of enduring high performance. Expressed in the form of 12 common attributes (no surprise that a list of numbers appears), these include such things as ambition, purpose, decisions, resilience, team work and improvements. And accompanying this particular list of “Whats”, is “The How”. MacNeice and Bowen capture this within their (now trademarked) Kotinos Powerhouse Performance Model. This list of “4Ps” are areas of focus that all the companies they researched invariably used on their paths to achieving sustained high performance.

Once again, although not ground-breaking in and of itself, each organisation’s focus on these key areas really stands out. Perhaps the most useful part of *Powerhouse* is that within each case study you

are walked through how the model and the 12 attributes applies to that company, and the practical things they did to deliver success. I found myself making notes simply on the types of conversations held and reflecting on the scenarios that were comparable in my own field.

Often the most crucial thing leaders seek are such straightforward examples of how strategies are executed. The insight is no longer in the formula itself (because clearly, many different formulas can work). No, the key is in how to make the formula both work and most crucially, stick.

*Powerhouse* provides a rich menu of practical examples and insights to achieve high performance, all of which seem well within your gift to implement. You finish the book not weighed down with models and theory, but rather with the reminder that regardless of the field you are in, practical steps exist that, if focused on, can fundamentally change the outputs of your organisation’s performance.

Quoting Muhammed Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, MacNeice and Bowen write: “one cannot but wonder how an environment can make people despair and sit idle and then by changing the conditions, one can transform the same people into matchless performers”. This is a motivating thought and the book has certainly left me wanting to get right back to doing just that.



Next week  
Books of the year, 2016

The content of our textbooks is fine – to a point. The books do what they are sold to do: teach children what they need to pass the exam for which they've been written.

But these days a textbook is not, in a traditional sense, a textbook. It's an exam primer. Current textbooks are crafted to "fit" exam specifications. They provide exactly what's needed for students to pass the exam. Often no more, no less.

There was even a time when textbooks were so entwined with exams that the examiners wrote them. Failure to buy the correct textbook could mean disaster for a school. The situation isn't so insidious today, but I still think we've got the relationship wrong.

In my research on the history of science education I've looked at syllabuses, textbooks, contemporary accounts of teaching and how schools organised the curriculum in the sciences. Reflecting on this, I realised textbooks bear little direct comparison to the textbooks of old; the sort Nick Gibb would recall from his school days.

My personal textbook library ranges from the 1960s to now. It shows a huge difference in content, format and, crucially, purpose.

Aside from modern textbooks including only a fraction of text found in the average one from the 1960 – even setting aside the difference in quality and clarity of drawings, photographs and use of colour – one thing really struck me. Mention

## THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER

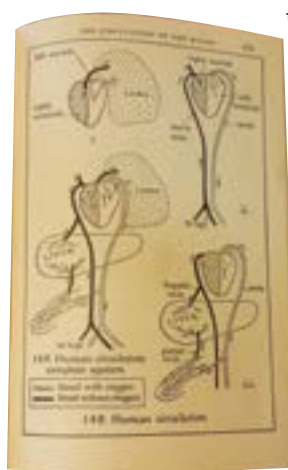


### OUR TEXTBOOKS ARE ALL WRONG

JAMES D WILLIAMS

of exams was rare in texts of yesteryear. Some contained "past questions", but invariably the text concentrated on the subject matter. It was firmly focused on teaching knowledge and understanding of concepts, rather than the test.

Sitting in a year 10 chemistry lesson last week, I was struck that a key objective was "how to answer a six-mark question". The key aspects of learning focused on how to answer the question rather than understanding



The circulation of the blood illustration 1957

the concept. Of course, understanding helps any year 10 to gain full marks, but so does knowing the "command words" of the questions and ensuring key terminology is included in the answer.

If what we want is children to learn, understand and be able to articulate what they know about the subject, then the exam should not be dictating what's in the textbooks. If anything, the textbooks should be the

source of questions for the exam. The relationship between the two needs to be re-established, with the textbook and the subject in the dominant role.

