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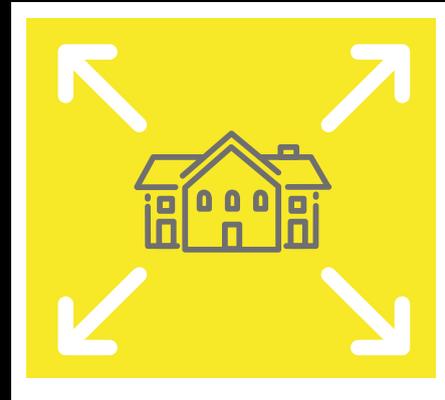
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JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

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SCHOOLS WEEK

MEET THE NEWS TEAM

schoolsweek.co.uk

**Laura McInerney**
EDITOR@MISS_MCINERNEY
LAURA.MCINERNEY@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Cath Murray**
FEATURES EDITOR@CATHMURRAY_
CATH.MURRAY@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK

Please inform the Schools Week editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication.

**Tom Mendelsohn**
SUB EDITOR@TOM_MENDELSON
TOM.MENDELSON@LSECT.COM**Freddie Whittaker**
CHIEF REPORTER@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Alix Robertson**
SENIOR REPORTER@ALIXROBERTSON4
ALIX.ROBERTSON@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Jess Staufenberg**
SENIOR REPORTER@STAUFENBERGJ
JESS.STAUFBENBERG@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK

THE TEAM

Head designer: Nicky Phillips
 Designer: Matthew Willsons
 Photographer: Ellis O'Brien
 Financials: Helen Neilly
 Sales team leader: Bridget Stockdale
 Administration: Frances Ogefero Dell
 PA to managing director: Victoria Boyle

**Sam King**
JUNIOR REPORTER@KINGSAMANTHA_
SAMANTHA.KING@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK

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**Shane Mann**
MANAGING DIRECTOR@SHANERMANN
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

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Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd
161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@schoolsweek.co.uk

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NEWS

SATs scrapped for seven-year-olds by 2023

FREDDIE WHITTAKER & JESS STAUFENBERG
@SCHOOLSWEET

SATs for seven-year-olds are to be scrapped, but not for at least six years, and it all hinges on controversial new baseline tests for reception children.

Justine Greening this week confirmed plans to make key stage 1 SATs non-compulsory by 2023 and introduce a new baseline test for reception children instead.

The changes would "free up teachers to educate and inspire young children while holding schools to account in a proportionate and effective way", she said.

However, closer inspection of the policy documents reveals that the SATs will only be binned if the new baseline measure, set to be first deployed in 2020, is successful, which could happen later than the education secretary envisages.

The announcement stated that KS1 SATs would become non-statutory "as soon as the reception baseline assessment has become fully established".

The decision not to scrap the tests earlier has been challenged by teaching unions.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, claimed the wait is "bad news for children, parents and education professionals".

Officials insisted changes could not be made any sooner because the tests are still needed to calculate the progress of primary school pupils.

The reasoning is that before 2023, there

will still be cohorts who started school before 2020 moving through key stage 1, and who will therefore not have taken the reception baseline test.

Having data from pupils who have sat both the baseline and KS1 SATs will enable officials to evaluate the correlation between the two tests, and provide assurances that the new baseline provides a "sufficiently strong correlation" to key stage 2.

The plan to introduce new baseline tests comes just two years after the government abandoned its last attempt, which ended in disaster.

The DfE wants the new test to be a "teacher-mediated assessment", which simply means the teacher will be present.

It will be developed "in conjunction with the teaching profession", and aims to give "credit" to the work and progress achieved by teachers for their pupils, according to a government press release.

Speculation has surrounded the baseline assessment since three approved providers rolled out their assessments in September 2015, only for a study to find that they were not comparable, effectively cancelling the project.



Justine Greening

receive less than secondary schools despite having many pupils in the same age range.

Extending minimum-funding guarantees to primary and middle schools is the latest concession the government has made to the formula following complaints from MPs, school leaders and parents over inequalities in the funding system.

But despite these concessions, including an additional £1.3 billion of funding announced in July, ministers remain under pressure to give more money to schools, which still face significant real-terms cuts as a result of rising costs.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies confirmed that the extra cash would only reduce the cuts faced by schools by 2019 from 6.5 per cent to 4.6 per cent, while the Education Policy Institute has warned that schools face inflationary pressures of far beyond the guaranteed rise.

Natalie Perera, the EPI's head of research, said schools which get the minimum increase of 0.5 per cent under the formula "will still face real-terms cut of just over two per cent per pupil by 2020" as a result of inflation.

She dismissed the minimum funding levels as "notional amounts" that will be subject to local authority decision-making.

"There is no guarantee that this is how much each school will receive over the next

One such provider, Early Excellence, developed an observation-based model of assessment which was favoured by the majority of primary schools.

The other two, Durham University's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, and the National Foundation for Education Research's Centre for Assessment, created test-based models.

It is not clear from today's announcement what kind of assessment any future test will feature.

Julie McCulloch, a primary specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said a new baseline assessment in reception was "good for children and schools" because "schools will be given credit for a pupil's progress through their whole time at primary school from the age of four to 11, instead of the current system which measures progress only from the age of seven".

The government has also announced that its long-awaited multiplication tables test will be introduced for year 4 pupils from 2019.

The policy was first announced as part of the Conservatives' general election manifesto in 2015 but focused on year 6 pupils, rather than year 4.

P-LEVELS DITCHED IN FAVOUR OF 'PUPILS CAN' STATEMENTS

The government is scrapping its so-called "P-levels" for pupils working below the national curriculum level.

The DfE has published its "ongoing" consultation response to the review, which looked at how pupils working below the standard should be tested.

It has decided that from the school year starting next September, schools will no longer need to assess pupils for "subject-specific learning" by using the P-levels.

Pre-key stage standards will instead be made permanent, requiring teachers to assess each pupil against specific "the pupil can..." sentences.

Teachers will assess each child as being either "below", "at" or "above" this "pupil can" standard.

For pupils not taking subject-specific learning, who are often those with the most severe needs, the DfE will pilot assessments in seven areas: responsiveness, curiosity, discovery, anticipation, persistence, initiation and investigation.

Teachers will not be required to submit this data.

The pilot will run throughout this academic year and results will be evaluated before any final decisions on whether to implement this approach on a statutory basis are taken, the DfE said.

The report was enthusiastically received by many teachers working in special educational needs, but concerns about the lack of requirement to report data.

Barney Angliss, an SEND consultant, called on the government to reject this particular recommendation.

"If it's important to collect data on other children, it's important to collect data on these children too," he said. "It's unforgivable not to."

PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO GET AT LEAST £3,500 PER PUPIL

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Primary schools will get at least £3,500 per pupil and secondary schools will get £4,800, Justine Greening has finally confirmed.

All schools are also guaranteed a minimum increase of 0.5 per cent in their per-pupil allocation in 2018-19 and a further one per cent in 2020.

In a statement to Parliament yesterday, the education secretary said the "historic" change would even out longstanding regional inequalities, though local authorities will still have the power to divvy up the funds in unequal ways until at least 2020.

The national funding formula has been over a decade in the making, and successive education secretaries have pledged to change school funding to a per-pupil measure.

Greening said implementation is to be staggered. There will be funding floors of £3,300 and £4,500 in 2018-19 for primary and secondary schools respectively, which will edge up to £3,500 and £4,800.

Middle schools have also been given a minimum funding guarantee of £4,000 per pupil in the next academic year and £4,200 in 2019-20. This means middle schools will

two years," she said. "Key stage 3 pupils in middle schools will only attract £4,200, so this could pose difficulties in areas where there are still significant numbers of middle schools."

Schools are expected to receive the funding directly from 2020.

The sums inspired a lukewarm response from teaching unions, who demanded more money.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the "fundamental problem" was there was not enough funding going into education, and said schools needed an additional £2 billion a year by 2020 to beat inflation.

On top of these allocations, the government announced details of a £110,000 lump sum all schools will receive to meet "fixed costs", while additional funding was also granted for the most remote, rural schools.

Schools will get additional money for every child from a deprived background, and for those with low prior attainment and pupils with English as an additional language. There will also be cash available for schools with issues related to their premises, such as PFI costs, and there is a mobility factor, based on the number of pupils who arrive mid-term.

RURAL SCHOOLS GET SUBSTANTIAL BUDGET BOOST OF £175,000

Rural and isolated schools will get up to £175,000 a year to meet fixed costs and manage their "unique challenges".

On top of an annual lump sum of £110,000 that will be handed to all schools, the most remote schools will get a further "sparsity" grant of up to £65,000.

Both funding pots were announced last year, but the Department for Education has only just set out precisely how much the schools will get.

Small remote primary schools will get up to £25,000 in extra sparsity funding, while the most rural secondary schools will get up to £65,000 each – amounting to a significant boost to budgets when added to the lump sum.

The exact amount each school gets will depend on their size and location. Funding is tapered to avoid "cliff edges" where small changes in pupil numbers would see schools lose cash. There is also a funding floor, so the smallest and most remote schools attract the full amount.

The impact of funding changes on small and rural schools has been one of the key issues throughout the development of the national funding formula as many influential Conservative MPs represent rural constituencies serving small populations.

"When the lump sum is coupled with the sparsity factor, we are confident that this provides sufficient support for the small and remote schools that play an essential role in rural communities," the government said.

DfE closes just three failing small private schools

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

CONTINUED
FROM FRONT

Almost 200 small independent schools are still open despite repeatedly failing to reach Ofsted standards, according to new *Schools Week* analysis, suggesting the government needs to do more to intervene.

In the past three years, 190 non-associated private schools failed the independent school standards but stayed open, and 48 per cent are still open despite falling short twice or more. Just three have closed.

One school, Rabia Girls and Boys School in Luton, is still open despite seven separate failed inspections.

Non-associated independent schools are private schools which don't have an umbrella organisation, including non-denominational faith schools and Steiner schools.

Around 20 per cent of the 1,081 non-associated independent schools in the country failed to meet the independent school standards since 2014-15, Ofsted data obtained by *Schools Week* shows.

