



**STEVE TAYLOR: THE EXECUTIVE HEAD WHO HATES THE TITLE**

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**WE WANT FLEXIBLE HOURS, SAY RETURNERS**

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**MEDIAN TIME BETWEEN REFERRAL AND FIRST CONTACT WITH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMONG 0-18 YEAR OLDS**

**FEBRUARY 2016**  
**7.3 DAYS**

**JUNE 2016**  
**28 DAYS**

Source: NHS Digital/Health and Social Care Information Centre

# Teachers to be mental health 'first aiders'

- > Training will start in a third of secondary schools later this year, says May
- > Charities warn that more referrals could clog already stretched services

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER & JESS STAUFENBERG**  
@SCHOOLSWEEK **Investigation**

The government will train a member of staff in every secondary school to identify mental health problems in pupils, but schools won't get additional funding to treat or refer children.

Theresa May has announced plans to deliver mental health "first aid" training to a staff member in every secondary school in England by 2020, but none of the money for the plan will go

directly to schools.

The announcement has prompted a renewed focus on counselling in schools, with dedicated trained mental health professionals working alongside teachers seen as the best option.

In guidance issued last February, the Department for Education said there had been a "significant move away" from the idea of teachers adding counselling to their role, as "emerging good practice" treated counsellors as a separate profession.

Although the training announced by the prime minister on Monday is likely to boost the identification of pupils with mental health problems, an increase in referrals by schools could exacerbate existing serious backlogs in child and adolescent mental health services.

The charity Young Minds has warned that services for young people have been "severely underfunded" in recent years, and NHS statistics show a sharp rise in the how long children wait between

**Continues on page 2**

**HEADTEACHERS' ROUNDTABLE**  
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FIRST KEYNOTE SPEAKER ANNOUNCED, MORE TO FOLLOW...

SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE INFO

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## NEWS

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

## 'These proposals are not even a sticking plaster'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER & JESS STAUFENBERG  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

referrals and "first contact" with mental health services, from an average 7.3 days in February last year to 28 in June.

Older figures in research by CentreForum's commission on children and young people's mental health show the average maximum waiting time for a routine appointment was 26 days in 2014-15, more than double that of 2011-12.

CentreForum, now called the Education Policy Institute (EPI), also found a wide variation in waiting times between providers, with some children waiting up to 31 months for treatment.

Emily Frith, a former special adviser to Nick Clegg and now a director at EPI, said efforts to boost mental health understanding among teachers could improve delays, but said increased services were also needed.

"Even if there is more awareness of the issue, if there's nowhere to refer to teachers are left holding an issue they're not trained to deliver help for," she said.

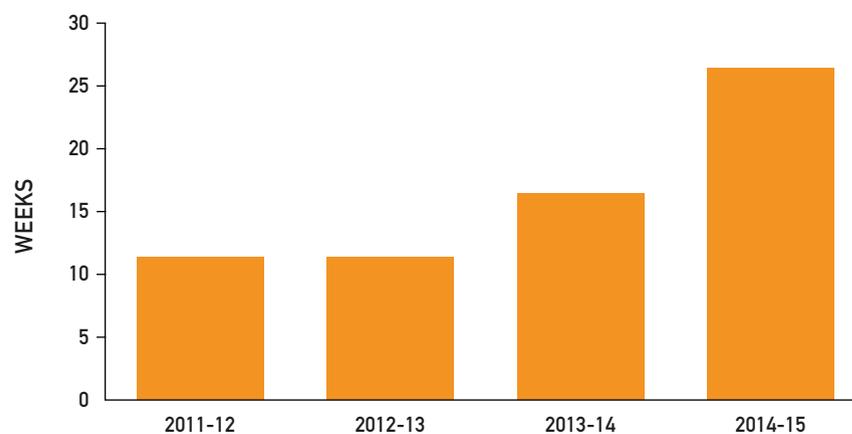
Training in schools will begin later this year ahead of a planned review of mental health services for young people.

But MPs and school leaders warn that a lack of additional resources in schools and local NHS services mean that it could fall short of what is needed to tackle what is acknowledged as a growing crisis.

Barbara Keeley, the shadow mental health minister, said the training would be "inadequate without work on existing resources", and demanded the appointment of a qualified counsellor in every school.

Rachel Gooch, a national leader of governance and governor at two schools in Suffolk, said the proposals were "not even a sticking plaster. There seems to be no additional money for schools here and, more importantly, no money for the specialist services we need to be available to refer students to when they have a mental

Maximum waiting times for a routine appointment (average of all providers)



Source: Education Policy Institute using NHS data

The increases in waiting times may be reflective of the different mix of providers taking part in the different years, as well as an overall increase in demand and service provision for CAMHS. However, the data does suggest that the waiting times have increased from 2013-2015.

health problem."

The training will be delivered by Mental Health First Aid UK to staff in a third of secondary schools this year. The remaining two-thirds will be provided with training in

the following two years.

The Department for Education will also survey schools on how they currently deal with mental health issues, ministers said.

## OFSTED TO 'BACK UP' PLAN

Ofsted will be involved in efforts to improve the support schools receive from health services, says the education secretary Justine Greening.

Writing in *The Times*, Greening said she wanted every school to get "the best support from their local mental health services" and that this effort would be "backed up" by Ofsted.

The inspectorate already looks at mental health and well-being, with a *Schools Week* and *Watchsted* analysis last year showing it appeared in one



third of inspection reports since a change to Ofsted's framework in September 2015.

The analysis showed, however, that Ofsted tended only to pick out examples of good practice and rarely criticised poor provision.

Ofsted said at the time that there was no "specific requirement" for inspectors to report on mental health, but they did so when there was a "cause for concern, or if the school is particularly skilled in supporting pupils with these needs".

## Calls for a counsellor in every secondary school

The government will consider a mental health counsellor in every secondary school in England, says public health minister Nicola Blackwood.

Blackwood says the government was "looking at" whether more counsellors in schools was the best option as ministers sought to address fears about the rise in mental health problems among young people.

Her comments follow a warning from Luciana Berger, a Labour MP and mental health campaigner, that tight budgets might force schools that already have counsellors to cut their working hours or scrap the posts.

"The prospect for the years ahead is to see some schools that fund counsellors

five days a week going down to three, or three days down to one, and some having to scrap the provision altogether because they simply do not have the resources to make this very important service available in their schools," she said.

Blackwood said ministers would consider the expansion of school counselling when it looked at the results of an ongoing trial of a "point of contact" approach.

NHS England is currently working with 255 schools in 22 areas that have appointed



Nicola Blackwood

a specific staff member to liaise directly with local mental health services.

"The question is whether that [point of contact] system is more effective than having an individual counsellor in every school," she said. "We are looking at that."



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## NEWS

## ACADEMY TAKES SPONSOR'S NAME AFTER SLIPPING INTO SPECIAL MEASURES

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

An academy has been renamed in recognition of its millionaire sponsor, just months after it was put in special measures and is possibly facing rebrokerage.

The Business Academy Bexley has changed its name to the Garrard academy to recognise the support of sponsor Sir David Garrard, a retired property tycoon and former Labour donor.

Garrard put up nearly £2.5 million to sponsor the school, one of Labour's first flagship academies; school leaders said the name change was to recognise both his financial and personal support.

Ofsted rated the south-east London academy as "inadequate" in June. The regional schools commissioner is now working with the academy to consider the "next steps", which in similar cases has led to a change in sponsor.

But school officials said the name change was not instigated by the Ofsted report.

Chair of governors Richard Elms told *Schools Week*: "It's a mark of recognition for all the support that he's given to the academy over many years in terms of financial resources and in terms of his support to the school."

School officials said Garrard had now ploughed about £5 million into the school, which opened in 2003 and was hailed as the "future" of state education by Tony Blair.

The school was designed by architect Norman Foster at a reported cost of £31 million. But media reports in 2010 found it was spending hundreds of thousands of pounds fixing parts of a building that was "incredibly expensive to run".

Garrard is one of a handful of wealthy sponsors who have invested millions in the academies programme. A *Schools Week* investigation last year revealed that philanthropists had handed over nearly £12 million in charitable donations to just 12 trusts in two years.

Sam Elms, the Bexley academy's PR consultant and former chief executive of the school, said Garrard had "worked tirelessly to support the academy in numerous ways, which not all of the original [academy] sponsors did".

She said a governor suggested the name change during a meeting last summer.

Garrard described it as a "great honour and a privilege, allowing the family name to go forward alongside this wonderful seat of learning of which I am so proud, as would be my late wife".

The name change was registered with Companies House in September, with Garrard the sole signatory to the change.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it was "working with the Garrard family foundation to consider next steps" after the Ofsted judgment.

Elms said "everything was going in the right direction" at the school.

## Don't tinker with the new formula, Greening told

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Justine Greening has been warned that tinkering with the proposed national funding formula to appease senior politicians pressing for a more radical plan could cause it all to "come crashing down".

A handful of Conservative MPs, largely from rural areas, have called for a review of the funding overhaul that will dish out more cash to struggling schools.

Hundreds of headteachers in West Sussex also this week told MPs the funding formula was not enough and compared it with "giving with one hand whilst taking away with two" – although the authority is in line for a 2.9 per cent boost.

Greening has insisted she will not inject more cash into the pot, meaning any extra money for some schools will mean a loss for others.

The government has a small majority in the Commons and the education secretary is under pressure to ease the fears of the unhappy MPs who could need to be onside to ensure the proposals are approved.

But Jonathan Simons, former head of education at right-leaning think tank Policy Exchange, told *Schools Week*: "The government has managed to do what many people thought impossible – do a redistribution where underfunded schools gain whilst overfunded ones, including

London, don't lose too much.

"And it's rightly been welcomed across the board. The danger of unpicking this just to placate Tory backbenchers is that the whole delicate edifice comes crashing down and we're left with the same unsatisfactory system that we've had for years."

More than half of England's schools would receive extra cash under the plans, which the government has said would end a funding "postcode lottery".

However, an exclusive analysis of local authorities with the most cash-strapped schools has found not all will get help.

Figures published as part of the National Audit Office's (NAO) *Financial Sustainability of Schools* found 24 authorities in which at least one in four of maintained schools posted a budget deficit.

While most of these areas will get extra cash under the new formula, due to be implemented in 2018, *Schools Week* found four that are set to lose out.