I suspect – though this is not written with any disrespect to my fellow writers – that textbook authors are very much constrained with what they are allowed to write.

I know when I wrote key stage 3 textbooks many years ago there was severe pressure to follow the curriculum to ensure publishing "success". Adding non-curriculum content to the textbook, or writing about things not strictly part of the curriculum was seen as risky.

I also recall that in one set of key stage 3 science assessments, written after the publication of my book, there was an explanation of the genetics of the plains zebra and its extinct relative the quagga (which had been used as an example in the textbook but hadn't previously featured – to my knowledge – in any exam), which then ended up in a SATs test. In this case the textbook example was later used in a test, rather than the other way around.

Our education system is too exam-driven at the cost of subject knowledge and understanding. The textbook, which is the very tool that should redress this imbalance, is failing to do so.

**James Williams is a lecturer in science education at the University of Sussex school of education and social work.**



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

The release of Ofsted's annual report was Sir Michael Wilshaw's last chance to shine. So surely he was nice about everyone, wasn't he?

Alas, unwilling to go quietly, Wilshaw took a characteristic pop at further education colleges, the north, secondary schools, the government, academy trusts, grammar schools and headteachers.

Responding to concerns among heads that their roles are "untenable" because of the "sheer pace of change", Wilshaw said they were "powerful people who are paid well" and who should "stop moaning".

Most secondary heads earned more than £100,000 a year, "far more than the parents of the children that they teach", and



received "gold-plated pensions."

"They are important people who are paid well. So stop moaning. They've got to get used to change. Change is a constant in the education world. Get used to it."

Oh, how we will miss him.

## FRIDAY:

The National Teaching Service is dead, but what of its small number of recruits?

*Schools Week* figures show just 24 people accepted jobs in the project, with the DfE suggesting they will continue to be matched with schools in the north west, as per plans for the pilot.

But the government is yet to reveal how this will work. Could a phantom NTS survive?

## SATURDAY:

It's always encouraging to know the man in charge of the Education Funding Agency is paying close attention to the money. Unfortunately, we hear Peter Lauener (left) today had an awkward moment at

Euroskills, the competition for vocational learners, when he realised he had taken Danish kroner to pay for his meals. This wouldn't be so bad but the event was in Sweden. *Schools Week* managing director Shane Mann cheered him up with a revelation that he had Swiss francs, and reporter Billy Camden had euros. (They all needed Swedish krona). Maybe geography should be compulsory at GCSE after all!

## MONDAY:

Sneeze. We had a cold. Didn't you?

## TUESDAY:

This year's civil service people survey shows that 58 per cent of DfE staff responded positively to a question about whether it was a "great place to work", up six points on last year.

Sixty-two per cent also said they were happy working there on a particular day, up three points on last year. Though perhaps this is because they weren't asked on

the day the grammar schools policy was revealed.

## WEDNESDAY:

With children's commissioner Anne Longfield about to embark on a large-scale research project on educational inequality in the north of England, contractors might be interested in her office's record on paying invoices on time.

New figures reveal that in the second quarter of 2016-17, just 80 per cent of invoices were paid within 30 days – meaning one in five people were out of pocket for more than a month.

By contrast, the figures show the DfE and Education Funding Agency have exemplary records, paying 100 per cent of all invoices within 30 days in quarters one and two of this year.

Next, if they could just find some more money to be paid out promptly, everyone would be happy.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

# SSAT DAY ONE

Over two days in Birmingham delegates at the keynote speakers and workshops, *Schools Week*

## ‘Think about cutting sixth-form contact time’

Auditors will look “increasingly closely” at dwindling levels of cash reserves in academies, says Simon Oxenham. He warned delegates not to look at the new national funding formula as a “miracle cure” for financial worries

Capacity to build up capital will be a priority for assessors as new formula funding changes come into force, said Oxenham, the national lead on school finance and efficiency at the National Association of School Business Management (NASBM).

“Academy auditors are going to be looking closely at the level of reserves.

“They will look at the competency of the chief financial officer on this. They want to see a balance sheet, and a three to five-year forecast.”