But only three schools have actually been shut down in that time. The Department for Education issued six more with deregistration notices, but these were either all appealed or ignored after the school improved.

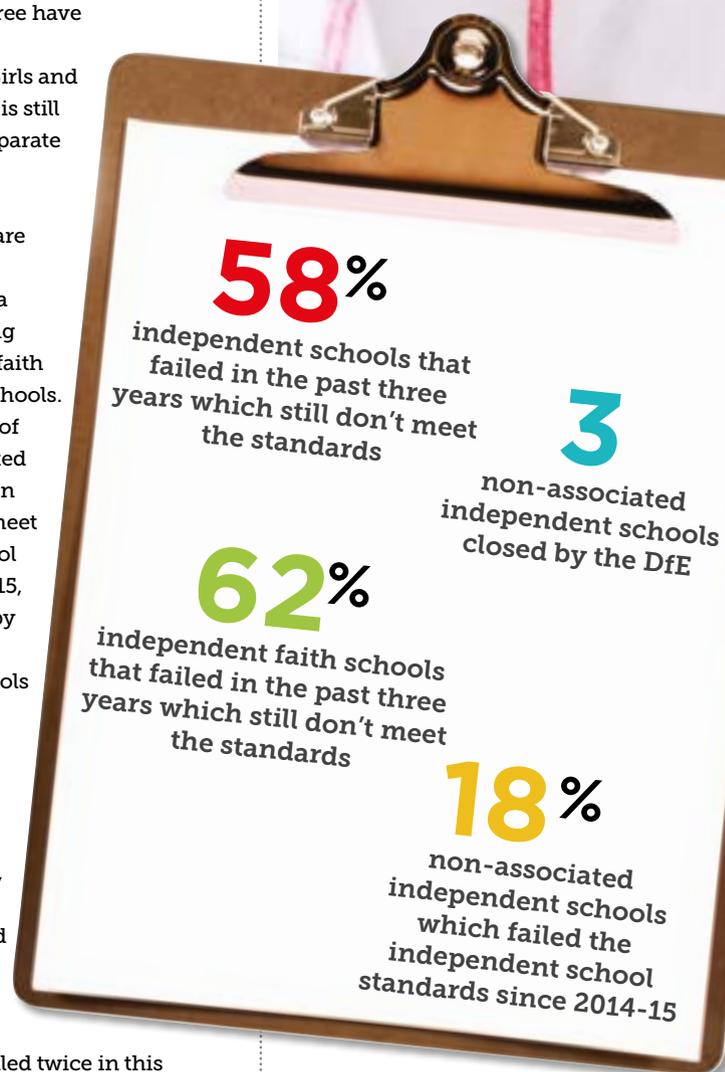
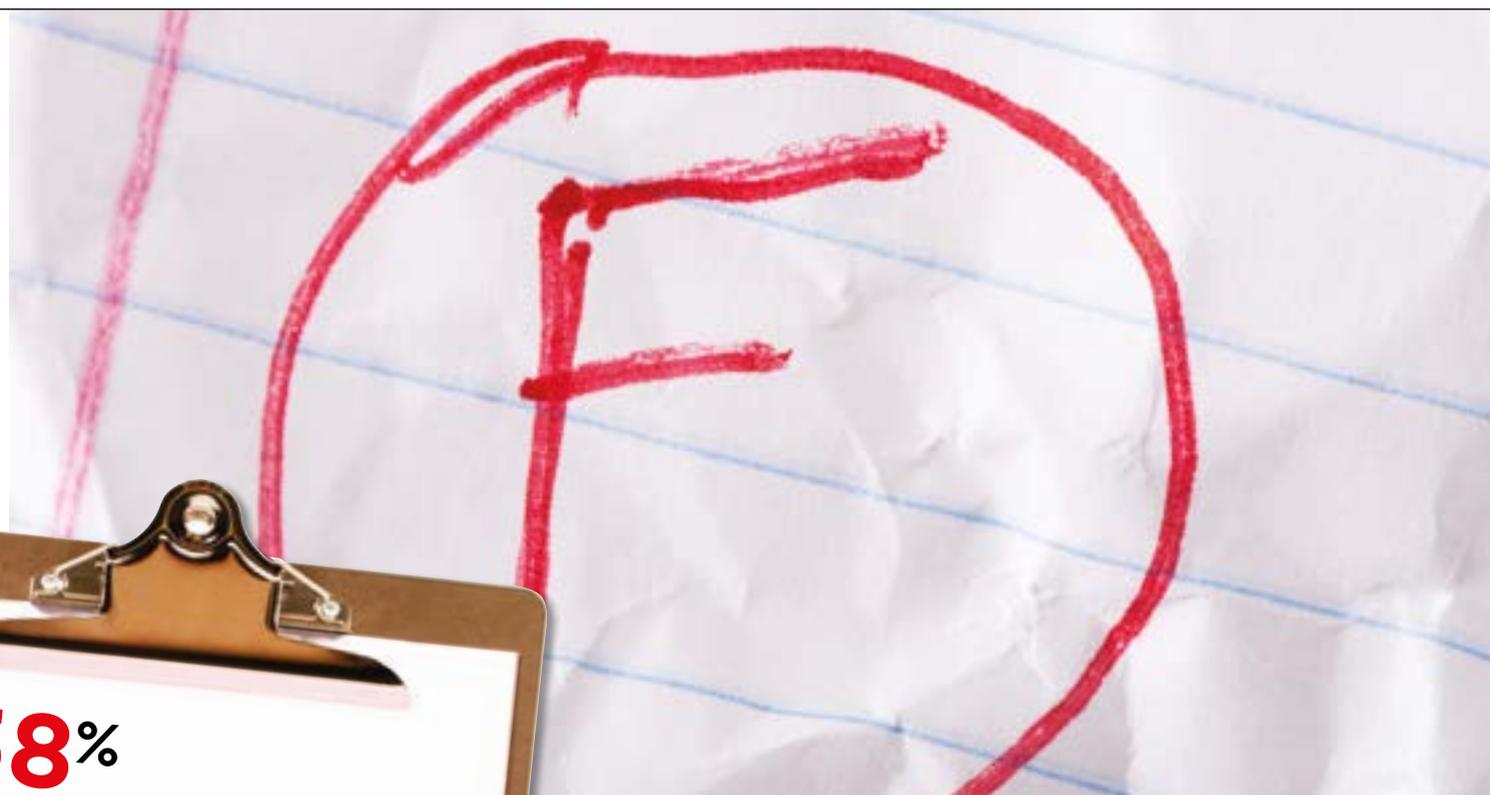
In fact, 30 per cent of the schools have failed twice in this time, while 13 per cent failed three times, six failed four times and three schools failed five or more times. Half of these are faith schools.

Dr Farid Panjwani, the director of the Centre for Research and Evaluation in Muslim Education at the UCL Institute of Education, said the figures show headteachers in small faith schools need more support to understand what the standards require, and that Ofsted's idea of failure and the schools' "might not be the same thing".

"The school needs to be clearly informed what those standards are and what they mean," he said. "Ofsted also needs to appreciate what the school is trying to do, and not make them feel particularly scrutinised".

Muslim schools made up 50 per cent of failed faith schools, Christian schools 28 per cent, and Jewish schools 22 per cent.

Independent schools can fail across five main areas: safeguarding, health and safety; moral and social development of pupils; premises and accommodation; complaints procedures; and the quality of education,



including teaching and the curriculum.

Schools Week analysis shows that the schools which did close were not necessarily even the ones which failed most frequently.

The Cornerstone School in Surrey, a Christian school, closed after just one inspection in 2015, which found pupils were "not open to the views" of others, leading the headteacher to step down and its doors to shut.

The King of Kings School in Manchester, however, has failed five times and is open even though it is still below the standards. The Centre Academy East Anglia, another Christian school, has failed four times and has similarly yet to close.

Ayasofia primary school in east London was thrown off the independent schools' register in September last year after it fell below the standards four times, in part because its secular curriculum was "narrow and lacked depth". The school appealed the decision, but a judge ruled it should close.

Two schools Jewish schools in north London, the Beis Aharon School and the Getters Talmud Torah School, are still open despite both failing five times, over an insufficiently broad curriculum and poor safeguarding checks on teachers respectively.

Jay Harman at Humanists UK accused the DfE of maintaining a "long-standing deference" to religious schools as a reason for inaction.

A department spokesperson claimed that regulatory action was taken against

any school which did not comply with the independent school standards, but insisted that complete deregistration only occurred in a "small minority of cases".

More than half of the schools which failed the standards at some point since 2014-15 still haven't rectified their issues, according to their most recent Ofsted inspections.

A spokesperson for Ofsted said it was up to the DfE, as the registration authority for independent schools, to "decide what action to take once we have reported our inspection findings".

RABIA GIRLS' AND BOYS' SCHOOL: THE WORST OFFENDER

The Rabia Girls' and Boys' School, an independent Islamic school in Luton, has failed the independent school standards seven times: first in 2014, then twice in 2015, twice more in 2016 and twice again this year – more than any other school in the country.

Sir Michael Wilshaw, former chief inspector of Ofsted, eventually wrote to the then-education secretary Nicky Morgan about the school last year, urging her to get tough.

Meanwhile the Charity Commission has been chasing the Rabia Educational Trust over late accounts since 2012 – eventually using its powers to get copies of its bank statements.

Despite this, the school appears to remain open with no notification of its closure, and its website is still up and running; it has also filed its most recent accounts.

During its inspections, Ofsted failed the school on a range of standards, including inadequate careers advice, lesson-planning, teaching British values, and provision for special needs pupils.

A particularly critical report two years ago noted that girls should not be limited to "knitting and sewing" in the design and technology curriculum.

The school did improve – an inspection nine months later found girls now had a science laboratory, and equal access to resources.

The report said the school only needed to make better safeguarding arrangements to meet the standards.

But sixth months later, it once more failed four

standards and found that male and female staff were being separated during training sessions – prompting Sir Michael to write to Morgan and sparking national headlines.