Greenwich in south London, where three of nine council-maintained schools posted a budget deficit, is set to lose 0.9 per cent of its funding in the first year of the new formula, and another 0.9 per cent in the following years.

The outlook is just as bleak for academies.



Justine Greening MP

The NAO found that in 2014-15 nearly two thirds of secondary academies spent more than they took in.

Small rural schools and primary schools in sparse communities are set to be the biggest winners under the new formula, with funds transferred from schools in inner London and urban areas.

But MPs in some rural areas are not happy with the proposals. Hugo Swire, Conservative MP for East Devon, told the *Exmouth Journal* he was disappointed some of his schools will lose money.

Huw Merriman, Conservative MP for Bexhill and Battle, told the *Huffington Post* he was "surprised" that rural schools in his constituency would lose out.

"I'm still struggling with the overall objective of what this is seeking to achieve."

Graham Brady, Conservative MP for Altrincham and Sale West and chair of the influential 1922 committee, has also criticised the proposals.

A spokesperson for the Department of Education has said: "Under the proposals, small rural schools – which typically face higher costs as a result of their size and location – will gain on average 1.3 per cent. Small primary schools in sparse communities will see even larger gains of 5.3 per cent on average."

## Schools bid for millions to move from flood areas

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Exclusive

Schools repeatedly damaged by flooding are mounting multi-million pound bids to move to new sites.

The Department for Education will decide in the coming weeks whether or not to provide capital funding to at least two schools that want to move following ongoing problems with water damage.

*Schools Week* understands that one is considering a move to a different town to escape future disruption.

In Carlisle, Catholic education bosses say they are "optimistic" about a bid for £17 million from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to move Newman school away from a flood plain.

Pupils at the school were forced into temporary classrooms on the site of the former Pennine Way primary school in Harraby after storm Desmond battered England's north west coast in December 2015.

"We think the site has been flooded four times in its history. That has had a significant impact on learning in the school, which is something we don't want to happen again," the Rev Michael Docherty, deputy head of the Diocese of Lancaster education service, told *Schools Week*.

"Even if we had remained on the existing site, there would have had to have

been significant adaptations to the buildings."

Docherty said a feasibility study prepared by the diocese and local officials would be submitted shortly, with a decision expected within six weeks. He said the EFA had been "very supportive", as had education secretary Justine Greening.

In a newsletter sent out last month, Newman head John McAuley said he had been proud of how the school community had "risen to new challenges" during "a very testing year".

"The government has agreed in principle to fund the building of the school as long as we can show that a school can be built in a cost-effective manner with no unexpected additional expenditure in this location."

Elsewhere in Carlisle, Trinity secondary school reported in July that most of its site was "back in action and fully repaired after the devastating damage of storm Desmond", although *Schools Week* understands that negotiations over a move of its sports facilities away from a flood-prone area are ongoing.

Storm Angus prompted more school



Trinity secondary school, Carlisle

closures across parts of England and Wales in November, while persistent problems with flooding have forced one school in Devon to consider a move to a different town.

In December, the schools minister Nick Gibb told East Devon MP Sir Hugo Swire that officials had assessed a feasibility study on moving Tipton St John primary to nearby Ottery St Mary, and were working with council officers to discuss "outstanding issues".

According to the BBC, some Tipton St John residents say the area risks becoming a "museum village" if the school moves away from its home of 200 years.

The government said further information on the schools would be released "in due course".

## NEWS

# Poor performance of private schools to be made public

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

**Exclusive**

Damning improvement notices for dozens of failing private schools will now be published online by the government, a year after *Schools Week* first requested and revealed the figures.

The disclosure comes as new figures show the number of independent schools rapped for poor performance is increasing.

The government said publishing statutory improvement notices issued to private schools was part of a new transparency drive.

But the number of notices throws a shadow on the government's insistence that private schools should sponsor state schools to drive up standards.

Melissa Benn, founder of the Local Schools Network campaign group, said: "When will the government ditch this faulty policy and provide public education with what it really needs, including proper investment?"

Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act



Melissa Benn

show that 131 improvement notices were issued to independent schools between January 1 and the end of November last year (when *Schools Week* submitted the information request). That compares with 120 issued in the 2015 calendar year.

Notices are issued when there has been a "substantial number of regulatory failures", including health and safety, education provision and safeguarding – and schools can be closed if they fail to act.

Some private schools failed to meet as many as seven different regulations – however, *Schools Week* could not analyse all the notices for further details as the Department for Education (DfE) refused to release those sent in 2016.

Instead the government said that this month it would start to publish all notices, including those issued last year, on the .gov.uk website.

Private schools are supposed to publish the notices on their websites, but a previous investigation by *Schools Week* uncovered that many did not.

Benn said the move towards greater openness should be welcomed. "Any institution that is in

charge of the education and welfare of young people must be subject to appropriate inspection and, whatever the status of the school, the public has a right to know how well it meets its responsibilities."

Improvement notices issued this academic year, according to the DfE figures, include the Brockhurst and Marlston House twin schools, in Berkshire, which charge up to £7,775 per term and have an 18th-century chateau in south-west France that pupils visit each year.

St Hugh's school, in Lincolnshire, which charges up to £6,500 for boarding pupils, was also issued a notice. Neither school responded to requests for comment.

Other schools handed notices in the 2015-16 academic year include the highly coveted Royal Ballet School in west London, and Hill House school in central London, once attended by Prince Charles.

A spokesperson for the Independent Schools Council (ISC) said just 2 per cent of its members received notices last year, but said they were taken "extremely seriously". Schools responded quickly "to demonstrate



Barnaby Lenon

the steps they will take to become fully compliant as soon as possible".

The spokesperson said notices were an important quality assurance and having the information "freely available online" was a "valuable addition to transparency".

"It will also be useful for the schools to be able to demonstrate reasons for compliance issues, which may be procedural and quickly rectified."

The DfE said publication was in the interests of transparency so notices were easily available to the public.

ISC chairman Barnaby Lenon has previously said the independent sector did not see itself as "hero knights coming into save state schools".

Commenting on the government's plan to force private schools into sponsorship of academies, he said private schools should work in consortiums with their state counterparts to "give expertise where we are experts".

## University-backed trusts take a bruising

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted has criticised a university-backed academy trust for failing in its school improvement strategies just as another has backed away from sponsoring a school in special measures.

Ofsted has warned the University of Chester Academy Trust (UCAT) that progress in its schools is "not good enough", particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and is "weak" among the most able.

The criticism came as the University of Brighton Academy Trust, recently singled out for praise by the prime minister, walked away from a deal to run Southgate primary in Crawley, Surrey, after the school's Ofsted rating was downgraded.

The disclosures come at an awkward time for the government, which wants universities to commit to sponsoring or setting up new schools in exchange for freedom to charge their own higher fees. They come a month after the government closed its consultation on the proposal.

After a visit last November, Ofsted warned UCAT, which runs seven schools in the north of England and the Midlands, that standards were below average in two of its three primary and three of its four secondary academies.

According to the Brighton trust, an order for the conversion of Southgate was made

in September when the school was rated as good by Ofsted. It is now in special measures.

A spokesperson said that after taking into account the "support needs of its other academies", the trust's board had concluded that it was "not in a position" to meet the school's needs.

UCAT, meanwhile, has said work to address Ofsted's recommendations was "already underway", including efforts to provide "further targeted opportunities for professional development for teachers.

"Principals have been working together to reduce absence rates and the number of exclusions across the trust and this was acknowledged in the recent inspection of one of UCAT's academies."

The trust has also become embroiled in a row over library provision in Warrington, where a library next door to a UCAT school, criticised by Ofsted for not having enough books, is under threat.

UCAT is now in talks with leisure operator LiveWire over the future of Padgate library, next to University Academy Warrington.

In 2015, *Schools Week* revealed that UCAT was one of several university-backed trusts to withdraw sponsorship from academies.

The trust withdrew from its co-sponsor role at the Winsford E-Act academy and



Ormskirk Bolingbroke academy after the Department for Education banned it from taking on more schools in 2014. It was criticised at the time for "unacceptably low" performance in three of its schools.

According to government statistics, as of October 1 last year universities had established 17 academy trusts that were responsible for 38 schools. Only two were rated outstanding.

In a response last month to a written question from the former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell, the schools minister Nick Gibb said 11 of the schools sponsored by universities (including co-sponsored schools) were good, while 13 required improvement and four were inadequate.

Twenty-four had not been visited since conversion or opening.

## GRAMMARS PART OF 'SHARED SOCIETY'

The government's plan to open new grammar schools is a key policy of Theresa May's "shared society", says the education secretary.

Justine Greening told *The Andrew Marr Show* on BBC One last Sunday that expanding selection in England was an example of the government's efforts to realise the prime minister's vision.

May had set out proposals for government intervention to stop what she called "burning injustices", marking a departure from David Cameron's idea of a "big society".

Pressed by Marr to give a "concrete example of what is going to change" as part of the new shared society, Greening said: "We've already set out that we want more good school places wherever children are in the country ... proposals to look at introducing more grammar schools where local communities want that."

Improving technical education and boosting apprenticeships were also a key element of the policy, she said.

However, the example of grammar schools forming part of a "shared society" has met with some disbelief.

Mike Cameron, a school governor and former teacher, said the government was effectively telling schools "we are going to take all your resources and share them out among those who already have the most".

The Kent Education Network, which campaigns against grammar schools, said the shared society seemingly stands for "not sharing schools with all local pupils who might want them".

## NEWS

## Demand for flexible hours scuppers returners' pilot

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

One of the largest lead schools in the government's "returner teachers" pilot says demands for flexible working scuppered the scheme – leaving it with just three of the 23 teachers it retrained.

In last year's Return to Teaching pilot schools were given £1,900 to retrain and employ qualified teachers no longer working in state schools.

*Schools Week* recently revealed that the scheme had mixed results, with only three of the 53 lead schools training 20 or more returners, despite funding available for up to 40 teachers in each school.

Bromley Schools' Collegiate, which provides teacher training across 31 schools in Kent, was only able to offer jobs to three of the 23 returners it trained. A fourth teacher found a job elsewhere.

Derek Boyle, teacher training co-ordinator at the collegiate, said the volume of flexible working requests was a "major barrier" to offering more jobs.

"It was a little frustrating as we knew schools with vacancies. It wasn't a quality issue, it was more they [teachers] shot themselves in the foot slightly because of requirements on work patterns."

Other lead schools also said they struggled to offer part-time work to participants.