He said that he expected the consultation on the national funding formula to begin within two weeks, with allocations to be announced in February next year.

Co-speaker Stephen Morales, chief executive of NASBM, added there was a brand of “head-in-the-sand-academy” that was not making adequate preparations ahead of funding changes and was too optimistic.

“If you’re expecting a massive change in your funding, I would think again. Because it will be a very sensitive process, politically and in the turbulence it creates, I wouldn’t be

overly optimistic.

“Make sure your plans are robust enough to get you through what are going to be quite clearly difficult times.”

Oxenham, who is also director of resources at Southend high school for boys in Essex, suggested leaving no area of finance unchallenged in the effort to build up a reserve – including assessing if too many contact hours were being delivered in sixth form.

“You could reduce contact time in years 12 and 13. Look at the hours you’re funded for and the hours you’re delivering.

“In my experience, a lot of schools are over-delivering...so you’re actually subsidising your sixth form with your lower school funding.”

The warning from both speakers comes as more than 20 financial notices to improve have been issued to academy chains this year – a significant rise on the seven issued last year.

In one of the most recent cases, the Ridings federation was told by the government’s academies and maintained schools group to “achieve a balanced budget”.

A further letter to staff leaked to a local newspaper also appeared to show there was a £1 million deficit in the federation’s balance sheets, *Schools Week* reported last week.

Elsewhere at the conference, Sue Williamson, the SSAT’s chief executive, told delegates that leading a multi-academy trust was “not the same” as being a head of one school, with teachers needing to consider whether they were “chief executive material”.

“Knowing the practical stuff backwards sounds pedestrian, but we have seen too many heads and leaders fall from



Simon Oxenham

grace.”

Ofsted does not inspect finance within schools and trusts – rather, the school appoints a separate auditor for its accounts whose overview is then published and assessed by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) once a year.

The EFA may also check on school and trust finances separately.

## Don’t put your all your faith in superheads, others count too

English schools are “way ahead of most of the world” in terms of collaborating to improve opportunities for pupils, says Andy Hargreaves

Education has moved from a focus on achievement and effort towards a “new age” anxious about identity and well-being, said Hargreaves, of Boston College in Massachusetts, but the English education system was setting an example by encouraging collaboration.

However, he warned against “identity politics” that placed “all our leadership hopes in one person who can save us”.

His words echoed concerns about the “shining knight” model of “superheads” parachuted into failing schools to achieve rapid turnaround.

“We cannot, should not, try to invest all our leadership hopes in one person, who could save us, or move us forward. We cannot, should not, invest our hopes in the identity politics of a particular leader,” Hargreaves said.

He argued that policymakers often based “their educational policies on their particular biographies, and their own experiences of being at school. I passed the 11-plus, I went to grammar school. Should this mean I foist grammar schools on everybody else?”

The rise of politicians and leaders making a “spectacle” of themselves based on their personal backgrounds in a bid to gain followers was part of a new age in education that focused on how to define oneself, said Hargreaves.

English schools split “between two periods” – one

from 2000 to 2015 defined by “achievement and effort” and the other beginning now defined by “identity, engagement and well-being” – he claimed, before warning teachers not to lose sight of social mobility.