He wrote that schools like Rabia were "actively undermining" the independent schools standards and urged Morgan to "further review the DfE guidance to independent schools on these matters".

Throughout all of this, the Charity Commission has been chasing the school's trust for persistently handing its accounts in late, as well as over governance, compliance and financial record-keeping issues.

When trustees did not comply with the commission, it had to use its powers to get hold of bank statement copies to build its case. The trust has since complied.

As of June, the commission has concluded the trust is now compliant on its accounts.

However the watchdog concluded that it is not satisfied "this is a charity capable of operating the school in a way which meets the independent school standards".

In the school's latest inspection, Ofsted found pupils still didn't make enough progress and lessons were not well-planned in April. There is no evidence the school has been closed or issued with deregistration.

Schools Week has repeatedly contacted Rabia Girls' and Boys' School and the Rabia Educational Trust but the phone rings out and emails have not been responded to.

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NEWS

RULES ON 32 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BOARDS PUBLISHED IN FULL

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The government has published guidance on how 32 new sub-regional school improvement boards (SRIBs) set up to help struggling schools will operate.

The new boards, which were introduced in July, will recommend how the government should spend £140 million of annual school improvement funding.

Newly published terms of reference explain how often the boards will meet, who will sit on them, what their roles and purposes will be, and how they will ensure transparency.

However, one academic has warned the boards could lead to "turf wars" with regional schools commissioners (RSCs).

In general, the SRIBs should assemble at least twice during each application round for the £140m strategic school improvement fund, which provides additional cash to schools needing to improve performance and pupil attainment.

The fund opened its second round of applications this week, after granting a total of £20 million to the first set of 56 successful applicants.

SRIB members will be drawn from teaching school councils, local authorities and diocesan boards of education.

Robert Hill, a leading education policy academic, has however questioned the need for the boards in the first place.

"It's not clear to me why we need RSC and education-standards delivery teams. It will inevitably lead to turf wars," he said.

Hill told *Schools Week* the boards would "bring all the key players round the table" but argued their remit is too narrowly focused on a fund "that is only going to last for 18 months".

A register of conflicts of interest will be held for all members, and a record of each meeting's discussions and decisions will be published on the DfE website.

The SRIBs are the brainchild of Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, who first floated the idea when he was the RSC for the south-west of England.

In a submission to the education selection committee in 2015, he wrote that he wanted to develop four sub-regional advisory boards to "build on the expertise and knowledge that our headteacher board has provided".

The launch of the boards has fuelled speculation that the government is trying to recreate elements of the local authority system within central government.

Schools Week reported earlier this month that the DfE is advertising two "school improvement" roles at the Sheffield office of John Edwards, the RSC for the east midlands and the Humber, for between six and nine months.

The plan is to recruit them from schools, multi-academy trusts or councils, and they will work part-time, earning a maximum salary of £67,680 pro rata.

While only two roles are currently advertised, *Schools Week* understands this is a trial run for a wider recruitment policy that could be replicated across the country.

CEO rules cause headteacher board election chaos

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Confusion reigns in the current headteacher board elections, amid accusations that ballots aren't being received and heads are "too nervous" to stand.

What's more, would-be voters have been uncertain whether executive heads of academies who also act as trust CEOs will be able to vote – even though they make up the majority of candidates standing for election – because trust bosses are forbidden from voting.

However, the DfE has now confirmed to *Schools Week* that CEOs who are also executive headteachers may vote.

The elections are being held now as the incumbents are all stepping down from three-year terms. Voting opened last Friday and will close next Thursday, but one source close to the process told *Schools Week* that about half the heads they spoke to had yet to receive their ballot.

Instead, many headteachers have been forced to ring a helpline to be able to vote.

Those votes that have been sent out were emailed to a named head or executive head of each academy, *Schools Week* understands, but until the DfE's clarification as we went to press, executive heads with shared duties as trust CEOs had been left in limbo.

"No one seems to know how MAT CEOs and executive headteachers will vote," said one school leader who did not wish to be named.



Stephen Tierney

They added that it was "rather strange" that CEOs were still not allowed to vote. CEOs were banned from the voting process in the first elections three years ago, but the multi-academy system now has many more of them.

Fifty per cent of candidates are CEOs, while 30 per cent are heads and 17 per cent are executive heads, though a proportion of these CEOs are executive heads.

The controversial reputation the boards have earned has prevented more candidates from standing, according to another senior MAT leader who wished to remain anonymous.

"Ongoing issues" around "lack of transparency" has caused some headteachers to be "nervous about being associated" they said.

Teaching unions have been especially critical, claiming they undermine the role of democratically elected local authorities, shut out headteachers at maintained schools, and were created only to "force schools into academy status".

The amount of work involved as a board member also means fewer candidates are standing than "one might hope, which is itself concerning," the MAT leader added.

Stephen Tierney, chair of the Heads Roundtable and a CEO of a MAT in Blackpool, said the "confusion" around the elections was making the headteacher boards seem like the "shadow side of education", without proper processes or transparency.

Schools Week has previously reported concerns that MATs have been planning to lobby for multiple members to sit on headteacher boards.

But the Department for Education's website states that no more than one school leader per MAT may be elected onto any one board.

Voting is also behind schedule, as current members' terms were originally supposed to end in the summer, with new members in place for the start of the month.

But voting for new members closes next Thursday (September 22) and results are now expected "before the autumn half-term", according to the election site.

CARTER: IS YOUR SCHOOL AN 'IMPROVING DECLINER'?

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

The national schools commissioner wants to challenge the idea there are only "the very best" or "very weak" schools by dividing them into eight different streams: strongest performers, rapid improvers, steady improvers, steady and secure, rapid decliners, steady decliners, improver decliners, and weakest performers.

At a conference in London on Tuesday, Sir David Carter revealed his "Schematic" tool, which CEOs, RSCs and other school leaders can use to work out whether their school is improving or declining. It will also be provided as a paper package for multi-academy trust leaders during internal reviews.

Sir David believes the tool is "more subtle" than Ofsted judgments and will give leaders more information about steps they should take to increase their schools' performance.

He wants it to challenge the idea that schools are either "the very best" or "very weak". He believes instead that there are eight categories, ranging from the "strongest performers" whose performance remains excellent over time, and "rapid improvers" whose performance suddenly shoots up, to "steady improvers" whose performance gets better over a longer time, and the "steady and secure" which are quite



David Carter

good and don't dip.

On the other side of the divide, he has identified "rapid decliners" whose performance drops drastically, "steady decliners" where performance tapers down over time, "improver decliners" which make initial gains but see a drop, and the "weakest performers" which rarely hit floor standards and see consistently poor results.

Schematic echoes the health-checks for multi-academy trusts that were piloted from January. It should allow leaders to gauge which schools and trusts are "capacity givers", and so should expand, and which are "capacity takers" and should not.

Once a "capacity taker" is improving again, Sir David wants it to "repay its debt" and help other schools do the same, he told delegates at the Westminster

Education Forum.

The model will be shared with schools as "widely as possible" between now and Christmas, although its use will not be compulsory.

He told *Schools Week* that RSCs may use the labels to "talk over" expansion plans with MATs, adding that the team had "quite deliberately" not recreated Ofsted grades but were instead going for a measure of improvement that was "more subtle".

"School improvement is not linear, it's messy," he said.

But Robert Hill, an education consultant, said he "wasn't sure another categorisation model is what schools need right now".

His words were echoed by Mark Wright, the incoming director of leadership at the National Education Union. He believes the tool could be "another trawl for evidence" which would add to headteachers' workloads, and wants to know "exactly what kind of criteria" are behind each category.

Neither Progress 8 nor exam results are flawless measures, he pointed out.

However, Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said Sir David had put huge work into the model, and brought "a real intelligence" about the school system.

He welcomed its rejection of "gimmicky quick-hits" and emphasis on school improvement as evolutionary.

NEWS

Academy transfers up 81% - and £2.9 million

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Academy trusts have received more than £7 million this year for taking over schools abandoned or handed over by previous sponsors – compared with £4.2 million last year.

The figures, released for the first time yesterday, show the increasing value of the school transfer market, which saw 165 schools passed from one academy trust to another last year.

The list includes the 11 schools once run by the collapsed academy chain Lilac Sky Academy Trust, which wound up in 2016, as well as various others with financial or performance difficulties, labelled in a recent report as “schools no one wants”.

This is a significant jump from 2013-14 when only 15 academies moved to a different trust, and represents an 81 per cent increase from last year, when 91 schools changed hands.

Five schools in the past two years have arrived with a cash sweetener worth more than half a million pounds to their new sponsors. Ely College in Cambridgeshire, which was passed from CfBT Schools Trust to Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust, had the highest dowry at £686,000.

Around £6.2 million was given to the academies which moved in the past academic year. The remaining £900,000 was paid out to academy trusts granted legacy funds for schools they had taken over in previous years.

The proportion of sponsors granted



funds this year was around the same as previously: a third of sponsors completing a takeover took an average sum of £106,700 per school. This was lower than the previous average of £140,200 in 2015-16.

The Department for Education has insisted this year's figures are “not comparable with earlier years”, due to “differences in what it has been possible to include in the total costs compiled”.

“It is encouraging that this data shows that as the number of trusts able to take over academies has grown, so has the ability to improve value for money,” said a spokesperson.

The five academies that earned half a million each are Ely College, The City Academy Bristol, Sawtry Community College, Ipswich Academy, and The West

Somerset Community College.

Ely College was covered in Schools Week in July 2015, when it cancelled a week's work experience and made year 10 pupils take additional GCSEs halfway through their courses to make sure they were “Progress 8 compliant”.

Its principal Evelyn Forde later apologised for her actions, saying that “no student will be compelled to take on any additional study”.

The school was left without a sponsor in February 2016, when the CfBT Schools Trust decided it had not made “rapid enough” improvements. It was adopted by Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust in September of that year.

In May, a Schools Week investigation revealed plans to massage the figures for the costs of passing failing schools between academy trusts.

We were initially previously refused access to hard figures relating to the past year after lodging an initial request in March.