The disclosure supports previous analysis by *Schools Week* that found a growing group of "tired teachers" looking for a cut in working hours, rather than a lack of qualified teachers in the system.

Recent government data showed 335,000 people with qualified teacher status not working in state schools.

A report by the think tank Policy Exchange, published last year, urged schools to offer flexible working such as "keep in touch days", and cash retainers to help to tackle the teacher supply crisis.

However Boyle said that a job share – two people who split one full-time position – worked best for schools.

Bromley, with Coombe girls' school in south-west London, another lead in the pilot, also found that many of the returners who qualified overseas ended up taking teaching assistant or voluntary roles.

Nicholas Power, senior assistant headteacher at Coombe, said eight of the 14 participants it trained were working in schools, although not all in permanent roles.

In the pilot, schools received £1,520 from the National College for Training and Leadership to train a returning teacher in an EBacc subject, and a further £380 if they



employed them.

However a second version of the pilot announced in November will now target only maths, physics and modern foreign languages teachers with incentives for schools to enable flexible working patterns.

This pilot, which launches in February for the north west and south east only, requires schools to demonstrate that they can offer the returner a job at the end of the programme. If no positions are available, the school cannot take part.

As a result, Andrew Roach, director of the teaching school at George Abbot school

in Surrey said his school would not be involved. "Essentially what you're doing is an interview process, and at this point in the academic year, when unsure of staffing needs, we cannot commit to that."

A DfE spokesperson said it was investing more than £1.3 billion over this parliament to attract the "brightest and best" into teaching.

"We are currently working with stakeholders to develop advice for schools on recruiting returners and offering part-time teaching responsibilities, and will set out more information in due course."

## SPIELMAN'S GRAMMAR SCHOOLS COMMENT GETS A LOW MARK FROM MPS

Ofsted's new chief inspector has been criticised by senior politicians for displaying "ideological beliefs."

In her first interview since taking up the post, Amanda Spielman told *The Guardian* that proposals for new grammar schools were "a distraction from our work".

Her comments were several notches down from the criticism dished out by the former chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw in the final months of his tenure.

Wilshaw said the return of grammars would be a "profoundly retrograde step" and that claims they would benefit poor children were "tosh" and "nonsense".

However Wilshaw did not come in for the same level of criticism as Spielman.

Andrew Bridgen, the Conservative MP for North West Leicestershire, told *The Telegraph*: "Once again we are seeing the civil service displaying their ideological beliefs".

"At the end of the day they are there to implement government policy impartially. It is unproductive of them to dispose their own ideological beliefs."

Spielman, who took over from Sir Michael last week, also said that Brexit might force education to "slide a bit further down the priority list".

She said the ability for multi-academy trusts to select within their schools, as first revealed by *Schools Week*, could also be a "complication".

"I hear that some are poised and ready to go, others who say they won't [select within their trusts], and others will keep themselves distant."

## Fines for lateness 'inappropriate', says union

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

A school's plan to fine parents if their children are consistently late for registration will not solve the problem, say union leaders – although the government has told headteachers they can legally issue penalty notices in such circumstances.

Catherine Stalham, head of Winter Gardens primary academy in Essex, last week told parents they would be fined if their children consistently turned up after 9am.

Parents said any fine was "ridiculous", while unions said it was a "worrying" and "inappropriate" policy.

But the Department for Education (DfE) told *Schools Week* that all schools have, by law, the authority to issue the fines if pupils had "no relevant reason" for lateness.

"It is right that schools monitor patterns of lateness and address it where it becomes a concern," said a spokesperson.

"It is a matter for individual schools to decide when to close their register and to take action as needed, provided it is in line with the local authority's code of conduct."

Government policy on attendance and absences gives heads various legal powers to call on if a child misses schools without a good reason.

In the case of Winter Gardens, Stalham said children that were persistently late could be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service run by the local authority, which could then issue



fixed penalty notices.

"Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and the vast majority recognise the importance of punctuality in ensuring pupils get the best possible education," she said.

"We have a very clear attendance policy, which is in line with national guidelines, and will always work with families to improve any attendance issues in the first instance."

Stalham also confirmed that her school would not pocket any money from the fines, which would be kept by the local authority to cover admin and potential legal costs.

The fines, to be introduced later this year, will start at £60 and rise to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

If parents do not pay after 28 days they

could be prosecuted and fined up to £2,500, or face a community order or a jail sentence of up to three months. They could also be ordered to attend parenting classes.

Mary Bousted, the general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said that while it was "very important" for pupils to get to school on time, she worried about using fines as a deterrent for lateness.

"This does not seem to be appropriate, and does nothing to get to the root of the problem. Persistent lateness

may well be a symptom of other problems in the family.

"These parents are more likely to need help to support their children's education, rather than punishment."

In 2015, nearly 500 schools in Hampshire wrote to parents warning of fines if their children were late more than ten times in a term.

Similarly, parents in Islington, north London, face fines if their children miss registration 12 times in a six-week period.

A spokesperson for the National Union of Teachers said these kinds of situations were best resolved through "discussion with parents and attempting to understand the issues that are contributing to persistent lateness and how best to overcome them".

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## NEWS

## TROJAN HORSE WHISTLEBLOWERS HAD WRITTEN PLEDGE OF ANONYMITY

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Leaked documents have revealed the Trojan Horse whistleblowers were given written promises of anonymity.

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) has asked the government to release the names of whistleblowers who gave evidence as part of its inquiry into claims of a plot by Muslim hardliners to take over several Birmingham schools in 2014.

It wants their details handed to the lawyers representing five teachers who face an upcoming disciplinary hearing. The five face a common allegation that they agreed to the "inclusion of an undue amount of religious influence in the education of pupils" at three schools.

Witnesses claim that a verbal agreement guaranteed their anonymity.

But documents leaked to *The Telegraph* last week now show a Department for Education (DfE) official assured whistleblowers in an email that their identities would be protected.

The email was sent to the British Humanist Association after the organisation contacted the government relaying whistleblowers' concerns.

The email reportedly read: "I'd like to assure [the whistleblowers] that we will treat this correspondence in confidence and respect their wishes not to be identified as the complainants.

"Should we need to share the document with others, we'll ensure that we redact details that would identify them. We've dealt with whistleblowers before and understand the sensitivities of such cases."

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has made legal representations to the Department for Education (DfE) about keeping the names under wraps. The government is now weighing up the potential legal issues before making a decision.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the NAHT, warned any disclosure could have a chilling effect on future whistleblowers.

"Many of these individuals came forward at great personal cost and would not have done so if they'd known that promises of anonymity could be broken.

"It is vital that where anonymity is promised it is kept. Without this, witnesses may think twice about coming forward, meaning that future cases might never be uncovered or investigated. This creates risks for young people in our schools."

Liam Byrne, the Labour MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill, has also urged the education secretary Justine Greening to "step in" and resolve the issue.

The lawyers for the five teachers argue they should be able to question individuals who gave evidence against their clients. The five could be banned from teaching if they are found guilty.

A DfE spokesperson said: "It is critical that all NCTL hearings are fair, just and follow the correct procedures. Given these proceedings are ongoing, it would not be appropriate to comment further at this stage."

## Gibb 'recognises' tight sixth-form funding

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

In a departure from the government's usual firm dismissals on a lack of funding, Nick Gibb has admitted that sixth forms face "tight" resources

The schools minister was questioned in parliament this week over the funding given to schools for 16 to 19-year-olds compared with that for younger pupils and those in higher education.

According to the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA), which is calling for a review of funding, school sixth forms and colleges receive on average 20 per cent less for each pupil than schools and 47 per cent less than universities.

Gibb (pictured), who is usually stoically optimistic on school funding, told the Commons on Tuesday that he "absolutely recognised" that resources were tight for 16 to 19 education and training.

However, he defended a decision not to ring-fence post-16 funding.

"In recent years, we have had to make some post-16 savings while working hard to sustain funding levels for schools, bearing in mind the fact that success in school pre-16 is the best predictor of outcomes in post-16 education."

"I recognise that there is more to do to continue improving our post-16 education system," he added.

Post-16 funding has not been protected



from cuts as has schools funding. Pupils aged 16 and 17 are funded at £4,000 a year, while 18-year-olds get £3,300.

Although extra money is made available for disadvantaged pupils and those who take additional A-levels, SFCA figures show that the average funding per pupil in sixth forms is £4,583, 20 per cent less than the average rate for 11 to 16-year-olds.

Nic Dakin, Labour MP and a former sixth-form college principal, questioned whether it was logical that a 16 to 18-year-old was cheaper to educate than a 15-year-old or university student.

The SFCA says cuts in 2011 to entitlement

funding – which paid for tutorials, enrichment activities and additional courses – resulted in school sixth forms and colleges losing about 10 per cent of their funding.

The subsequent introduction of per-pupil funding in 2013 resulted in a further cut of 6 per cent, while a cut in the base funding rate for 18-year-olds from £4,000 to £3,300 the following year hit institutions to the tune of 1.2 per cent.

The government has pledged to protect the base rate of funding for 16 to 19-year-olds until 2020, and sixth forms continue to receive additional funding for students taking part in more expensive programmes.

There is also a "large programme uplift" for providers that have pupils studying four or more A-levels, and about £540 million is allocated each year to "enable schools and colleges to give extra support to disadvantaged students", Gibb said on Tuesday.

James Kewin, the deputy chief executive of the SFCA, said he would write to ministers urging them to press ahead with a review of post-16 funding.

"The fundamental point is that there is no link between the amount of funding available for 16 to 19 and the cost of delivering a high-quality education.

"At the moment they conjure up a funding rate and say to schools and colleges, 'do what you can with that'. A review is urgently required."

Opinion, page 14

## Sugar tax will boost school sports until 2020, say ministers

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Ministers have confirmed that funding from a tax on sugary soft drinks will continue to be ring-fenced for school sports until 2020.

The government has plans to double the value of the primary PE and sports premium to £320 million from September by using some of the funds from the new tax.

The levy, which the government has said will raise £520 million, will also pay for an extended school day at 25 per cent of secondary schools in the most disadvantaged areas of England, and fund the expansion of healthy breakfast clubs.

The move, announced in last year's budget, was welcomed by many in the schools community, but there is disquiet among some government MPs on whether it will raise the amount ministers have promised.

Facing questions in Westminster Hall on Tuesday, schools minister Nick Gibb insisted that a large chunk would still be used to improve sports.