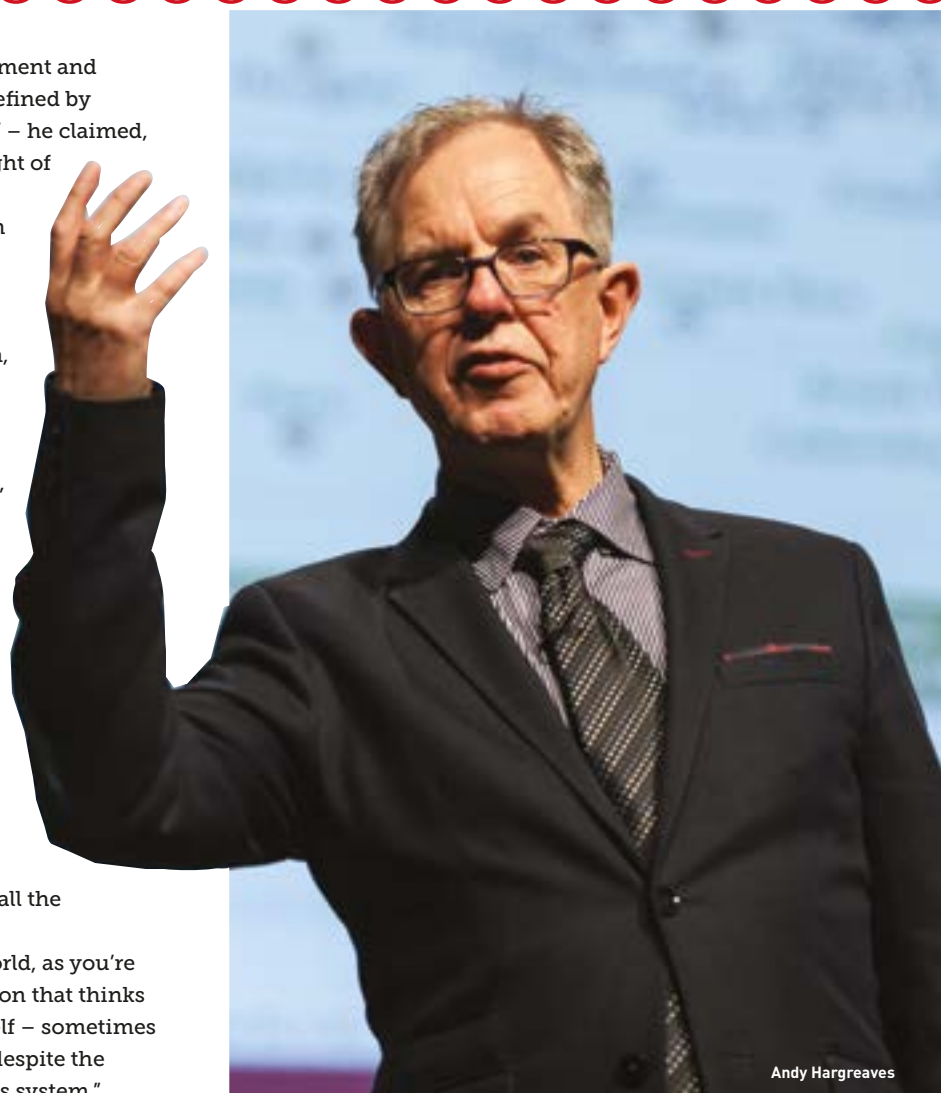
Questions about identity were given further weight by the arrival of often traumatised refugee children who now had to sit a standardised test in schools, as well as the rise of self-harm, cyberbullying, and anxiety in girls.

But the English education system continued to lead the way by specifically encouraging collaboration, rather than just competition, to build communities.

Citing projects in Hackney, east London, and across Greater Manchester, Hargreaves praised the idea of schools in clusters, such as academies, to help struggling schools improve.

“Compared with most other countries in the world you are way ahead on leading from the middle; you take collective responsibility, not just for kids in my schools, but kids in all the community.

“I talk about you to the rest of the world, as you’re a paradigm case of positive collaboration that thinks about other people and not just yourself – sometimes with the government and sometimes despite the government. It’s a great strength of this system.”



Andy Hargreaves

SSAT annual conference learned lessons from  
k's Jess Staufenberg joined them to find out more

# LAURA MCINERNEY



Schools Week's editor Laura McInerney (left). Delegates at the Birmingham conference

If you want to be an education secretary you should be privately educated, have no children, and have a July or August birthday, writes Laura McInerney, whose presentation at SSAT gave an insight into what school leaders can learn from politicians

Politicians are forever visiting schools to “learn” from them, but how often do school leaders look at the work of education secretaries to learn from them? After all, no one has greater power over the £30 billion spent each year on schooling in the UK.

Back in the summer of 2013 I set out to read the biographies, autobiographies, *Who’s Who* entries and all other materials I could get my hands on of former education secretaries.