However, we were sent a series of emails which accidentally revealed that the academies minister Lord Nash had “agreed” to publish the figures in April last year, but had asked civil servants to bury the information in a larger report, in case it “highlights high brokerage costs”.

Officials were urged to explore “the option of publishing as part of the annual accounts or another large data set” – a suggestion branded “unacceptable” by transparency campaigners.

TEACHING ASSISTANT APPRENTICES ARE PAID JUST £3.50 PER HOUR

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

The vast majority of apprentice teaching assistants are being used as “cheap labour” for just £3.50 an hour, the union GMB has found.

Analysis of 190 TA apprenticeship vacancies revealed that 143 (75 per cent) were advertised at the legal minimum wage for those in their first year of training.

A TA apprenticeship is a training programme that lasts around two years, in which participants learn how to support teaching and learning. During the course, they help set up the classroom, supervise pupils and support them in their work.

More schools are advertising the jobs since the government introduced the apprenticeship levy in April allowing schools to gain cash to fund the roles.

Andy Prendergast, a GMB organiser, described the £3.50 hourly rate as “a miserly reward for an important job”.

The average hourly wage advertised for a TA apprentice was just £3.81, while the highest on offer was £6, per the vacancies advertised on www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk in August.

The £3.50 rate is less than half the £7.50 national minimum wage for over-25s, and somewhat lower than the regular national minimum wage for under 18s, which is £4.05.

According to the National Careers Service, a TA starting salary is between £11,500 and £14,000 a year, for 32 to 40 hours a week. This can rise to £17,000 with experience.

Many of GMB's TA members are at risk of redundancy and are having their hours reduced, he said, and “there are real fears that apprentices will be left to fulfil tasks that should be carried out by experienced professionals”, according to Prendergast.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “Apprentices must be paid a minimum of £3.50 per hour but most receive much more than this. We believe school leaders are best placed to use their professional judgement to decide how much to pay their staff, including apprentices.”

More than 4,000 teaching assistant posts have been lost in secondary schools since 2012, according to school workforce data published by the government in June.

Schools Week reported in March that the David Ross Education Trust was consulting on plans to cut up to 40 support staff jobs across its schools. GMB's analysis found Eresby School in Lincolnshire, a member of DRET, advertising a TA apprenticeship at the lowest rate.

Jon Richards, the national secretary of UNISON, told *Schools Week* that “all support staff apprenticeships are being done on the cheap”.

“Apprenticeships are replacing jobs that had previously been full-time, damaging the good name of posts,” he said. “We all know it is funding cuts that are forcing schools to cut corners and wages.”

David Cobb, chief executive of Oceanova, a specialist in teacher recruitment and training, said that while “apprenticeships are a great opportunity”, they should not come “at the expense of well-being or being fair with pay”.

NAO: DFE'S TEACHER-RETENTION EFFORTS ARE NOT WORKING

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government cannot prove its efforts to boost teacher retention and quality are having a positive impact or achieving value for money, the National Audit Office has declared in a damning new report.

In a major blow to the Department for Education's workload agenda, the report also reveals that half of school leaders have not engaged with the government's flagship ‘workload challenge’ programme at all, and that only £91,000 has been spent on programmes to support workload or pupil behaviour – even though these were flagged as key issues to keep teachers in the profession.

The NAO wants the DfE to publish “clear measures of success” and plans for evaluating the success of recruitment and retention programmes, and accused the department of failing to “coherently” set out how it can work with schools to improve the teaching workforce.

The report is released today and follows an investigation by the powerful Public Accounts Committee, which last year questioned the value for money offered by teacher training schemes and incentives.

Meg Hillier, the MP who chairs the committee, said that “the rise in teacher vacancies in secondary schools nationally is



Kevin Courtney

a key risk for pupils”.

This new assessment, undertaken by the government's spending watchdog, notes that although £70 million was spent last year trying to support existing teachers, interventions had been on a “relatively small scale”, and just a tiny fraction of the money – £91,000 – was earmarked to solve workload issues.

There is “limited evidence” that the initiatives actually make a difference to retention rates. Auditors found that while the teaching workforce has grown as a whole, secondary schools face “significant challenges” to keep pace with rising pupil numbers, which are expected to increase by a fifth in the next eight years.

Amyas Morse, the head of the NAO, described the trends on both retention and recruitment as “concerning”, and said that

pressure on teachers will grow unless these are addressed.

The DfE said it recognises the “challenges facing schools”, and claimed it is taking “significant steps” to address them.

“We have established a £75 million fund to support high-quality professional development in those schools where teacher retention is an issue, and we are making it easier to advertise vacancies,” a spokesperson said. “In addition, we are working with Ofsted to tackle workload and will continue to engage with the profession to better understand the specific challenges and how we can address them.”

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the report's findings were “an indictment of a record of failings” stretching back over several years.

“The Department for Education has failed to engage with schools on issues of recruitment, retention and professional development,” he said.

“Its response to an ongoing crisis has been on a scale far too modest to achieve effective change and has failed to collect the basic information which would allow it to address acute local-level problems.”



Meg Hillier

NEWS

The Expandables: Academy trusts are supersized

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Exclusive

To kick off the first term of 2017-18, *Schools Week* has delved into the data on academy trust expansion over the last year. Although the headlines have been full of trusts shedding their schools, populations are booming at many others. We set out to find out what is driving this growth.

Twenty academy trusts grew by taking over five or more schools last year – with some even managing to triple in size.

Using Department for Education data on open academies, we looked at every takeover during the 2016-17 academic year, as well as schools which are planning to open between now and the end of 2017.*

Of the academy trusts that “supersized” this past year, the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust grew the most, taking on nine new schools and growing from 18 to 27 in total.



The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust started from the largest base – holding 22 schools in September 2016 – and took on five new schools over the following 12 months to also reach a total of 27 this term.

But certain smaller trusts took on almost as many, with three chains grabbing seven schools each.

Reach South Academy Trust – which only had one school this time last year – now encompasses eight primaries, and has told *Schools Week* there will be announcements about further expansion “in the near future”. It just so happens to be a sister chain to Reach2, the largest primary school academy trust, and is led by Sir Steve Lancashire, a prominent member of the Headteacher Board.



Meanwhile L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust, based in Nottingham, grew from 13 schools to 21, and the Learner's Trust grew from three to 10. St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust doubled its size from seven to 14 and is also lining up new additions for this academic year.



GLF schools, led by Jon Chaloner from the Headteachers Round Table, notably took

on an extra five schools during 2016-17, rising from 19 to 24. It has a further three takeovers due before the end of the year, bringing its numbers up to 27, and was also granted three new schools in April through the free school programme.

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust rose from eight to 11 schools over the last year, but with four more takeovers due before Christmas it will have taken on seven altogether, bringing its total to 15.



The Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, which was originally set up as CWA Academy Trust and received one of the lowest scores for performance last year, doubled in size last year, growing from six to 12. And Ebor Academy Trust, the first MAT in York, grew from five to 11 schools.



Some much smaller trusts have also grown significantly: Severn Academies Educational Trust and Yorkshire and the Humber Cooperative Learning Trust both increased from just one each to six, and the Worcester Diocesan Academies Trust expanded from two to seven schools.

The trend for local expansions

Most growing academy trusts are in local clusters or ‘hubs’.

Richard Ludlow, the chief executive of Ebor Academy Trust, is planning to run four hubs of between eight and 10 schools “within relatively easy reach of one another”. The trust owned five schools last year but expects to be 20-strong by September 2018.



Executive headteachers are employed to “lead and quality-assure” each hub, said Ludlow, adding: “It is the executive headteachers’ jobs to make sure all our schools operate to the highest of professional standards.”

Gary Peile, chief executive of the Active Learning Trust, said the hub model his trust uses across Cambridgeshire, Lowestoft and Ipswich “means best



Richard Ludlow



practice and knowledge are shared at local level”.

ALT is opening two new schools in Littleport this month to meet a need for additional pupil places in secondary and special education. This is being managed by executive headteachers from two of its other Cambridgeshire schools who have the “experience and expertise” to guide the process. Another new school will open in Ipswich next year.

Michael Cowland, the interim chief executive at the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, said grouping schools into clusters prevents them from feeling lost.

PDET’s 23 schools are all in Northamptonshire, except one on the Rutland border.

“I think our school in Rutland probably felt a bit more isolated until we had some more on the north of the county joining us,” he said.

The trust is building “regional learning communities” over the next 12 months, but “because we’ve got a large number of schools, it will become increasingly hard to know these schools intimately, so we’re thinking how we can best make use of these clusters.”

Jon Chaloner, the chief executive of GLF Schools, said he had split his member schools into primary and secondary clusters.

“We focused on primary first and, in light of the initial geographical spread, focused on developing clusters to enable more local collaboration and support,” he said.

The trust has recently turned its attention to

secondary level, growing from one to four secondary schools in 2016.

Religious responsibility

Eight of the expanding trusts were diocesan multi-academy trusts, catering for Christian schools.

St Edmundsbury’s chief executive Jane Sheat has seen her two-year-old trust double in size since September 2016, from seven church schools to 14. She stressed it was important for her trust to be “rooted in Christian values”.

John Crane, chief executive of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust, said diocesan trusts aimed to provide “a home” for any church school that wanted to become an academy, but that their rapid growth had also come as an academy solution for schools that were “in trouble”.

“Sometimes with the Church of England ... the choice is little more limited, because if you get a church school in trouble then the diocese has to provide a solution,” he said. “They’re not going to turn their back on any school.”

His trust holds “a level of responsibility to those children at that school”, he added. So where “some secular trusts might get to pick and choose” the schools they take in, dioceses support any church school in need.

His trust has grown from 10 to 16 academies in the last year. Normally, he said, academies that come to join it “need a sponsored solution”, for different reasons.

“Sometimes it’s Ofsted, sometimes it’s a warning notice for the local authority, or back-to-back exam results,” he said.

But bringing in new good schools also matters: “Out of the four new ones that joined recently, two bring extra capacity,”

Supersizing – but which ones are growing fastest?



he added. "They are good schools with good leaders."