"The funding will continue to be ring-fenced to assist schools in developing PE and extracurricular sport activities and to make long-term improvements that will benefit pupils joining the school in future years."

Gibb said the increased funding would allow schools to "build on the progress



made through the existing premium.

"It will enable them to hire qualified sports coaches, provide existing staff with training or resources and introduce new sports and activities that encourage more pupils to be healthy and active."

But Will Quince, a Conservative MP, warned there was "no way of saying" how much money would be raised from the levy, and said the government should instead be investing in school sports through other means.

"If we are saying that the issue is important . . . and that it will have a massive impact on childhood obesity and public health, we should invest in it.

"We should not be giving schools funding that is not sustainable."

Sarah Wollaston, a former GP who chairs the health select committee, called for the remaining revenue from the levy that is

not spent in schools to be ring-fenced for children's public health programmes, rather than funding the expansion of academies as part of the Department for Education's general budget.

"Now that there has been a change to the policy objective of forced academisation, the sugary drinks levy would command far greater public support if every penny of it was hypothecated to public health measures to support children."

Mike Kane, the shadow schools minister, welcomed the investment in the sports premium for primaries, but said the government needed to go further.

"A legacy for school sport is about looking beyond primary-age provision and competitive sport initiatives," he said. More pupils of all ages participating in school sport should be "fundamental to a comprehensive strategy".

## NEWS

# Postcode lottery on academisation charges

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

LOCAL AUTHORITY	CHARGE FOR CONVERSION	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS CHARGED		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Portsmouth	£5,000	7	7	3
Staffordshire	£6,000	0	0	0
Swindon	£5,000	7	1	1
Norfolk	£0 - £17,150	19	36	26

Schools in Norfolk have paid more than £500,000 in "conversion costs" to their local authority to become academies, *Schools Week* can reveal.

The charges cover almost the entire estimated cost to the council of legal and financial work during the conversion.

But in other parts of the country schools paid far less, or nothing at all, leading experts to say conversion fees are "excessive" and a lottery.

Since 2013, 116 schools in Norfolk have paid between £3,300 and £17,150 each to the county council to become an academy, according to the response from a Freedom of Information request made by *Schools Week*.

Norfolk estimates the cost of conversion is £5,000 for legal, HR and other work. Of the estimated £555,000 cost to the council over the past four years, schools contributed £514,562.90 – 93 per cent of the total.

But at least two other councils that also charge schools to convert, Medway and Staffordshire, charge just half the cost and pick up the rest themselves, while Portsmouth charges just under a third.

Other councils do not yet charge at all – although Shropshire is considering a charge

from April and East Sussex says the issue is under review.

The Department for Education (DfE) has previously said it does not expect councils to charge schools for conversion and that penalties must be "reasonable". The government provides schools with a £25,000 grant to cover costs.

The disclosure shows how schools face a postcode lottery of charges when they convert into an academy or open a free school.

Swindon charges schools £5,000 to convert and to establish a free school where the council has to enter into a lease or other legal document. Since 2013 it has fined nine schools a total of £45,000, which a spokesperson said was a "reasonable sum" in light of the £25,000 grant.

Portsmouth, which also requests £5,000 for a school to convert, has charged 17 schools a total of £85,000 since 2013.

Medway charges an hourly fee for any legal or survey and lease costs, amounting to about half the council's costs.

A spokesperson for West Sussex said it charged only if "additional costs" could not be met from its budget which was "rare."

Meanwhile, Staffordshire introduced a £6,000 "financial contribution" charge in April last year. No school has converted since.

In Norfolk's case, several schools were charged more than the £5,000 average cost. Heartsease primary academy was billed £17,150 in April 2013, as was Taverham high school in July that year.

A spokesperson for Norfolk said the greater cost was "exceptional" as these were private finance initiative (PFI) schools, and so subject to higher than normal legal fees.

Fakenham academy was charged £8,500 to convert in October 2013 and, last year,

Thorpe St Andrew was charged £10,525.

The spokesperson added the fees were "fair and accurate" given the large amount of work required to convert schools that had become "a considerable drain on the finite resource" of the council.

Unions and funding experts have called for consistency across local authorities.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, urged the government to pay conversion costs from the Treasury rather than use school budgets.

"A lot of conversion costs are going on lawyers and accountants, when that money should be going on education."

Phillip Reynolds, academies and education solicitor at accountancy firm Kreston Reeves, said councils needed to be transparent about charges.

"Is the council providing a time sheet of evidence of what work it has put in?"

He said it was "excessive" to ask a school to cover the council's entire cost of conversion, adding that it should be picked up by the Education Funding Agency.

Richard Watts, chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people board, said some councils had "no option" in the face of a £450 million cut to the educational services grant but to charge schools that converted.

## £4m extra to implement special needs care plans

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Councils have been given £4 million extra for special educational needs to deliver reforms that the government admits will prove "challenging" to implement.

Edward Timpson, minister for vulnerable children and families, confirmed this week that £40 million will be handed to councils from April to smooth the transition to new education and health care (EHC) plans, brought in more than two years ago. The promise is an increase of £4.2 million on the funds councils received this financial year.

Without an EHC plan, a pupil may not be able to access additional school support such as a teaching assistant.

But Richard Watts, chair of the Local Government Association's (LGA) children and young people's board, said the extra cash would only go "some way" to allow councils to support families further.

"Proposed changes to schools and high needs funding could also make this even worse, taking away the freedom for councils to top up high needs funding from other budgets if necessary."

He said councils were experiencing greater demand for services at the same time as "trying to implement significantly underfunded reforms".

The cash makes up two-thirds of a £60 million funding package announced on Tuesday, intended to support children with special educational needs, and includes £15 million for the independent

supporters programme.

Families seeking an EHC plan assessment are meant to be able to access these supporters to navigate the process.

The role is overseen by the special needs charity, the Council for Disabled Children, which has worked with the government on the reforms.

Another £2.3 million was announced for parent-carer forums to "provide a voice to influence local decision-making".

Councils are now inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the quality of their "local offer" for SEND pupils, ranging across schools, voluntary organisations and social and health care services. Parents are also encouraged to give their views.

And a final £1.8 million has been put aside for Contact a Family, a national charity for families with disabled children that provides advice via a telephone helpline.

Timpson said the wide-ranging SEND reforms had been "the most significant" for SEND children "in a generation", but challenges remained in implementation.

"As we enter the final year of the transition, I know there are still challenges to overcome, to ensure that the inspiring work going on in many parts of the country is shared with areas where improvements still need to be made."

The funding announcement follows a review published in November last year by former Conservative MP and

special educational needs adviser, Lee Scott, that found some councils were building up cash reserves while cutting SEND provision.

He found that one council had reserves of £150 million, which was "hard to justify when some local authorities are making large cuts to SEND services".

*Schools Week* has also reported claims that councils can be reluctant to fund assessments beyond basic diagnoses because of the additional costs of treatment that this could trigger.



## BAVERSTOCK FACES CERTAIN CLOSURE

An academy that was told it would be given a new sponsor now faces certain closure.

The government last year told Baverstock academy in Birmingham that it could consult on closure, but in October former West Midlands regional schools commissioner Pank Patel said that efforts to find a new sponsor had "progressed positively".

However, despite a vocal campaign from parents and Birmingham Selly Oak MP Steve McCabe, the government has told the school that it can shut after all, a decision that McCabe said "completely betrayed" his constituents.

There will be a four-week consultation for stakeholders to submit their views before a final decision.

The government said the school would close no earlier than August, allowing current pupils to complete their GCSE courses. Non-GCSE pupils would be moved to other schools "on a phased basis".

As of October, Baverstock had 417 pupils on roll. It has a capacity for 1,330.

The school, in special measures since September 2014, is another example of a failing academy shunned by sponsors.

*Schools Week* revealed last week how the Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) will no longer sponsor Hanson academy, in Bradford, after working with it for 12 months.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it had agreed in principle to the closure after a request from the LEAP trust. Its priority was to ensure "all children receive the best possible education".

Cover story, see page 9



**That's the Academy system for you ... asks you to think outside the box and then won't let you back inside!**

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinemey | laura.mcinemey@schoolsweek.co.uk

# We can see mentally ill pupils, but what do we do?

I once cried on the tube in London. Tears dripped down my face, an inconsolable stream barely contained by my wet hands. I no longer remember what I was crying about. But I do remember the kindness of a hunched Nigerian woman, dressed in her Sunday best, who from her seat opposite, was watching me carefully. While everyone else in the carriage pretended not to see, she looked directly at me with widened eyes.

As the train pulled into a station, she pulled a handkerchief from her pocket, and laid it on my knee. She grabbed and squeezed my hand. "This too shall pass," she said with a fierce certainty. And then vanished between the closing doors, off to continue the rest of her day.

Even now, several years on, thinking back to that day makes me emotional. She recognised that she could solve nothing except letting me know that nothing could be solved. Which is why she was unique. It's not that everyone else on the tube didn't see my crying. It's that the rest of them didn't know what to do about it. So they did nothing at all.

I was reminded of it this week when Theresa May made her announcement to tackle mental health issues in Britain, starting with a package for schools. The speech she made on the issue was superb. It highlighted the right statistics – the one in ten children with a diagnosable problem, the high suicide rates among young men.

But her package of support for schools

only deals with the first part of the problem: spotting the issue. And, to be honest, I don't think teachers need all that much help. When you spend your days with children you know the difference between a kid "being a bit mental" (zany, that is) and those who are actually troubled. You know who needs more help to stay attached to reality or to get through the day without harming themselves.

The problem, therefore, is not that teachers fail to see mental illness. It's that there isn't a whole heap they can do about it. As our cover story this week shows, the average number of days children wait for referrals is now at 28 days – and this is only for serious cases, such as children at risk of physical

self-harm. Budget cuts mean schools are also increasingly struggling to provide follow-on services, such as counsellors or welfare officers.

Like the people on the tube, it is not that teachers cannot see the disturbed children, it's that they don't know what to do about it.



## INTRODUCING THE TEAM SCHOOLS WEEK



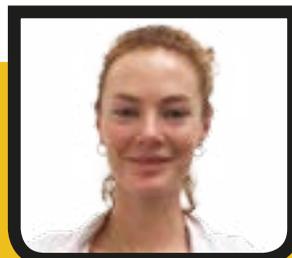
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Two of the roles are full-time and offer opportunities for further development activity within the partner organisations of the NCETM consortium: Tribal and MEI. The third role is half-time and involves NCETM work alone.