Creating a database as I went (including parents’ education and left or right handedness) a number of things began to emerge in terms of similarity.

First, education secretaries have almost always attended a form of selective school. Even David Blunkett, whose state school didn’t select by intellectual ability, nevertheless went to a school for the blind. It was not a grammar school, but it wasn’t comprehensive either.

Second, the most common number of children for an education secretary is, surprisingly, none. In some ways, it makes life easier. If Justine Greening was attempting to bring back grammar schools while putting children through school, the scrutiny on the places they attended would be a distraction.

Third, a large number of former education secretaries were born in July or August. Summer-born children have far lower exam results, on average, than those born in autumn, and so it has long been expected that politicians will be born earlier in the academic

year. (On the presumption that one must be vaguely smart to be a politician).

Looking at the secretaries born in August, such as Michael Gove, gives away a clue, however. Gove was educated in Scotland, where the academic year starts earlier. Born in the last week of August, he would nevertheless have been one of the eldest in his year.

Given most school leaders cannot easily change these characteristics – is there anything more tangible they can learn?

Yes, there is.

A few things seem to separate the best education secretaries from others. First, they stay in post for at least three-and-a-half years. This seems to be the golden timeline for being remembered well. Second, they really want the job when they took it. Those who were a bit vague about why they took it tend to have wimped out early. Estelle Morris has said that she wished she’d known her purpose going into the job – even if it had just been written on one piece of paper – as that would have made her more effective.

Finally, it is very important to want the power the job brings, more so than actually achieving outcomes.

Where politicians are focused on actually getting what they want, the job is too stressful. Where they focus on trying to get what they want – as in, the process is what matters to them less so the outcome – they seem to be more successful. Obliquity wins out, it seems.



Blythe Bridge high school and sixth form jazz orchestra performed at the close of the conference



David Carter

# SSAT DAY TWO

## Extra fund shows shift to 'mass improvement'

**Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, said the new £140 million strategic school improvement fund proves the government's intentions have shifted from "mass conversion to mass improvement"**

The Department for Education announced the new £140 million funding last week to go towards four targeted issues.

Sir David Carter told delegates they money would help to create "less patchy" coverage of multi-academy trusts (MATs) and teaching school alliances (TSAs); launch more high quality training routes for teachers in challenging areas; make sure curriculum ideas such as "mastery" consistently got into all classrooms; and allow faster intervention when schools were failing.

Carter said the millions of pounds of funding in the "current climate" was "fairly unprecedented".

He also said a further £50 million would go to local authorities to monitor and commission support for underperforming maintained schools.

"This is a really interesting message around our shift from mass conversion to mass improvement, which has to be the right thing."

The £140 million will "make the biggest impact for schools that are in the most difficulty". Explaining about the four themes, the former headteacher and regional school commissioner for south-west England said: "The first is around system capacity.

"It will enable us to continue to grow teaching school alliances, continue to grow national leaders of education and continue to support and develop existing and new high quality multi-academy trusts.

"That's going to be the system capacity."

MATs had proven themselves to deliver "school alliances at their best" and would be key in bringing a wider and more consistent spread of teaching school alliances.

Curriculum "best practice" would also be targeted, he said, since the notion of "best" was subjective and required a more rigorous focus on the actual efficacy of classroom methods.

"It's great to be able to talk about the Shanghai maths or Singapore experience or phonics, or maths mastery, or music hubs – but so what? How do we get that to make a difference in every classroom in the country?"

Carter said he most welcomed the extra funding to intervene when Ofsted placed a school in special measures.

"When an academy, which is my remit, goes into special measures on a Thursday, I want to be able to support it the following Monday morning.

"At the moment, as we go through the school-to-school support round, it takes too long. So having access to that rapid intervention means that those children in those schools should get the opportunity to find themselves in schools that are improving more quickly."

A further £20 million of support from the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) had also been pledged to "scale up and disseminate evidence-based programmes."