Michael Cowland, the interim chief executive at the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, said his trust had welcomed six new schools in 2016-17, bringing it to 22 academies.

Like Crane, he described his trust as "a home for any church school", saying that joining was generally their "preferred option" in the area.

This ready acceptance of any church school has meant a steady increase in the trust's population. In fact, schools regularly approach the trust, and typically need support as services they are used to receiving from the local authority decrease.

"We've currently got two schools with academy orders waiting to join us, and another seven with applications in," he said. "We didn't have to go out and sell ourselves to schools."

Supersizing helps the budget (but beware the hospital pass)

Increasing the number of schools was described in many cases as a way to ensure trusts could work more effectively with their finances – but trusts must beware so-called "hospital pass" schools which drag on the overall budget.

The commitment by dioceses to take in schools, particularly smaller primaries, can influence the balance of school sizes within the trust. For example, the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust has "a higher-than-average number of smaller schools" simply because church schools tend to be smaller.

"We're now on 23 academies and three-and-



Jon Chaloner

WHO ARE THE EXPANDABLES?

NAME	% INCREASE BY DEC	NUMBER LAST SEPTEMBER	NUMBER THIS SEPTEMBER	NUMBER TAKEN ON IN 2016-17	TAKEOVERS DUE SEP-DEC 2017
REACH SOUTH ACADEMY TRUST	700%	1	8	7	
DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS MULTI ACADEMY TRUST	500%	1	5	4	1
SEVERN ACADEMIES EDUCATIONAL TRUST	500%	1	6	5	
YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER COOPERATIVE LEARNING TRUST (YHCLT)	500%	1	6	5	
THE WORCESTER DIOCESAN ACADEMIES TRUST	250%	2	7	5	
LEARNERS' TRUST	233%	3	10	7	
EBOR ACADEMY TRUST	120%	5	11	6	
ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH DIOCESAN MULTI ACADEMY TRUST	100%	7	14	7	
EASTERN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST	100%	6	12	6	
DERBY DIOCESAN ACADEMY TRUST	87%	8	11	3	4
DIOCESE OF SALISBURY ACADEMY TRUST	71%	7	12	5	
TRANSFORM TRUST	63%	8	13	5	
DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD VINE SCHOOLS TRUST	60%	10	16	6	
L.E.A.D. MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST	62%	13	21	8	
GLF SCHOOLS	42%	19	24	5	3
SAMUEL WARD ACADEMY TRUST	42%	12	17	5	
PETERBOROUGH DIOCESE EDUCATION TRUST	38%	16	22	6	
OXFORD DIOCESAN SCHOOLS TRUST	50%	18	27	9	
ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST (ALT)	33%	15	17	2	3
THE ELLIOT FOUNDATION ACADEMIES TRUST	23%	22	27	5	



*Nerd box: These figures do not include planned convertor schools, or free schools, as the DfE data does not include sponsor name

a-half thousand children, whereas I think some of the larger ones have got a similar number to us but over 10,000 children," Cowland said.

This brings "its own challenges" but the trust won't turn away small church schools that come to them for support.

The chief executive of the Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, Hugh Greenway, believes the size of the trust is important to its sustainability.

"The DfE has only lately come round to realising that if you don't provide funding to keep schools safe, solvent, structurally sound, legally complaint and educationally improving, you have to take the money to do it from the schools' budgets themselves," he said. "You need to be of a certain size to be able to afford to do it."

Trusts can manage if they are smaller in size, he said, but will have to rely more on "significant

amounts of volunteering, both from trustees but also from your executive principals, who you won't be able to pay for the job they are doing".

However, trusts should try to "avoid hospital passes" he said, warning that taking on very weak schools can be a burden.

"At our third school, the roof fell in six weeks after it converted," he said. "It was a Christmas of sustained and heavy rain. We only had three or four schools in the trust and it was half a million pounds to fix. That could have bankrupted the trust."

Small academy trusts just "don't have the balance sheet of the local authority", meaning that they should choose carefully which schools they take on.

"That was one of the points of having roughly 150 local authorities; each of those had some capacity to absorb the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," he said.

The cost-benefit of being an expandable trust

There can be a downside to expansion. Several multi-academy trusts have been

heavily criticised for supersizing too quickly. The DfE has put nearly 60 academy chains onto a pause list in order to stop their growth.

In response, the national schools commissioner David Carter introduced "health checks" to look at a trust's history before granting expansions.

Nevertheless, a *Schools Week* investigation in January found several trusts were ducking the pause list and still expanding.

Several more trusts were also told this year by Ofsted that they had expanded too quickly, and that supersizing had led to poor performance among schools, including the Northern Education Trust, which took on nine "untouchable" schools, to create a stable of 18 academies.

Ofsted said weakness in due diligence meant the trust took on too many challenging schools.

Ultimately, for all trusts, there is a balance between continued growth, especially where required by commitments or necessary for budget, and the perils of over-expansion.

NEWS: Laker and Hill research special

'Architect'-style heads need time

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Heads with the best long-term school improvement plans are often nearly fired two years into the job simply because they don't get "quick exam results", according to a new study by controversial management researchers Ben Laker and Alex Hill.

Boards expect to see better exam results almost immediately under the regime of a new headteacher, the researchers claim in their new study published today.

An analysis of governing body minutes revealed that 90 per cent of headteachers who oversaw a steady rise in GCSE grades, achieved a budget surplus and improved parental engagement over eight years were almost fired by their governors after two, simply because their boards expected to see better exams performance.

Hill and Laker, whose research into superheads caused a storm in the sector last year, claim to have identified better indicators for whether a new head is on track, even if it's not yet showing up in exam results, following up on their earlier work.

In research released last October, they analysed data on 411 headteachers at failing secondary academies. They identified five different types of headteacher: from the so-called "surgeons" who drive exam results up quickly but unsustainably, to the "philosopher", who wants to inspire but fails to embed change.

One type, the "architect", engaged the community and focused on underperforming pupils. Just 62 of the 411 headteachers studied were architects, but they were the best at improving results over the long-term.

Now Laker and Hill, whose findings will be



published in the Harvard Business Review alongside co-authors Liz Melon and Jules Goddard, have studied board minutes from the 62 architects' schools to identify nine indicators that could be used at the end of the two years to show progress (see right).

These included expelling less than three per cent of pupils over three years, and taking on a primary school or expanding admissions to include younger years, which makes it easier to get to know pupils from reception through to year 13.

Successful headteachers did not have to meet all nine of the key indicators, but meeting six of the nine correlated with an eventual increase in the GCSE pass rate of 45 per cent after eight years. If all nine were met, grades increased by just over 50 per cent, the research found.

"The motivation for the research is to help headteachers who are making the right

changes for the long-term to not get fired," said Hill. "It's about giving clear, tangible measures that predict you are on the way to success. Governors can then use those, even when exam results haven't changed yet."

Andy Buck, the chair of the education committee at Ambition School Leadership, himself a former headteacher, said he was "really excited" by the research because it was a different measure of success than that typically used by governors and Ofsted.

"Many senior leaders don't want to become headteachers, especially at the most challenging schools, because of the current accountability framework," he said.

"This gives us a way of identifying that a school is on the route to being outstanding, and needs time."

The measures also have the advantage of being flexible – schools did not need to implement all nine, but can leave three if they



Ben Laker



Alex Hill

were too difficult to achieve.

Steve Munby, education consultant and former chief executive of the Education Development Trust, said the requirement to have all-through schools was less attainable, and that closer partnerships with primary schools was a more realistic goal, he said.

He said that having less than three per cent exclusions is also "actually very high" since the national average for permanent exclusions stands at 0.5 per cent.

But Hill confirmed this percentage included informal exclusions, not shown in government statistics.

Change at least a third of staff to get turnaround success

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Heads need to change between 30 and 50 per cent of the teaching staff at a failing secondary school in their first three years if they want to see a successful "culture shift", according to new research into the behaviour of successful turnaround heads.

The research hasn't pleased everyone, however, and teaching unions have shot back, saying headteachers need to make it a "primary aim" not to fire anyone when improving a school.

Mass changeover of staff is one of nine strategies successful heads use to improve schools, identified by researchers Alex Hill and Ben Laker on behalf of the Centre for High Performance.

And while they admitted that new heads were generally successful if they adopted just six of

the strategies, in an article for the Harvard Business Review, the pair said that changing how a school works "usually means changing staff".

They reached their conclusions by analysing decisions made by 62 heads who saw the C grades their students earned at GCSE increase by 45 per cent or more over eight years at failing schools.

Changing less than 30 per cent of teachers made little impact on staff culture, they found, but a turnover of more than 50 per cent "created too much disruption".

They were clear to point out that churn doesn't just mean

job-losses: around half of turnover comes from new recruits, with a quarter from firing supply teachers, and the rest made up by firing

underperforming staff.

To achieve a 30-per-cent change, only 7.5 per cent of permanent staff have to leave their jobs, said Hill – and a third of those are typically on long-term sick leave.

However, Nansi Ellis, the assistant general secretary of the National Education Union, said heads should be aiming to turn schools around "without managing out anyone".

Supportive approaches can "reinvigorate teachers who may be struggling to cope", she said, and work better than "simply weeding out staff". There may be some teachers genuinely in the wrong job but this requires careful thought.

Laker and Hill found the most successful heads also shift staff culture by clarifying key indicators of improvement. Some

even display pupils' attendance, behaviour and test scores in real-time on video screens in corridors and staffrooms, so teachers can see where improvement was needed.

Visiting other schools and formal observations also helps improve standards, Hill told *Schools Week*.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, welcomed many of the findings, but warned all school leaders to remember they have a duty of care to staff on long-term sick leave.

Supply teachers are also "easy to stigmatise", he said, and headteachers should seek to get them on contract if they are capable.



Nansi Ellis



Geoff Barton



Mary Boustead



Dan Moynihan

How to turn failing schools around

THE 9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEING A SUCCESSFUL HEADTEACHER AT A FAILING SECONDARY SCHOOL

We ask Dan Moynihan, CEO of the Harris Federation, and Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, for their thoughts

1 Stay for at least five years

The most successful headteachers remain for at least five years, and often longer. Many even develop a 10-year plan for the board to follow.