For further details of these posts, please see [www.ncetm.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.ncetm.org.uk/recruitment) or email [careers@tribalgroup.com](mailto:careers@tribalgroup.com)

The closing date for applications is 27 January 2017.

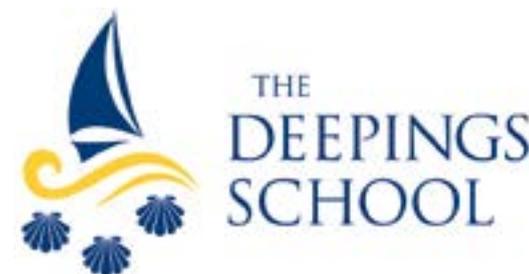
Interviews will be held in the week beginning 13 February 2017.



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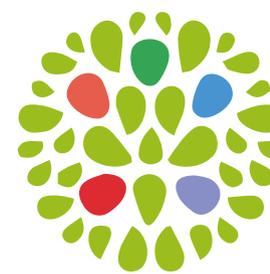
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**Interviews: 23 & 24 January 2017**

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If you decide to apply you should include a letter with your application form on no more than two sides of A4, giving your reasons for applying for the post, addressing information you have read in the pack and particularly the person specification, and outline any relevant experience and personal qualities you would bring to the Academy. Please do not send a general letter; we really are looking for someone who is prepared to respond to us as an individual Trust.

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**Sonia Turner, Human Resources Officer,**

The Shared Learning Trust,  
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For an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Karen Wespieser** at:

Phone: **01753 637480** - Email: [k.wespieser@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:k.wespieser@nfer.ac.uk) -  
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# READERS' REPLY



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## Ofsted ignores more than 100 schools for a decade

 **Jonathan Jones, Nottingham**

Is Rachel de Souza suggesting that "good" schools should also be exempt from routine inspection? If so, I would agree. All heads and teachers know that there are schools at the top end of "good" that outperform so-called outstanding schools, in similar circumstances, in their neighbourhood/local authority year on year, and yet good schools have to prove they are still good. Complete waste of time and resources.

 **Janet Downs, Bourne**

In a Midlands town there's a butchers' shop that claims to make prizewinning pies. When I asked a local when the prize was awarded, I was told it predated the Second World War. This raises the question whether the pies are still worthy of the claim. And so it is with "outstanding" verdicts made a decade ago. The "ingredients" are likely to have changed: staffing, leadership, governance, likely academy conversion, curriculum. There must come a time when such judgments are well past their use-by date.

## School places left out of plans for garden villages

 **Martin Matthews, Oldham**

The Greater Manchester spatial framework has similar issues. There are plans to build 1,900 houses here and when I asked my local authority about school place planning as our local schools are full, I got a very non-committal reply. We must learn from previous mistakes and build communities.

## Behavioural scientists join the DfE team

 **Richard, Bury**

Sounds like they missed reading tea leaves. Just another way of avoiding doing real work that would actually help schools and ultimately the ones who really count. Kids.

## Teachers in England get access to research journals (finally)

 **Matthew Clements-Wheeler, West Midlands**

In a climate where teachers and school leaders are concerned about workload, I remain to be convinced that there will be significant uptake of this facility.

## Easy books are not the route to a lifelong love of reading

 **Lesley Martin, Cambridgeshire**

Being prescriptive about what children read is the surest route to dissuade them from enjoying it. Give them access to a wide range of books – don't try to get a 10-year-old to read Dostoevsky – and let them choose what they want.

Children need to start off with books that they enjoy. Whether you approve is irrelevant. No one develops a love of reading from books that are too hard for them or don't interest them – but once they have developed that love of reading, they will persevere with a more challenging book and reap the rewards.

This is one of the reasons a trained librarian in every school is so important. Teachers do not have the time or, in many cases, the expertise to do what is second nature to a librarian. The most effective thing that we can do to get children to love reading is to ensure that every school in the country has an adequately funded and professionally staffed library, yet librarians are often the first casualty of cost-cutting.

 **Debra Kidd, Oldham**

My children have all been voracious readers – the eldest going on to study literature at university. Without exception, I've found that following their interests has worked best. That's not that everything has been easy – one child's interest in the *Twilight* stories led to *The Historian*, *Dracula* and wider gothic literature. Another found a love of American literature – from Alice Walker to Paul Auster. The trick, I've found, is not to prescribe, but to suggest. If you like this, you might like that..

What they all have started with though, is brilliant literature written for children. From Seuss to Dahl to Pullman and Gavin to Michelle Paver – they've started with literature that does transcend time, that touches on common human themes and conditions.

To assume that because something is written for children or teens, it's "easy" or superficial is wrong. To assume that a damned good story is somehow cheating, is daft. Dickens, Hardy, Shakespeare – they were all writing to make a living, to please a crowd. They wrote great stories. Modern writers are also writing great stories. So we should aim to get our children reading because they love it; because they get lost in it; because they see that if you read, you are never lonely and never bored. The choice of book, frankly, should be up to them.

 **@FiDaisyG**

I agree reading is important but not convinced we all need to love it. Bit like vegetables really!

## Ofsted ignores more than 100 schools for a decade

 **DEBBIE ELLISON, LONDON**

Is a school still required to have its latest Ofsted report on its website? Such an old report would be fairly meaningless, especially as many members of the senior leadership team and governors may have left and the whole ethos of the school changed. How are families looking at schools for their children supposed to rely on such outdated reports?

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



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## OPINIONS



## ALLANA GAY

Deputy head, Lea Valley primary school, north London

# We must mend the split in education leadership

**If primary and secondary leaders better understood each other's phases, children would be better prepared for the move from key stage 2 to 3, says Allana Gay**

School leaders suffer from fear of missing out. They aim to keep up with all of the latest trends for teaching styles, data manipulation, Ofsted and sources of funding. In doing so, schools often miss the basic investment that can improve their outcomes by a significant margin: true partnership with feeder schools.

In September 2015, Ofsted released a report on the wasted years of key stage 3. It said that "gains made by pupils at primary school were not embedded and developed at key stage 3". Lack of challenge, low-level disruption and lack of priority by schools

## The skills of a senior primary leader are considered of less value

were all given as contributing factors.

Since then secondary schools have gone on to treat these symptoms. Lesson observations focus on the level of challenge embedded into daily lessons, stricter rules are enforced to eliminate low-level disruption and key stage 3 leaders are added to staffing structures to monitor teaching quality. These are all quick wins and easily initiated as they depend only on the desire for change – and most would think them sufficient to change the impact of key stage 3 on achievement. I tend to disagree.

Within the Ofsted report there is one key statement that should be central to ensuring achievement: "many secondary schools did not work effectively with partner primary schools". This looks at the foundation of education provision and explains why, despite the many cracks now plastered over, a drop in achievement during key stage 2 to 3 transition is still a norm. A plethora of excuses can be drawn.

First, the current structure of education makes schools into self-contained units. Even within multi-academy trusts (MATs), interaction between primary and secondary educators is limited. There is no view of all-through flow of education because the

structure places responsibility within each school phase to a finite end: 3 to 11 or 11 to 18. This is not child-focused.

Second, the statement seems to attribute blame to the secondary sector, suggesting, incorrectly, that primary schools are not equally responsible. If the primary phase sought ongoing experience within the secondary phase then it would be able to better prepare each child for the challenges ahead. They could help to adjust the curriculum to suit all learners and to bring creative and active approaches into the secondary sector. The stigma of the "Jack of all trades" belittles the academic capacity of primary practitioners.

The experience of school leaders is also an area of potential. Leadership skills are commutable. Yet currently, there is little scope for the exchange of school leaders between primary and secondary.

A dichotomy in education leadership seemingly diminishes the worth of one sector against the other, with the skills of a primary senior leader considered of less value than his or her secondary counterpart. The pay scale starts lower and builds more slowly. They are less likely to be given opportunities to transfer their skills into leading a secondary school and even less so into running MATs that include secondaries. Conversely, growing numbers of secondary practitioners are moving into the primary phase. These actions subliminally devalue the contribution of primary leaders and reduce the desire for leaders to move across the key stages.

How can we overcome this? To start: training for teaching or leadership that requires a term in a school of a different phase would ensure that those who enter the profession have a clear understanding of education as a whole. It would allow primary practitioners to share their creative academics, pastoral strengths and business team-building with a secondary establishment. Secondary colleagues would be able to share systematic approaches and subject depth while enjoying the moments of adapting instruction to the audience.

Most importantly, the child at the centre of this work would be surrounded by teachers and leaders confidently preparing them for their future based on the education they had or with a view to the education they will receive. Overall, by immersing our leaders into both sectors we increase the quality of provision that we provide.



## JAMES KEWIN

Deputy chief executive, Sixth Form Colleges Association

# Sixth-form colleges do have a strong track record

**Education Datalab's recent report on post-16 education has got it wrong, says James Kewin. It is a myth that the best way to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people is to increase the number of school sixth forms**

Last month, Education Datalab produced a report – handily summarised by *Schools Week* – entitled *Social and ethnic inequalities in post-16 choices available and choices made at age 16* on behalf of the Social Mobility Commission. Given the impeccable credentials of those producing it, it seemed certain the report would make an important contribution to improving social mobility in England. Sadly, it did not.

The report has two major flaws. First, it claims sixth-form colleges are more selective than schools. Second, that post-16 outcomes are worse in areas without school sixth forms. Both are wrong.

The authors claim that "sixth-form colleges are generally more selective in their intake than school sixth forms", yet there is no reference to the source of this assertion.

It is not true. The response to a parliamentary question last month said that the average GCSE point score of students enrolled at a sixth-form college was lower than that of students attending a school sixth form (and our students are less likely to have achieved five GCSEs at grades A\*-C, including English and maths).

We also know from another recent parliamentary question that sixth-form college students were more likely to be eligible for free school meals at the age of 15 than their peers in school sixth forms. Sixth-form colleges also receive more disadvantage funding per student, reflecting the particular needs of the young people that they educate.

So if recruiting students with lower GCSE scores, higher levels of free school meal eligibility and a greater need for disadvantage funding makes sixth-form colleges "generally more selective" than school sixth forms, we stand guilty as charged.