David Carter

## COGNITIVE DUMPING – AND A TUMBLING TOWER OF PISA

**Debra Kidd says pupils are primed for national exams, which is why they struggle in tests such as PISA**

An "atomised" curriculum that does not allow for transferable knowledge explains the country's poor performance in international education league tables, said Dr Debra Kidd, an author and former teacher.

She told delegates that English pupils struggled to transfer the knowledge they learnt for national exams into different kinds of tests, such as PISA, because of a focus on assessment formats and subjects being kept separate.

Pupils were taught to treat knowledge as valuable mostly within the context of an exam rather than having worth in its own right, a process that she labelled "cognitive dumping".

Citing a study by Wylie and William in 2006, Kidd told delegates: "Knowledge gained for a test in one context is not transferring into other tests. That might explain our performance in PISA and other tests.

"We use this language that primes their brains for a sort of cognitive dumping. You are priming their brains when you say 'you need this for the exam' so they feel they don't need it for anything else."

Kidd, who taught in primary, secondary and university settings, said rather than dividing the curriculum arbitrarily by subject, learning should involve greater "novelty" since evidence suggested that discovery and awe made the brain receptive to learning.

"We have to stop thinking in terms of atomised objectives of learning and in wider concepts of ideas. Where is the beauty in maths? Where is identity in geography?"

"A pupil might be doing a task where they're doing maths and they're using DT at the same time. They're thinking really,



Debra Kidd

really deeply about the kind of world they live in – that's what needs to be driving that curriculum forward."

Her comments follow warnings from artists, scientists and employers against a "narrow" school experience based around written tests rather than creativity and skill.

Some 57 per cent of businesses believe a lack of soft skills such as communication are the reason pupils and graduates are ill-equipped to find good work, according to a 2014 survey by the British Chambers of Commerce.

Meanwhile, the uptake of creative arts subjects has declined, with a 50 per cent drop in GCSE entries for design and technology, 23 per cent for drama and 25 per cent for other craft-related subjects between 2003 and 2013, according to a report by the University of Warwick released last year.

There was a risk of a "two-tier" system where only the most

advantaged pupils had access to a wide range of experiences, said the researchers.

Kidd argued for a moral purpose to be returned to the curriculum, stating that the International Baccalaureate's focus was her favourite.

Its mission, which Kidd quoted, said: "The IB aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."

The English Baccalaureate, introduced by the government in 2010, has been promoted by schools minister Nick Gibb on the grounds that: "A rigorous academic curriculum is the way to overcome educational disadvantage [...] and secure a good job."

Reporting by Jess Staufenberg

# WE'RE GOING TO FOCUS ON THE BROADER PICTURE, SAYS OFSTED

## Science and modern languages are going to get a good look-in too, says Sean Harford

Ofsted will increasingly check that science and modern languages are not being pushed out of the curriculum because of a historical focus on numeracy and literacy – with the inspection body “putting its hands up” to playing a role in that focus, said Sean Harford, the watchdog’s national director of education.

The curriculum had “narrowed” over the past few years because of a drive for standards in maths and reading, with Ofsted now looking for an emphasis on broader curriculums if schools were to gain higher inspection judgments, he told the SSAT delegates.

And a recent report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) proved Ofsted was “not just driven by data” because it said the inspections body should have downgraded hundreds more schools over the past nine years if academic performance alone was taken into account.

Speaking at a workshop session on Friday, the former teacher and senior leader said: “We hold our hands up here. Primary schools have mostly in the past decade focused on numeracy and literacy, and we’ve seen huge gains.

“But there is a bit of an issue ... the focus on those two subjects has narrowed the curriculum and as a result the provision of things such as science in particular, and foreign languages more latterly because it’s come in as a compulsory element in key stage 2, has suffered.

“So that’s something we’ll look at by saying, ‘OK, the school is doing well in the basics of maths and English, but is that at the expense of the broader curriculum?’ That’s a key

feature of our inspection as well.”

Harford also dismissed the EPI report for “effectively criticising Ofsted for not using data enough” following long-standing accusations that the inspections body is too driven by grades and attendance measures.