Dan Moynihan: It's fundamental to have this stability in a headteacher. You really want them to stay five years at least, assuming they're the right head. A low turnover of headteachers across a trust is important.

Mary Bousted said: This does not surprise me. Schools are complex organisations. Successful school leaders take time to understand a school's context.

2 Expel less than three per cent of pupils

The most successful headteachers temporarily excluded 10 to 15 per cent of pupils in the first three years, but expelled or permanently excluded less than three per cent. This includes informal exclusions, such as sending them to colleges or off-rolling them.

DM: I don't agree with not expelling anyone; there is behaviour that is beyond the pale. It can get to a point where it's impossible to teach. Although we try not to exclude, anyone who says no exclusions is not being realistic. Less than three per cent is a good target.

MB: It is sometimes necessary to expel a pupil, but this must be a very serious decision taken only after all alternatives have been explored. Expulsion as a means of improving the pupil intake should be deplored.

3 Teach from five to 18 years old

It took five years to see results increase, but pupils in schools that expanded their age range with five GCSEs at C or above jumped nine percentage points and improved by five percentage points each year after that.

DM: Pupils can be more used to behaviour and learning styles if they're at an all-through school. But junior schools are still very different to secondary schools; they need different expertise.

MB: Successful schools come in all phases, stages and sizes. I can see the rationale for all-through schools, but I can also see the rationale for concentration and focus on a particular stage of learning. I think the key is to make sure there is a successful transition between one phase and another.

4 Change between 30 and 50 per cent of the staff

The most successful leaders saw a third to a half of their staff change. This does not mean they were fired, but that new teachers were brought in and some moved on. Less than 30 per cent turnover and there was no "cultural shift" among staff. More than 50 per cent was too brutal.

DM: We bring in subject experts to support teachers who have been struggling, but there're no two ways about it – if you're trying to turn around a school that's failed, and there will be some colleagues who might not want to make that journey. You want to minimise staff turnover, but you also need to make sure everyone is doing a good job.

MB: While some staff turnover is good for every organisation – bringing with it fresh ideas and innovation – a particular percentage should not be a prerequisite for success. In the current teacher recruitment crisis, school leaders need to develop their teachers.

5 Pupils on 95-per-cent attendance

Successful schools have at least 95 per cent of pupils attending all their classes.

DM: You often find failing schools don't have proper tracking systems for pupil absence, and they're not aware which key groups have poor attendance – is it poor working class boys, for instance? The education welfare officer at the council might also not be reliable. We employ a private firm sometimes to check on absentees. Our senior team will also actually collect the pupil in a van. You want attendance to be at least at 95 per cent.

MB: Pupils cannot learn if they are not being taught. Good attendance gives a structure to pupils' lives, keeps them out of potentially dangerous situations, and involves them in the life of the school and its community.

6 Between 30 and 60 per cent of the governing board should challenge the headteacher

The best leaders are challenged by between about a third and two-thirds of governors on key decisions in their first three years.

DM: We appoint all our governors centrally and I interview them personally. It's a huge responsibility. In failing schools, you often get governors who are fan clubs. We tend to appoint professional people who are used to having that kind of debate and discussion.

MB: Governors should exercise both support and challenge to school leaders who have an immensely difficult job, particularly when leading challenging schools with disadvantaged intakes.

7 Have 50 per cent of parents at parents' evenings

The most successful heads made sure at least half of pupils were attending by the end of the third year.

DM: We have a translator for pupils whose parents don't speak English – the last thing you want is a pupil translating what the teacher is saying to their mum or dad. Haranguing parents to come to parents' evening doesn't work; incentives to come are much better.

MB: High rates of parental attendance at parents' evenings are essential. Many schools are now trialling new ways to inform and involve parents – beyond the traditional parents' evening.

8 70 per cent of staff take no absent days

The most successful schools had 70 per cent of staff taking no sickness absence by the end of the third year.

DM: We'd want more than 70 per cent: we'd be aiming for 80 per cent no-absence in the first year. The first thing to help staff who are absent is to sort out pupil behaviour.

MB: The best way to achieve low staff absence is for leaders to tackle excessive workload which results in teachers working more unpaid overtime than any other profession, rather than a punitive approach which spreads fear about legitimate teacher absence.

9 100 per cent of staff are capable

No teachers should be on capability, and all staff should be capable by the end of the third year, the study found. This was achieved through recruiting competent teachers, increasing informal teaching observations through mentoring programmes, and sharing best practice from different schools.

DM: If you do what a MAT is supposed to do, you bring teachers together to collaborate. This helps them to improve, and gives them access to subject experts too.

MB said: Teachers would agree that it is preferable to have no colleagues on capability measures. But these can be applied very unfairly. It never ceases to surprise me how many women teachers, over 50, are put on capability – a toxic combination of sexism and ageism.

NEWS

IN brief

OUTCRY SAVES SMALL-TOWN SECONDARY SCHOOL

AET has abandoned plans to close a Hampshire town's only secondary school after a backlash from parents.

Sandown Bay Academy, one of just eight secondary schools on the Isle of Wight, will now either be taken on by a new sponsor or merge with the local Bay Church of England Primary School to become an all-through academy.

AET, which with 66 schools is the nation's largest academy chain, announced in May that it planned to close the academy and move pupils to another of its schools, Ryde Academy, seven miles away.

The trust has now capitulated and will relinquish control of the school after a council survey found 98 per cent of parents were in favour of continuing secondary education in the town.

FORMER HEAD PLEADS GUILTY TO £100K FRAUD

A former academy headteacher who took £100,000 from his school has pleaded guilty to fraud and misconduct in public office.

Between August 2011 and August 2014, James Stewart, the former principal of Sawtry Village Academy in Cambridgeshire, made off with the money, including roughly £84,000 in fraudulent expenses claims, and regularly had sex with another adult during school hours in a part of his office.

He also helped his former deputy Alan Stevens to claim fraudulent expenses.

These irregularities came to light when a whistle-blower approached Ofsted inspectors during a visit in June 2014. The school was subsequently placed in special measures and Stewart resigned.

Sarah Wilson, the school's principal, said the school has made "significant progress" in all areas since.

DFE SEEKS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EXPERTS

The Department for Education is seeking advisors for "school improvement" roles at a regional schools commissioner's office. Two experts are needed – one for academy school improvement and another on trust development – to work in the office of the RSC for the east midlands and the Humber. They will earn a maximum salary of £67,680.

Schools Week understands the roles are a trial run as the education department seeks to increase its ability to improve multi-academy trusts.

The job advert says the experts will train a "cadre of education advisers" on school improvement strategies

A source said the government wanted to "get away from the typical civil servant who has never been in a school deciding what schools need".

DfE says no to Young and Seldon's fast-track headship college

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

The Department for Education has declined to provide millions of pounds in funding to a mooted fast-track headship college, the brainchild of two of the most visible figures in education, *Schools Week* can reveal.

The free schools advocate Toby Young and former top headteacher Sir Anthony Seldon were "in talks with ministers" in April last year about a college that would parachute promising candidates straight into headship positions after at least one year's intensive training.

Their grand plans have now stalled, however, because the DfE has turned down their request for £10 million from the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund.

And while the vision originally had the backing of Sir Michael Wilshaw, Ofsted's former chief inspector, Seldon admitted that though he was still supportive of the idea, Wilshaw has been too busy with other work since leaving the inspectorate.

The duo said they are now "tweaking" their application and reapplying for the second round of the fund.

If successful, the college would train a "radically different kind of headteacher", said Seldon (pictured), who is vice-chancellor of the University of Buckingham. Trainees will be placed in areas of greatest socioeconomic deprivation, he added.

It would target managers and directors from both the private and public sectors to make a mid-career switch, a plan different from original reports last year, which said the fast-track pathway would be for graduates fresh out of university.

If the application is approved, plans will go ahead to purchase an office site in Milton Keynes, with doors intended to open in September 2019.

Some teachers are opposed to the idea of non-teachers entering a leadership role, but Seldon, who is also the former headteacher of the private Wellington College in Buckinghamshire, insisted the practice is usual in other sectors.

"Why are we accepting that people are going to have two or three different careers, and this applies to everyone but not teachers?" he asked. "Some people get terribly upset about people starting mid-career, but we need more fluidity. There's a headteacher recruitment crisis, for a start."

He pointed to managers and directors from business, NHS trusts, social services, local government, the army, law and finance as examples of the sorts of people who might take the course.

Although the exact details of the course were yet to be finalised, *Schools Week*

Toby Young



Sir Anthony Seldon

understands there would be a period in which managers continue with their current jobs while visiting numerous schools.

Participants would then take an intensive one-year course at the college, before being offered a "leadership role" in one of the schools they'd been working with. This would either be self-funded by the participant, or the cost would be covered by a multi-academy trust that wished to employ them.

Young also mentioned the college at a Westminster education forum in London yesterday.

He cited research from the Harvard Business Review in October which found the headteachers who achieved the highest exam results over the long-term had often had previous careers in other sectors.

"The idea is that people with successful careers in other sectors might switch at the age of 40 onto a headship track," he said.

Full education select committee announced

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The full membership of the House of Commons education committee has now been confirmed, and education secretary Justine Greening will be among the first to face a grilling from its MPs.

Five Conservative MPs, five Labour MPs and one Scottish National Party MP will serve under the chairship of Robert Halfon, the former skills minister.

The committee holds the government and its education sector regulators, like Ofsted and Ofqual, to account on policy, administration and spending.

Officials have already announced early hearings with Greening, Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman and Ofqual chief regulator that will take place "in the coming weeks".

Greening will face questions on school funding, changes to GCSEs and educational outcomes for poorer children, the committee says.

Committee chair Robert Halfon said he was "pleased" that MPs would have an "early opportunity" to hear from Greening about the work of her department. It is almost exactly a year since the education secretary faced her first questioning by the committee.