Regarding the second claim, the authors use a complex methodology to estimate the impact of living in an area with no school sixth forms (and where students must therefore progress to a sixth-form or FE college). Sandwiched between 40 pages of report and 36 pages of appendices, they offer a single page of analysis, which begins – unpromisingly – by telling us they "can only speculate" why post-16 outcomes are worse in areas without school sixth forms.

But the Department for Education performance tables tell a different story. There, it is sixth-form colleges that

outperform school sixth forms, particularly in value-added performance. It is odd that a report from the Social Mobility Commission focuses so much on attainment and has almost nothing to say about the all-important value-added progress measure.

The report also tells us that students in schools make more "ambitious" higher education choices, concluding that schools have more success in securing "the best possible university place for their students". This reflects the report's focus on the take-up of 'facilitating subjects' and progression to Russell Group universities. This is a very narrow definition of success and misses the obvious point that it is progression to the right course at the right university that really matters. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (not included in the report) shows that sixth-form college students are less likely than school students to drop out of university and are more likely to secure a first or 2:1 at the end of their studies.

## The Social Mobility Commission is backing the wrong horse

So why does all this matter? Because the Social Mobility Commission advises the government on matters relating to social mobility. In advocating the expansion of school sixth forms it is backing the wrong horse. There is a long tail of underperformance in school sixth forms, particularly small ones, something Ofsted identified in its latest annual report. On a range of measures, the performance of sixth-form providers declines in line with size – a fact that sits uneasily with another of the report's unsubstantiated claims that smaller class and cohort sizes are beneficial to students.

The report also overlooks the potential role that an expanded sixth-form college sector could play in driving up social mobility. Our sector does not have all the answers, but it has a strong track record that is simply not accurately reflected in this report. The sector is ready and willing to do more, but it may have to overcome the stubbornly persistent myth that increasing the number of school sixth forms is the best way to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people.

**An autism diagnosis doesn't mean other special needs are being missed - it's just the first step in the process, says Malcolm Reeve**

Between 2010 and 2016 the number of children with autism in schools in England nearly doubled. The percentage in secondary schools increased markedly, even more in special schools.

The broad SEN area of communication and interaction, in which autism sits, is the second most prevalent in schools in England, according to last year's DfE census. The challenges we professionals face in meeting these needs is considerable, but they are not nearly as challenging as those faced by the parents or by the children themselves.

Over the many years I've worked with children who have autism, I can honestly say that I have never met two the same. Autism is a complex lifelong condition and it "plays out" very differently in every person.

This is partly because it is a spectrum disorder, so where the autistic person is along the spectrum determines how autism affects them and how it presents to others. It also has three distinct but related components that each affect the autistic person differently – communication, social skills and imagination (sometimes referred to as flexibility of thought).

These are known as the "triad of impairment". People with autism also often have a sensory difficulty, which again affects them in a very particular way. The most



## MALCOLM REEVE

Executive director, SEND & inclusion,  
Academies Enterprise Trust

### A diagnosis of autism is the start of a journey

common one is noise (which is why you might sometimes see a person with autism covering their ears), but any or all of the senses can be affected. Finally there are sub-types of autism that add to the complexity of diagnosis and need.

Phew! How does one unravel all that? There are some common principles so let's work through them. It is in a deeper understanding of how individuals are affected that we begin to understand them and support their lives and learning.

For instance, I have recently been supporting a child who has normal language for her age but who is not interested in other people or their views and wants to tell the stories she is interested in, at all times. Her eye-contact is limited and she does

not show an understanding of the nature of relationships or friendships (so she finds unstructured times such as play times very challenging).

She cannot understand her own feelings and explain them to others. In addition she has sensory difficulties with noise, which we have to recognise and plan for in the busy school setting. This mix means that she finds it difficult to manage in the classroom; the way forward will be devising a personal plan with things we can all work on together.

In this case, her diagnosis of autism was just the start of a journey towards a better understanding of her particular, complex needs. For this reason I was puzzled when I was asked to comment in last week's *Schools Week* on how an autism diagnosis can miss

other special needs. A diagnosis may just be the start of understanding a child better; not the end of a journey.

**No two children with autism are the same**

We have to delve into each component area and consider sensory sensitivities alongside other possible concurrent conditions before we can really begin to understand and support a child properly.

As professionals supporting children with autism and their families, we need to understand the complexity of the issues that a diagnosis can bring and show our own flexibility of thought and practice in responding.

We have to be open and flexible to making the changes necessary to make education a success. We also need to listen very carefully to what the parents tell us and (if they are able to) what the child tells us themselves.

The SEN code of practice puts children and families at the centre. In working with children who have autism I have always found that the best education is provided when another triad is in place: the child, the parents and a service that understands the complexity of the issues and is always flexible in its response.



David Weston, CEO of Teacher Development Trust, speaking in the Chapel at Festival of Education 2016.

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## PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS\_MCINERNEY

**Steve Taylor, executive headteacher, Robin Hood primary academy, Birmingham**

On an unremarkable road in Hall Green, on the outskirts of Birmingham city centre, sits a small brick hut that is the front to Robin Hood academy. Beyond its unassuming doors is a labyrinthine school, extending on through tunnel-like corridors, and 38-year-old Steve Taylor is in charge of it all.

As executive head of a small trust he has none of the common trappings of young academy leaders. He didn't do Teach First. Or Future Leaders. He was never fast-tracked. And he doesn't have a prolific social media presence.

Appointed in January last year to help the Robin Hood trust to take on challenging schools in the area, he is ambitious about what he wants to achieve.

He is also brutally hard on himself. Talking about his first headship, at a Coventry primary, he admits that while he rarely cries, he often did back then.

"I always hammer myself," he says, looking pained. "I've got this relentless drive, which tires me out sometimes, because I want to make a difference."

The head he took over from had been in post for 29 years – a position he took when Taylor was four.

"They saw this really young guy going in, thinking he doesn't know what he's doing. It really annoys me when people judge on experience rather than effectiveness.

"People said they weren't sure if my approach was right. They had their doors shut to classrooms. They said they wanted an ever-present head and when I went in and started being ever-present... Well, I think they wanted someone ever-present to sit in his office."

When some staff decided to leave, the former head returned to give a speech, which Taylor found awkward. He also felt lonely.

"I remember sitting at home and getting a bit upset with my wife. I said 'I'm just not sure I can do it'.

"If you think about the role of heads, you're judged by everybody. You're judged by the staff, rightly so. You're judged by the parents. You're judged by the children. You're judged by the local authority, if it's a local authority school, or you're judged by the powers that are above. You're judged by the DfE.

"Your family look at you and say 'Ah, we're sure you're doing a brilliant job'. But it's not evidenced-based, it's love-based, isn't it?

"If I talked to my wife, I'd make her worry because I was in some fairly dark places. If I talked to my local authority adviser, she was amazing, but there was part of her that was going to judge me. And I couldn't talk to my parents about it because they think I'm brilliant, but without any evidence."

He trails off. And then smiles. "So I decided that I was going to pay for a coach ... best thing I ever did."

Taylor had taken the National Professional Qualification for Headship course run by Coventry local authority, during which he was given eight hours coaching with Kirsty Barton-Smith ("a brilliant woman") whose help he sought later. Paying £80 each half-term for an afternoon of "targeted listening" his confidence began to return.

When Ofsted came, he was ready. The school received a good overall, and an outstanding for leadership.

"That was very affirming. No matter what anyone said, I'd cut the mustard, stood up to the biggest scrutiny. I found it difficult to talk about it for the next couple of weeks without getting emotional because I'd put everything on it. In this job, you lose sight of who you are when you're in it."

Is that sort of pressure sustainable? "No," he says honestly, "but that's education. I'm not sure that these days, education's something you go into for life. I look at people



**"I DON'T LIKE THE TITLE OF EXECUTIVE HEADSHIP"**

who have become big hitters. Generally, they've taken periods in their career when they've stepped back from headship and done something else. They've taken stock and then they've come back and reapplied themselves."

For someone so committed to education, it is surprising to learn a chance encounter at a zoo was what prompted him into it. After doing well at his GCSEs, Taylor botched his A-levels, gaining only a C and D in geography and law, limiting his university options.

He was planning a gap year in Australia with his then-girlfriend, but they split up three weeks before the trip. He decided to go alone.

"I was only 19. I flew out there and landed; it was the closest I've come to feeling like I've jumped into the deep end of a swimming pool without being able to swim."

His family had a contact in Adelaide who took him in until his dad, who had just retired from the police, came to join him. "I felt a real wimp... but it was amazing. I got to know him as a man and as a friend, more than just a dad".

While waiting for his dad, the family asked him to take their three-year-old to the zoo. "I had such a great time and such a relationship with her that it was like a hammer blow. I thought 'I know what I want to do'. I travelled for three months, cut short the trip, flew home, went to university and became a teacher."

His first job was in the outstanding-rated St Chad's in Saddleworth, Oldham, where inspirational headteacher Peter Burnley seeded the idea that Taylor could one day follow in his footsteps.

His next move, to a school in Coventry, was less helpful. "The teachers arrived pretty late, they went pretty early. Everything was driven towards making their lives easier, rather than the children's lives better." At his lowest point he even looked at an Asda manager's job in Lutterworth.

Instead, he took a job in another junior school. He received several internal promotions and was starting to feel confident until he applied for one of three internal roles, for which there were only three candidates. "It should have been a forgone conclusion, shouldn't it? But I've got this amazing capacity to really cock-up interviews."

While the other two jobs were offered, Taylor was told the

STEVE

governors wanted to reinterview him. Feeling spurned he told the head he was withdrawing his application.

He shuffles. "So, at lunchtime, he did what was probably one of the single greatest acts of kindness anyone has done for me. He said 'follow me'. I thought we'd go into his office where he would bend my ear for half an hour. But we got into his car and drove to a pub. He offered to buy me a beer, which I didn't accept because I was going back to school to teach afterwards, and then he said 'you've done everything right to deserve this position. This position is yours. You've got to step up and become the person you should become and I believe in you. Go for it'. So I did.

"But so many people would have just taken what I'd said and thought 'oh, that's a pain in the neck'. The fact he took time to drive me off site, and talk to me like that, is what catapulted me to get on the SLT."

Now, as executive head of a trust, he enjoys what he does, but is unsure about the role's name.

"I don't like the title of executive headship. I like chief



# STEVE TAYLOR

executive even less!" he says, pulling an incredulous face. "It sounds like you're lording it over people."