The report, released on November 22, said that according to value-added progress data, only half as many primary and secondary schools with low levels of disadvantage should be rated as “outstanding”, and twice as many with higher levels of disadvantage should be “outstanding”.

“Of course we look at national exams tests, assessment and attendance data before we come in – but anyone who read the EPI report last week in which we were effectively criticised for not using data hard enough [...] will know that to say that we’re entirely data-driven cannot be right.

“When you go back into a school, of course there will be flags on things like data, but actually going into a school there’s no point in inspecting if you just go on the data. And I think our inspection outcomes show it’s a professional process not just driven by data.”

Instead, Ofsted had been right to bring in the “shorter inspection methodology” in which schools on a good judgment are inspected for one day every three years – rather than a full inspection every seven years – with any proposed change in judgment prompting the further, and more expensive, full inspection. The changes came into force this September.



Blythe Bridge high school and sixth form jazz band



Schools Week's 'Spill the beans' coffee area



The choir of Brockhill Park Performing Arts College

# School Bulletin *with Sam King*



Some of the The Elms pupils who celebrated a Tudor Christmas at Wollaton Hall

## Pupils step back in time to celebrate Christmas

A group of year 4 pupils in Nottingham had a taste of what Christmas might have been like 500 years ago when they made a school trip to nearby Wollaton Hall.

Pupils at The Elms junior school dressed in traditional Tudor costume and celebrated a historically accurate Christmas – albeit an early one – at the stately home, which dates back to 1580.

They acted out a traditional Mummers play, learnt a Tudor-style dance, ate a period banquet in the Great Hall, and made pomanders – scented oranges studded with cloves that acted as potpourri

in the Middle Ages through to the 1700s.

The trip tied in with the children's study of Tudors as their history topic, and brought some of what they had learned to life.

Teacher Lucy Davies said: "The children had learnt about Tudor food before we went, and are now learning about Elizabeth I and the Spanish Armada.

"We have used Wollaton Hall and its grounds for inspiration for our English work.

"The setting was perfect and it was wonderful to use the magnificent Great Hall.

"We all left having learned lots but also feeling very Christmassy!"



Pupils at Longborough primary with the quality mark

## Curriculum goes out of this world

A Gloucestershire primary school has been awarded a Space Education Quality Mark for its space-themed curriculum.

Awarded by the European Space Education Resource Office, Longborough Church of England primary school was presented with a silver award to recognise its continuing commitment to using space in the classroom.

The school's 39 pupils have spent more than a year on different activities, including testing materials to gauge what would make the best rocket to writing an application to become an astronaut.

They also visited the UK Space Agency to meet Tim Peake, and had a star-gazing session with a local astronomy group.

Science teacher at the school Fran Regan said: "You can link space to everything, you just have to be creative; once children are hooked into it they will engage and work really hard for you.

"We even use it in PSHE, so if people are feeling low you can link it to an astronaut being on a space ship for six months and discuss how they would cope emotionally and build up their resilience when away from their families."

## Specialist school celebrates a ton of success

### FEATURED

Wargrave House school and college in Merseyside is a new centre of excellence for teaching personal finance.

The specialist autism school became the 100th named centre after taking part in the Personal Finance Education Group (PFEG) centres of excellence programme, part of the Young Enterprise charity, supported by financial journalist Martin Lewis of *Money Week*.

The programme helped the school to improve its finance curriculum through staff training, action plans and advice from personal and education advisers sent from the charity.

The school caters for children and young people from 5 to 25 who are on the autistic spectrum, and for whom learning to be independent is a vital aspect of the curriculum.

Gennie Hyde, head of education, said: "We provide a highly specialist approach to education, but our focus for all of our students, regardless of ability, is independence.

"People with autism are very concrete learners. To learn, they need to be experiencing what you're teaching them about, so if you're looking at money and finance we teach it in context, in a shop with real money."

The school has now revised its maths curriculum and is implementing an annual "My Money Week" event, which



MP Suella Fernandes presents Matthew and James with the award

will focus on managing personal finances and help pupils to understand potentially tricky topics such as pensions and exchange rates.