Labour announced before the summer that the former shadow education secretary



ROBERT HALFON (CHAIR)



EMMA HARDY



TRUDY HARRISON



JAMES FRITH



LUCY POWELL



THELMA WALKER

Lucy Powell would join committee veteran Ian Mearns and Westminster newbies Emma Hardy, Thelma Walker and James Frith as its representatives on the committee.

But the Conservatives took much longer to put forward members, in a move some critics claimed was designed to hold up the committee's work.

The full membership has now been confirmed by parliament after a motion

passed without debate on Monday night.

Conservatives Lucy Allan, Michele Donelan and former teacher William Wragg, who served on the last committee, will return to the fold in this parliamentary session.

They are joined by Trudy Harrison, the Conservative MP for Copeland, alongside the chair, Robert Halfon.

Marion Fellows, the committee's sole SNP MP in the last session, will also serve again.

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NEWS: WHILE YOU WERE AWAY

21-school West Yorkshire MAT to dissolve

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Wakefield City Academies Trust is to give away all 21 of its schools to other sponsors, in a move that shocked parents, staff and pupils as they returned to school last week.

No timetable has been set for the transfers; the schools will all remain with WCAT until it is taken over and only then will the trust be wound up.

The trust had been selected by the government as a flagship "northern hub", and was handed more than half a million pounds to take troubled schools over.

Since then, its chief executive Alan Yellup, and its former chair and interim chief, Mike Ramsay, have both left the organisation. A finance and governance review later revealed the trust had breached rules by paying more than £300,000 to an IT company run by Ramsay.

In April, two of its schools, Willow Academy in Doncaster and Brookfield Primary in South Yorkshire, were plunged into special measures, while it walked away from two more schools it was lined up to support.

At the time the trust refused to explain why it had stepped back from taking on Hanson Academy in Bradford once it had finished a 12-month try-before-you-buy period in which it provided support to the school.

It also pulled out of sponsoring another



West Yorkshire school, University Academy Keighley.

In its statement, the trust said that after a "robust period of review and evaluation of all aspects of the organisation", it had "requested that the Department for Education work with [the board] to place our academies with new sponsors", because it "does not have the capacity to facilitate the rapid improvement our academies need and our students deserve".

"The board recognises this announcement will cause uncertainty, particularly for our staff," it continued. "It will work with them to ensure the transition to new sponsors is as seamless as possible."

Back in 2015, WCAT was handed a slice of a £5 million government fund to set up academy hubs in underperforming northern

regions in order drive up standards.

But in a bruising exchange in Parliament on Monday, the MP Yvette Cooper, whose constituency is in the Wakefield area, accused the education secretary Justine Greening of failing to address long-standing concerns.

"[Parents and staff] had this announcement in the first week of the new school year, out of the blue, yet it turns out that there have been huge problems with the trust for a long time, on governance, finance, accountability and performance," she said.

"Her department has been pushing all of these schools into this model. Is it not time she had a full review of the complete failure of local accountability in these multi-academy trusts, and made sure there is enough finance and support in place for the pupils in my constituency so that they do not lose out as a result of this failed management?"

Greening said that "swift action" would be taken in Wakefield, and accused Labour of failing to be passionate about "raising standards when it was in government".

It is unlikely that one single chain will be able to take all 21 of the schools over.

Of the other trusts given funding to expand in the north, both Astrea Academy Trust and Outwood Grange Academy Trust have already taken on significant numbers of schools. It is not known if they have more capacity to aid the imperilled schools.

Exclusive

ENGLAND'S FIRST LOW-COST PRIVATE SCHOOL FACES DELAY

England's first "low-cost" private school has delayed its planned opening this month because the Department for Education has still not signed off.

The Independent Grammar School: Durham, which aims to charge parents of primary-aged children £52 a week to deliver a "traditional curriculum", now plans to open its doors to pupils in January 2018.

Chris Gray, the school's principal, said the first day will now be Monday January 8, "assuming the school is approved to open".

In an email sent to interested parents, Gray said the school would not want to be seen "poaching" children from other local schools halfway through the year.

"If you still wish your child to join us, bear in mind that children may change schools at any time during the school year," he wrote.

Almost 100 parents have registered expressions of interest so far, he told *Schools Week*, meaning the school is "likely" to have enough pupils to be viable.

According to the new school's website, the curriculum will consist of maths and English in the morning, followed by "an afternoon of mainly topic work". Sport and music will be "included at appropriate times".

A DfE spokesperson said the department was considering the application and the outcome will be announced in "due course".

Exclusive

INFORMATION COMMISSIONER CRACKS DOWN ON PUPIL DATA

The information commissioner has told the Department for Education to strengthen its guidance on collecting pupil nationality data.

Census guidance issued last month includes more bold text drawing schools' attention to their duty to inform parents of their data protection rights.

Schools must now tell parents that they can refuse to provide information on their child's nationality or country of birth, and that they can retract data already provided.

Documents seen exclusively by *Schools Week* show the changes were made after the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) advised education officials that these rights should be made "much more prominent" in the guidance so as to comply with information laws.

The government's decision last year to ask schools to collect data on pupils' nationality and country of birth prompted a massive backlash both among parents and digital rights groups.

Schools were criticised for demanding pupils' passports, and the government was forced to back down on plans to share the information with the Home Office for immigration control purposes.

In emails, seen by *Schools Week*, DfE officials acknowledged that data collection in this vein was "considered by some elements of the public to be contentious", and asked the ICO for help.

In response, the ICO asked if there were "any other mechanism" by which schools would be informed of their duties other than by the guidance, and if not, said the rules had to be made more prominent.

"It's important that schools are clearly aware of this right and the requirement for schools to make parents aware of it," an ICO representative said.

Scandal-hit academy chair finally steps down

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Sir Greg Martin, the chair of an academy trust that's currently battling both the Department for Education over its governance and Ofsted on an 'inadequate' rating, has stepped down from his role.

He resigned as head of the Durand Academy in 2015 after 29 years at the helm, but controversially stayed on as chair of governors.

Companies House documents show that he left the position at the end of August, more than a year after he was originally ordered to by the Education Funding Agency.

The school's executive head, Mark McLaughlin, who was also ordered to resign from his posts at the school last year, stood down on the same day.

Two new directors – acting headteacher Rebecca Pickard and staff governor Harriet Russell – have since been appointed to the trust's board.

Pickard is a former assistant head at Durand, and has previously served as head of key stage 1.

Last Friday, a week after Sir Greg's resignation, Ofsted launched a last-minute appeal to overturn a High Court decision that struck a recent, damning inspection report from the record.

Durand was placed in special measures after an inspection in December, but



Sir Greg Martin

launched its legal challenge in early February, securing an injunction preventing Ofsted from releasing its report.

However, the report it was inadvertently published on Ofsted's website days ahead of schedule, a situation described by Judge Martin McKenna as a "matter of regret".

The school has also been under investigation over its finances and management structure for several years.

The EFA's probe has focused on conflicts of interest surrounding the trust's association with several other organisations, including Durand Education Trust, which owns land occupied by the school, and London Horizons Limited, which runs the school's leisure facilities on

a commercial basis.

A public accounts committee heard in 2015 that Sir Greg had been paid a £175,000 management fee by London Horizons Limited in 2013-14, on top of his £229,000 salary and pension package as head of the academy.

Sir Greg's resignation as executive head in 2015 occurred after the Charity Commission launched an inquiry into the running of the leisure facilities.

The trust was then handed formal notice in June that its funding would be terminated next year, after he failed to step down as the chair as demanded by the DfE in 2016.

At the High Court hearing in August, Gerard Clarke, the lawyer representing Durand, accused Ofsted of being influenced by the "background" of financial criticism of the trust.

Deok Joo Rhee, acting on behalf of Ofsted, said the school was prolonging its complaint "as a means of keeping the Education Funding Agency at bay".

But Judge McKenna agreed with Durand that challenges to reports which place schools into special measures are "specifically precluded" by Ofsted's complaints procedure, giving it no chance to change the outcome of the inspection.

If it isn't rolled back as a result of Ofsted's appeal, the ruling could have wide-ranging consequences for schools that want to challenge the inspectorate.

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Could you play something a bit faster please?

How about 'Tomorrow' from the musical Annie? She was an orphan too...



EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss_mcinerney | laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk

What a week!

Just as schoolteachers are starting to get to grips with their new classes and timetables are settling down, Justine Greening decided to hit us all with a whirlwind. In just the time it took our features editor to visit the dentist (seriously), the country learned that SATs for seven-year-olds were to be scrapped and a new reception test would be brought in, while primary schools found themselves with a new funding settlement, over £7 million had been handed to academy chains as a sweetener for taking on challenging schools, and teacher training was deregulated (more on that next edition). A teacher who spent six hours in the classroom yesterday had absolutely no chance of keeping up!

So, to answer the question everyone loves: what does it all mean?

The £7 million for Schools No One Wants (SNOWs)

Academy pass-the-parcel is in vogue. Figures released yesterday showed that 165 schools were passed between academy chains last year. An eye-watering £7 million was given to the chains taking on candidates lovingly labelled as "schools no one wants".

It is not surprising that academy chains need to be paid to take over these schools. Many are half-full, with serious financial and performance issues. Now that academy trusts are judged in a league table-style of report published each year by the Department for Education, it is risky to take on a school whose results are less than stellar.

Yet I wonder if the government isn't missing a trick. Of the 165 schools that changed hands, only 59 came with a fee. The rest were given to a trust for free. But why not ask for payment? Some academies that end up on the transfer list are quite good; among the 21 schools that came onto the market this week when Wakefield City Academy Trust announced it would wind up, four are rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. Taking on one of these schools could actually help a trust improve its scores. That must be worth something!

Why not create a market, then? 'Outstanding' academies could be sold to the highest bidder with the proceeds going to fund those chains which take on the most difficult cases.

Primary schools get £3,500 and secondary schools get £4,200

It is welcome news that every school will get a 0.5 per cent increase in its budget next year and one per cent more the following year. But as the Institute of Fiscal Studies has noted, this doesn't really cut it given all the inflationary pressures on schools.

We also learned this week that while police and prison officers are going to pocket a higher pay increase than expected, teachers will remain within the per cent cap. This is a problem when inflation continues creeping up.