What he does love is building an ethos based on innovation. On a tour of the school he is keen to point out the "Confucius classroom" – a bamboo-covered space in which children learn Mandarin – and introduces the school's robot, who the children are learning to interact with and, later, will learn to code.

His Ofsted fears are also less now as a chalkboard in his office reveals. It states that the aim of the trust is to create "flagship" schools. "Not outstanding ones", he says. The

trust's own moral compass is more important.

However, his brutal realism means he doesn't see himself in the role past the age of 45. Will he leave education for something else? "No. What I love is we're trying to make a difference in education. I like that we're fighting for something I believe in passionately. If I didn't have that, I don't know what I'd do."



Steve Taylor introduces Laura McInerney to Robin Hood school's robot



Visiting Beijing No2 Experimental School



A family holiday to the Isles of Scilly

## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

### What is your favourite book?

*The Humans* by Matt Haig. It's a book about aliens and how humans operate. It talks well about what it is to be human and emotionally intelligent.

### If you were invisible for a day, what would you do?

I'd go to Area 51 [the US airbase rumoured to house UFOs] to find out what really happened there.

### What was your most memorable party as a child?

A cousin's wedding when I was about seven. You see your parents and other adults having fun, letting their hair down. There were a few pranks.

### If you could have a billboard across England, what slogan would you put on it?

"Limits, like fears, are often just an illusion." I think it's from the actor Will Smith, but I'm not sure if it's out of a film. Or maybe "Do not follow where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Too many people in their lives settle for second best.

### Which animal are you most like?

A meerkat! Generally they are inquisitive, alert and rely on a survival strategy based on mutual trust. I think that ties in with the modern way of working with MATs.

## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit  
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Our blog reviewer of the week is Jill Berry, a former head, now educational consultant and Twitter addict @jillberry102

### Bengal tigers welcome

@BELMASOffice

My first choice this week is by Susan Splichal for BELMAS (the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society – see how easily that rolls off the tongue?), an organisation that is well worth joining if you are interested and involved in educational research in any capacity. Here she reflects on the importance of communication for leaders in both education and medicine.

### Not really on the job description

@ChocoTzar

In this post, headteacher blogger @ChocoTzar describes the many elements that make headship challenging, interesting, unexpected and often entertaining – including “the weird stuff that comes out of nowhere”. This made me smile, but also made me think. As a head, everyone seems to want a piece of you, and you have to be able to cope and put yourself back together again at the end of each day. But as @ChocoTzar concludes, “To be honest, I kind of like it.”

### Dogs and sleds – harnessing action to clarity of vision

@thatboycanteach

This blogger considers the importance of clarity of vision. In the face of multiple priorities, how do teachers, and leaders at all levels, ensure that there is a coherence to their efforts and that they are pulling in the right direction rather than wasting time and energy in busy, but perhaps not necessarily meaningful, work? If actions are harnessed to purpose, they are far more likely to be effective. Sometimes we have to let some of

the actions go – the dogs that are pulling the sled of our vision – because they are not helping us to achieve what is most important.

### On pace and purpose

@SteveAdcock81

In the same vein, Steve Adcock reflects on “pace”, and suggests that we challenge the assumption that rapid growth and development are necessarily advisable, healthy and sustainable. A rapid improvement in standards may sound impressive, but steady growth that is maintained over the longer term is going to take us further and may help us to avoid overload and burn-out. This made me think about extreme diets that can help us to lose weight dramatically, but how probable is it that we will hold our weight steady when, inevitably, we settle back into a more realistic regime? Adcock makes some specific, practical suggestions about what a more measured approach in our schools might look like.

### Making a # of it

@theprimaryhead

My penultimate choice, from @theprimaryhead, focuses on how the same arguments circulate about the perceived advantages and disadvantages of holding a particular position on an educational issue. I am absolutely with this writer when he says: “I’m quite up for changing my mind. I enjoy adapting. My beliefs are very strong but they are also apt to change depending on situation and context.” One of the great advantages of Twitter and the world of blogging, for me, is that I have read arguments that have made me think again, something that I see as a strength, not a weakness. This then almost becomes a post about a flexible, simple, contextualised and grounded approach to school development planning, but we will have to wait another day for that...

### Gratitude

@MrOCallaghanEdu

Finally, I found the warmth and positivity of this post uplifting. This assistant principal and teacher of computing spent time at the end of last term on lunch duty, talking to students about the importance of showing gratitude. Many completed “gratitude slips” in which they said thank you for the different ways in which staff had helped them. But, as this blogger says: “Gratitude should not end with a few notes at the end of a busy term. Gratitude is the very essence of a purposeful life that should be the foundation of every school ethos.”

And thank you for reading this column. May 2017 be a positive and rewarding year for you.

## BOOK REVIEW

### The School Leadership Journey

Author John Dunford

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Reviewer Liz Free, director of the International Leadership Academy, The British School in the Netherlands



*The School Leadership Journey* is a timely jaunt through the social and political education landscape of the late 20th century to current times, tracing the ebb and flow of education policy and leadership development.

John Dunford, former general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders and pupil premium champion for the government, leaves us with no doubt as to his intention in writing this book. In his first sentence he boldly asserts that it “is about school leadership, but is not a leadership manual”. Added to this, and unusually in the current climate where research-based proclamations are king, he has no qualms about his lack of references to the “great works on educational leadership” and adds that his points “are not particularly profound”.

Refreshingly honest and clear in his intention, Dunford lays out his stall, priming the reader for a series of vignettes, observations and commentary spanning a 40-plus year career in education.

Born from Dunford’s 2011 blog, *Ten things learned on my leadership journey* (point two: “water the plants”, particularly excellent advice), this book is simply structured around these ten key themes: from leading assessment, accountability and curriculum to education of disadvantaged young people and the values-led school. He explores his experiences, rather unsurprisingly considering his career, from a secondary perspective and whilst many of the messages are universal, this bias may prove a little irksome for primary colleagues.

Seven is my stand-out chapter, where point two is given a new lease of life as: “Watering the plants; leading a learning school”. It is in this chapter particularly, and despite previous declarations of not referencing great works, that Dunford’s extensive experience combines with key

research from experts such as Dylan Wiliam, Viviane Robinson and John Hattie. For the first time, we really hear Dunford’s voice as he drives home the message that the quality of teaching is the most significant and cost-effective factor in improving the life chances of young people. Hear, hear!

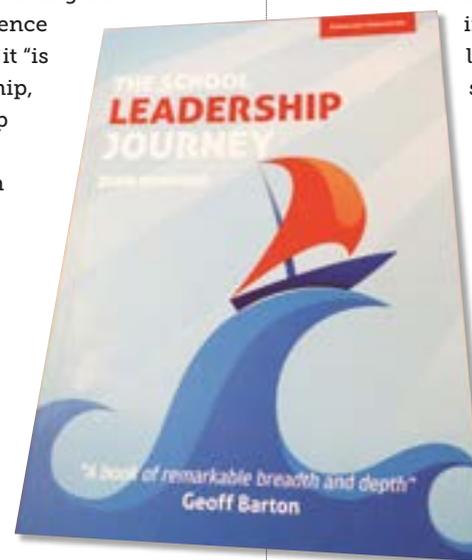
He goes on to denounce the “suffocating centrally directed policy climate” of the past two decades that, despite national and international recognition of the value and importance of professional development and learning, has led to some schools reducing their investment in this area as budgets are increasingly squeezed. He asserts that this climate has resulted in school leaders increasingly accustomed to being “told” what to do. The balance needs to be reset, he says, with school leaders reclaiming the professional learning space.

Hearing Dunford’s voice come through in this way emphasises the importance of building leadership capacity for all staff in all schools.

This message is underpinned by concrete and useful advice for school leaders. Six core measures are outlined, each designed to encourage a culture and climate where all staff play an active role in professional learning. For me, this sends a powerful message that education leaders should value, promote and model learning, while also providing practical guidance and advice.

The book offers more than the billing it gives itself. It is an interesting memoir of a professional life woven with the complexities of political influence and impact in education. But more than this, it contains deep knowledge and reflections based on personal experience, research, evidence, impact and education successes (as well as some failures).

This is more than a book about school leadership; it is a book for school leadership where lessons learnt about effective education leadership transcend the time-specific political narrative. Maybe there is an education leadership manual here in the making, Sir John?



### Next week

Road School  
By Sue Cowley  
Reviewed by Angela Browne

Last week a school in Kent gained national headlines for sending home girls whose skirts were deemed as too short.

Uniform stories are not rare. Most weeks at least one will surface in a local rag. If the subject is outlandish enough, the national press will also pile in.

Headteachers will defend their right to set and enforce uniforms. Parents will muse about the frivolity of the rules. Commentators will provide sensible points about equality and the lower costs, and less sensible ones about the distraction of boys when girls flash their knees.

In a distant time, however, uniform-related exclusions happened for another reason. In fact, uniform was one of the main barriers to the development of universal education in the 1800s.

A parliamentary inquiry completed between 1816 and 1818, "Education of the lower orders", found that more than 2,000 children in the London borough of Southwark were unable to attend school simply because they did not have the correct clothing.

"In one family, consisting of six children, there was only one suit of clothes, which each child was obliged alternately to use when he went into the street," documents from the inquiry show.

The inquiry heard from William Freeman Lloyd, secretary of the Sunday School Union, who said he had seen "an amazing number" of children kept out of

## THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



### THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF UNIFORMS

LAURA MCINERNEY

school because of their lack of uniform.

By the 1830s, concern was so great that "penny clothing" societies allowed families to rent clothing or to get significant discounts – a sort of Bright House for clothes, if you will. Discounts also extended to shoes, which were particularly difficult to come by.

Evidence given to



the "State of Education" inquiry held by parliament in 1834 states: "They subscribe a penny or two pence a week, and are allowed to have shoes at one-half or a third less than their cost."

Stealing a trend started in the 1500s for charitable schools to give standardised long blue coats to orphaned and poor children, uniforms proved a good way of

ensuring clothes could be cheaply given to those most in need. By requiring everyone to wear the same outfits, the poorest were not marked out.

The standard blazer, shirt, tie and skirt/trouser combo of today's schools is, however, a relatively modern concept. Shorts and flat caps were common in the first half of the 20th century, with grey flannel trousers also standard.

The BBC reports that a uniform list for Scorton grammar in Preston, dating from the 1960s, now held by the British Schools Museum, included a "reindeer green belted mackintosh", with shorts, until a pupil's 15th birthday. How stylish!