Since receiving their new centre of excellence status, Wargrave students have been invited to speak about their learning experiences at a national conference hosted by the charity.

The PFEG programme is free and open to schools, colleges and universities that want

to develop their teaching of finance.

Speaking of the school's accolade, Martin Lewis said: "For a school to take the teaching of finance on board and to say they want to become one of the best schools in the country for it is music to my ears."



Winner Sue Brown with HNAP chairman Professor Richard Rose, left, and Andrew Mitchell MP

## SUE-PER ACHIEVEMENT FOR TEACHING ASSISTANT

Sue Brown, this year's outstanding higher level teaching assistant (HLTA), recently received her national award from Andrew Mitchell MP at a ceremony in Westminster.

Brown, who works at Malcolm Sargent school in Stamford, Lincolnshire was nominated by colleagues for her work in supporting pupils with special needs, running sporting events and delivering art lessons.

After qualifying for the national award following a series of regional heats, she beat the eight other finalists from schools across the UK to take the top spot.

Now in its fourth year, the award is aimed at teaching assistants who have gained HLTA status and go above and beyond what is required.

"It was very apparent after meeting the regional winners that we are a very diverse bunch and to have made the final at all was a great honour," she said.

The award is organised by the HLTA National Assessment Partnership (HNAP), an organisation made up of the four regional assessment providers that manage the assessment of standards for HLTAs across England.



L-R: Steve Hogarth (financial champion, Wargrave House school), Michael Mercieca (CEO PFEG), Courtney, Ben, Herbie, James, Matthew, Gennie Hyde (head of education, Wargrave House)

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**Julian Drinkall** is the new chief executive of Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), the country's largest multi-academy trust with 66 primary, special and secondary academies.

He was chief executive of the Alpha Plus Group, one of the largest groups of independent schools in the UK, before that chief executive of a number of global regions at Cengage Learning, an educational content, software and services company and, before that, chief executive of Macmillan Education.

He graduated in philosophy, politics and economics from the University of Oxford, has an MBA from Harvard and a masters in public administration from Harvard's JFK School of Government, where he holds a Littauer fellowship.

Speaking of the appointment, he said: "I am very pleased to be joining the Academies Enterprise Trust, which is doing such important work, and I share its commitment to achieving the highest standards in education."

He will take over in the spring term, replacing Ian Comfort.

The Girls' Schools Association (GSA), which represents the heads of all-girls'



Julian Drinkall



Charlotte Avery



Gwen Byrom

independent day and boarding schools, has made two new presidential appointments.

**Charlotte Avery**, headmistress at St Mary's school in Cambridge, the only independent all-girls' school in Cambridgeshire, will begin her presidency from January.

She will act as the association's official spokesperson, representing the views of its members to external agencies and the

media, both nationally and internationally, as well as promoting the benefits of single-sex education.

She is a past member of the Ministry of Defence's research ethics committee and a governor of a maintained Church of

England primary school, and is currently a governor at an inter-church 11 to 16 academy.

She also represents the independent sector on the council of the Association of School and College Leaders.

Commenting on the role, she said "I am looking forward to being part of the national educational debate and flying the flag for girls' schools nationally."

**Gwen Byrom**, headmistress of Loughborough high school, an independent day school for girls aged 11 to 18, has been appointed the association's 2018 president.

She has worked in all-girls' schools for more than a decade, becoming head of Loughborough in 2011.

"I look forward to sharing good practice, and working closely with institutions and leaders across all sectors of education, as well as promoting all that GSA schools have to offer," she said after her appointment was announced. "This is a very exciting post to be invited to hold."

She will become president-elect in January next year before starting her term as president in January 2018.

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your school, local authority or organisation please let us know by emailing [news@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:news@schoolsweek.co.uk)

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### SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Solutions:  
Next week

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

### Spot the difference to WIN a *Schools Week* mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins a mug. Tweet a picture of your completed spot the difference using @schoolsweek in the tweet.