From the 1970s until the early 2000s many schools experimented with looser uniforms, often changing ironed shirts for polo shirts, or allowing pupils to select from within a number of branded items – such as sweatshirts and leggings – rather than the traditional suit.

The appointment of Michael Gove as education secretary in 2010 prompted a turnaround in thinking after he advocated the return of blazers and ties. In February 2012 he even went on local radio in Devon and slammed King Edward VI community college for its policy of allowing pupils to wear what they wanted.

A consultation followed with pupils. Turned out they wanted a uniform; the school's website now shows children wearing matched outfits.



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

Everyone was ill.

## FRIDAY:

A fanfare followed the call by the Local Government Association for small local authority-maintained schools to be "exempt" from paying the apprenticeship levy, although many MPs seemed unaware that schools with few pupils will have to pay.

As the government pointed out, councils are responsible for paying the tax on their employees, which do include those employed in maintained schools. But it is up to the council how they pass costs on.

Many cash-strapped councils have put a flat percentage charge on to schools, which those in financial difficulty cannot afford. But the council can't afford it either. A tough one all round.

## SUNDAY:

When news of a big new government slogan leaves us scratching our heads, we

are lucky to have Justine Greening to clear things up.

Following Theresa May's announcement of a "shared society", the education secretary was pressed by Andrew Marr on his Sunday show to give "concrete examples".

Greening's answer, inevitably, was "grammar schools" and then something about technical education and apprenticeships. How does that constitute "sharing"? Mega-shrug.

## MONDAY:

Freshly installed Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman is worried about Brexit.

She told *The Guardian* this week that education risks "slipping down the political agenda" as a result of the national preoccupation with our European divorce.

Still, it's probably a distraction for the DfE given all the fights over funding.

## TUESDAY:

MPs turned to jokes during a debate on the proposed "sugar tax" on fizzy drinks, the

proceeds of which will allegedly be used to fund school sports. (Cynical? Us? WHAT?)

While managing to say little about what was new, the debating MPs kept themselves and the 2.3 people watching entertained with one-liners and anecdotes.

First, Tory backbench troublemaker Dr Sarah Wollaston warned that by focusing solely on sport as the solution to obesity, MPs risked "taking our eye off the ball". SEE WHAT SHE DID THERE!

Next Mike Kane, Labour's shadow schools minister, regaled listeners with stories of his time as a primary teacher. He denied he was ever the "sugar police", but admitted he would "patrol" the lunch hall, because he "knew what the afternoon would be like if [pupils] had had a can of Coke, a load of chocolate and a packet of crisps". Fat, presumably?

But the most surprising light-hearted moment came from schools minister Nick Gibb who speculated that MPs should "sit less and stand more".

"We run for office, stand for election and take our seats, but of the three, the most important is obviously running for office," he said.

Oh, how we laughed. And then poured ourselves a Pepsi and downed a packet of Revels to help to rid ourselves of the thought of Nick Gibb in Lycra.

## WEDNESDAY:

Forget whistleblowers. A school in Luton appears to have a problem with a snake in the grass. Or, rather, a boa constrictor in the head's office.

Ofsted has found that Chris Oakley, head of the fee-paying Luton Pentecostal Church Christian academy, has been keeping a 7ft snake, plus some tarantulas, in his office without checking if they pose a risk to pupils.

In a section of their report, spotted by *The Telegraph*, Ofsted inspectors warned that "no risk assessment has been made to ensure that keeping such animals in school does not pose a risk to children". This is the stuff that Roald Dahl novels are made of.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

# School Bulletin *with Sam King*



The West End cast of *School of Rock*

## Lloyd Webber hits the right note

Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber has given schools free rights for his newest musical, *School of Rock*.

The show, which opened in the West End last November, is based on a 2003 film of the same name

that follows an aspiring rock star, Dewey Finn, who poses as a substitute teacher at a prep school where he cajoles his class to form a rock group.

Speaking of the decision to waive a licensing fee, Lloyd Webber said: "I'm delighted that we are able to make our



schools' licence so quickly available. I encourage teachers and their students to pick up their instruments, get going on the script and show the world everything they've got to give."

The free licence will allow schools up to five

performances on their premises before the end of this year, and includes all the musical materials to download and print alongside a logo pack, education pack and teacher's guide.

**For more information, go to [schoolofrockthemusical.com/schools/](http://schoolofrockthemusical.com/schools/)**



(L-R) Stockton mayor Ken Dixon and Linda Dixon, Thomas Neal and Redcar and Cleveland mayor Barry Hunt

## Thomas wins calendar competition

An eight-year-old's artwork has been chosen to feature on the front of the 2017 Teesside community calendar.

Thomas Neal, a pupil at Kirkleatham Hall school in Redcar, took part in a competition that asked local schoolchildren to create a picture around the theme "Things I like about me".

His picture will now be seen in the 20,000 households near the Wilton, Billingham and North Tees industrial sites that receive the calendar, and will feature alongside the work of 12 other pupils.

The competition was judged by the mayors of Redcar and Cleveland and

Stockton, with representatives of companies that financially support the calendar, community groups, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive.

Nearly 100 pupils, teachers and parents from nine primary schools (plus A-listers Spongebob Squarepants and Peppa Pig) attended the awards ceremony at Middlesbrough college's STEM centre.

Now in its 28th year, the calendar – organised by local companies – tells local residents key health and safety information such as times of alarm tests on the industrial sites.

Winning artwork

## Sixth-formers become Guildhall guides

FEATURED

A group of sixth-form students became tour guides for the day at an exhibition in London's Guildhall Art Gallery as part of a nationwide initiative to get young people visiting museums and galleries.

The students from Trinity Catholic high school in Woodford, north London, were invited to work at the *Victorians Decoded: Art and Telegraphy* exhibition as part of a scheme run by Kids in Museums.

The charity works with museums, galleries, heritage sites and historic homes to encourage young people to engage with history and art.

After a receiving a two-week crash course at school on the history of the gallery's artefacts and paintings, the students took up their posts across the exhibition's four themed rooms.

The exhibition includes original code books, newspapers, a Roald Dahl-inspired messaging machine, telegraphic devices and telegraph cable samples.

Liz Bainbridge, who has headed the art department at Trinity for more than 30 years, saw the day trip as an opportunity to develop the students' literacy skills.

"We had started looking at how we facilitate getting kids out into the world to experience things. It improves literacy because it's different from the everyday and gives them something to write about – which is rich experience. Kids



The student guides  
Inset: Looking at the artefacts on display

are eloquent when they've got something to tell and say."

Alongside their guiding duties, the sixth-formers also had to run 10-minute activities for year 7 Trinity pupils, who also went to the exhibition, each linking to one of the artefacts on display.

Bainbridge said: "We wanted to get the year 7s involved as well. The kids went round and did 10-15 minutes with each set



of sixth-form students who chose a couple of paintings that they then produced an activity round. It was really fascinating."

## #Formers



The former extremists, Sammy, Nigel, Yasmin and Shahid

## CAMPAIGN TO TACKLE EXTREMISM

A social enterprise has released short films of former extremists discussing their experiences for use as an educational resource.

ConnectFutures, which works with organisations and communities to tackle extremism, has published the videos on its website, alongside resources for schools, to encourage dialogue amongst parents, teachers and pupils.

The films include stories from Yasmin, a former recruiter of women for extremist Islamic organisations, and Nigel, who joined the National Front in 1982 and was a national council member of the far-right group Combat 18.

Zubeda Limbada, director at ConnectFutures, said: "With the continued prominence of news about Islamist extremism and the rise of the far right, it has never been more important for young people and communities to discuss how individuals have been radicalised, and how we can prevent people from becoming extremists in the future.

"It's no longer enough to just tell people not to join violent extremist groups. Using the voice of the 'formers', we've got to make people understand why."

Crowdfunding raised £9,000 for the project.

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**M**ichael Fordham has been appointed specialist subject leader for history at the Inspiration Trust.

The Norwich-based trust, which operates 13 schools across East Anglia, was recently named by the Department for Education and the Education Policy Institute as the top schools group in the UK for progress at secondary level.

Fordham will develop the history curriculum from primary through to sixth-form, as well as establish professional development for teachers at the trust's new teaching school.

He was assistant headteacher at the West London free school, a role he held for just over a year. He also taught history at Hinchingsbrooke school in Huntingdon, and was head of history at Cottenham Village college in Cambridgeshire.

"History is a subject where breadth really matters," he said. "I do not want children to learn 'just enough' to see them through: I want them to have stories dancing around in their heads from which they can build up a meaningful sense of different periods of the past."

He starts his new job on May 1.



Michael Fordham



Rebecca Lyons



Hannah Wilson

**Rebecca Lyons** is the new headmistress at St Swithun's junior school, an independent day prep school in Hampshire for girls between the 3 and 11, and boys from 3 to 7.

She is currently deputy head at Stroud, King Edward VI prep school, where she has been responsible for pastoral care.

She also sits on the governing body of a local state junior school and has recently become an inspector for the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Lyons was director of studies at West Hill Park school from 2011-13 and head of

English at Stroud from 2007-11. She has also taught across the primary age range in the maintained sector and internationally from 1997.

She said she was attracted to St Swithun's by the "warmth of relationships between children and staff", as well as an ethos resonating with her core belief that "the broad talents of all children must be nurtured and celebrated."

She joins the school at the start of the summer term.

The co-founder of WomenEd, **Hannah Wilson**, has joined the Glyn Learning Foundation (GLF) as headteacher of the new Aureus school, and regional director of the GLF Oxfordshire hub.

The multi-academy trust, established in 2012, currently oversees 17 primary and four secondary schools across Surrey, Croydon, Oxfordshire and West Sussex.

Wilson joins GLF from the Harris Federation, where she worked for ten years in numerous senior roles, most recently as a professional learning consultant leader and teaching school facilitator at the federation's teaching school alliance. Before this she was vice-principal at Harris Academy Morden.

"I'm a big believer in being a system leader and working across schools rather than being territorial at the one school. GLF has a very outward-based approach to school improvement and system leadership, and that really resonated with me."

She said she hoped to "create more flexible opportunities" for GLF staff, and will look at developing part-time and flexible roles to "recruit the right people".

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)

## A new primary school website - for the price of your old one?

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SCHOOLS WEEK

## SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Solutions:  
Next week

## Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

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.