Even if teachers were to get more pay, this wouldn't help the teaching assistant apprentices who we've learned this week are increasingly earning £3.50 per hour. That's less than £25 for a seven-hour day. I was earning more than that working in McDonalds in 1999, and one reader tweeted she earned more than that working in a bookshop as a student in the 1980s!

Schools will always say they need more money, but one cannot deny that if wages are being pushed this low, they absolutely do.

Tests, tests, tests

As secondary schools continue

ironing out all the difficulties with the new GCSEs and A-levels, primary teachers were yesterday treated to the news that standardised tests for primary pupils are out – but not until all the current pupils have left. Hmm.

And – crucially – they won't be scrapped if the new reception tests don't turn out perfectly. This is a serious gamble given how horribly wrong the last round of baseline tests went.

The problem is that two conflicting things are true. One, to work out how effective primary schools are at preparing their pupils for secondary school, it is helpful to measure a starting point and an end point. But, two: tests for four-year-olds are massively unreliable. So, what to do?

Ministers are adamant that progress must be measurable so another round of tests are to be trialled. Primary teachers, meanwhile, whose lives are subject to this continual experiment, continue to tear their hair out.

The inevitable consequence will be that, in about 10 years, ministers realise all this testing is very expensive and not that useful and it will all go. Until 2028, however, we may all just need to hold our noses. Sorry folks.

Right, that's it for this week. Let's hope the next one is quieter!



A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO RESHAPE A HIGH-PROFILE ACADEMY

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Harris Academy St John's Wood (previously Quintin Kynaston) is a new sponsored academy, which joined the Harris Federation in September 2017. This is a large 11-18 secondary academy located in St John's Wood - a few minutes' walk from the Jubilee line - with over 1,400 students, approximately 370 of whom will be in the sixth form. Although located in an affluent area of London, the school serves an urban, highly multi-ethnic and disadvantaged intake. The school moved into first-class, purpose-built new buildings three years ago.

As the academy looks to accelerate back to achieving academic excellence, Harris Federation seeks to appoint a new Principal of Harris Academy St John's Wood. This is an opportunity for an ambitious leader looking to extend their experience of headship, or start their first Principalship. For first time Principals, we will provide support and mentoring from a highly experienced Executive Principal.

As a top performing MAT, we offer a supportive network of academies, and a very collegiate group of Principals and mentors to help develop and progress your career.

For a confidential discussion, please call Sir Dan Moynihan, Chief Executive, on 020 8253 7777

Closing Date: 18th September 2017

Harris academies are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment are subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

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Harris is a Federation and not a chain; each Harris academy is different, reflecting the particular aspirations and leadership style of its Principal.



Transformational Leadership Opportunities

Executive Principal **Norfolk Academies**

Salary: Circa £110k Closing Date: Friday 6th October

Transforming Education in Norfolk (the TEN Group) is looking for an Executive Principal to lead its multi-academy trust, Norfolk Academies and our University Technical College Norfolk. This is a new role and will have Group-wide academy responsibilities, for one junior academy, three secondary academies, and a university technical college.

An experienced school leader, preferably with experience of leading more than one school/academy, you will have demonstrated your abilities to improve the performance of schools under your care with evidence of sustained improvements in outcomes over time. You will also be an excellent people motivator and have the right skills to lead and develop your senior team of academic colleagues.

Principal **Fakenham Academy Norfolk**

Salary: Circa £80k Closing Date: Friday 6th October

The TEN Group is looking to appoint an experienced school leader who will relish the challenge of moving Fakenham Academy Norfolk from Good to Outstanding. A dynamic individual with experience as an existing head, you will be a great people motivator, with a real desire to make the difference in young peoples' lives. You will have a track record of success in school leadership, experience in improving student outcomes and able to evidence school level performance improvements you have led.

Fakenham Academy Norfolk is an improving school with over 750 students, rated Good by Ofsted, with improvements in results over the last 4 years delivered through its membership of the Norfolk Academies multi-academy trust (MAT).

See www.tengroup.org.uk/senior-vacancies for full details and online application.



Assistant Principal - with responsibility for English

Highly competitive and negotiable salary for an exceptional candidate

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If so, then Oasis Academy Oldham is the school for you.

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Our ambitions are high. We are looking for a talented and inspiring Assistant Principal with responsibility for English to help us continue this progress and ensure that we are developing respectful and confident learners to achieve excellence for all.

This is a role in which you will be able to make a real impact. You will be a member of a committed, driven senior leadership team whilst supporting and leading a dedicated and talented English faculty looking to embrace new ideas. The role requires someone who has a clear vision and will be able to lead and develop the faculty at a strategic level on our journey to outstanding.

The school is dedicated to meeting the needs of our community, but excellent transport links to Manchester and our proximity to the M60 mean that our staff are able easily able to reach us from a much wider area.

Through Oasis Community Learning, the opportunities to further your career are significant. Oasis has, for example, recently been successful in a bid to open a secondary free school within Oldham. This partner school will enhance the career opportunities available - making this a very attractive position for someone committed to furthering their career in education.

We are looking to appoint a colleague who will:

- Demonstrate strong leadership skills and prove to be a dynamic and supportive member of the Leadership Team
- Provide professional leadership to secure high quality teaching through improved standards of learning, progress and attainment for all students.
- Be responsible for the development of the English faculty, providing clear direction and a sense of purpose.
- Engage, enthuse, motivate and challenge students to raise achievement at all levels, and provide the very best educational opportunities for the students
- Be an inspirational team player and have a passion for enabling change for students and across the wider community.

In return you can expect:

- A highly competitive salary and benefits including a generous pension scheme and access to our outstanding onsite gym, which is free to staff members
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- Regional and national support towards career progression
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If you are interested in becoming part of our team, building on our success and joining us on our exciting journey to become an outstanding academy, we would love to hear from you.

The Principal welcomes an informal conversation either by phone or school visit.

To learn more about us or to download an application pack, visit our website: www.oasisacademyoldham.org or email: recruitment@oasisoldham.org

Completed applications should be returned to recruitment@oasisoldham.org

Closing date for applications is: **12.00 noon on Tuesday 26th September 2017**

Interviews will be held week commencing **2nd October 2017**

Oasis is committed to making a difference to the lives of the communities it works in, and as such you must show a willingness to demonstrate commitment to the values and behaviours which flow from the Oasis ethos. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff to share this commitment and to undergo appropriate checks, including enhanced DBS checks.



Magna Academy Poole
an Aspirations Academy

Subject Co-ordinator: Maths (L7-12)

Salary: negotiable for an exceptional candidate (with opportunity to become a Specialist Leader of Education, with further salary enhancement)

Starting: January 2018

'This is an outstanding school. Teachers have high expectations of their students, who respond by producing excellent work.'



(OFSTED, June 2015)

'Excellent teaching takes places in Maths.'



(OFSTED, June 2015)

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This position has arisen due to the promotion of the current post holder to Assistant Principal at the Academy.

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'The behaviour of students is outstanding. They are exceptionally keen to learn, and show real enthusiasm in lessons.'



(OFSTED, June 2015)

We are looking for an exceptional individual to play an important role in our unique and growing Academy. The successful candidate will be an excellent teacher of Maths, with proven middle leadership experience.

This is an excellent opportunity for an ambitious practitioner, who wants to lead the rapidly growing Maths curriculum area and make a real impact on further driving up attainment and progress in Maths.

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With great students who behave impeccably, an outstanding team of staff, state of the art facilities, and a very pleasant location in beautiful Dorset, Magna Academy offers an excellent opportunity for an ambitious, talented individual looking to develop their career. Ofsted highlighted our very effective staff training and support and outstanding CPD. We have a very comprehensive, and effective, development programme, bringing all subject areas together every week to share best practice.

We teach a challenging academic curriculum for all students. We are driven by a desire, at the core of our mission, to get the best possible results for all of our students, no matter what their starting points or circumstances.



'Students make exceptional progress.'

(OFSTED, June 2015)

We would be delighted to show you around our Academy in order to fully appreciate our excellent learning environment.

How to Apply

Application forms and further details on the role are available from: www.aatmagna.org/82/vacancies or **Zoe Challis**, zchallis@aatmagna.org or **01202 604222**

Closing date for applications: Friday 22nd September 2017, 9am.
Learn more about Magna Academy Poole at: www.aatmagna.org

Schools Liaison Director



Location: North West England

Salary: £30,000 per annum

Talk The Talk is an education charity working with schools across the UK.

Over the past six years, we have delivered in-school workshops that have equipped over 75,000 young people with the tools that they will need to be confident communicators in all aspects of their lives.

Due to continued expansion, we are looking for the right candidate in the North West of England to join our team of School Liaison Directors.

Main Responsibilities:

The School Liaison Director will work closely with the Director to:

- Make initial contact and recruit new schools through school visits, meetings and presentations to networks and education consortia
- Liaise with schools prior to and after workshop delivery
- Maintain and build relationships with schools already engaged with Talk The Talk
- Promote the work of the organisation through social media
- Take responsibility for aspects of communications strategy

Knowledge and experience:

- Two years sales and marketing experience
- An understanding and experience of the education system
- Experience at engaging and building relationships with secondary schools
- Teaching experience is an advantage

Skills and aptitudes:

- Experience of Microsoft Office
- Well organised with the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines
- Strong communication skills and ability to liaise with colleagues across the organisation
- Ability to work under pressure using own initiative and able to work unsupervised
- Attention to detail
- Good oral and written communication skills including an excellent telephone manner

Personal attributes:

- Self-motivation
- Flexibility, teamwork and a service mentality
- Access to own car and willing to travel across the North West region with monthly visits to our head office in Herefordshire

For an informal chat about the role, please contact Talk The Talk Director Richard Hull via email - richard@talkthetalkuk.org

Application by CV and cover letter to richard@talkthetalkuk.org

Any offer of employment will be subject to a satisfactory disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Closing Date - Friday 20th October 2017

Website - www.talkthetalkuk.org

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INTRODUCING THE TEAM

LAURA MCINERNEY EDITOR @MISS_MCINERNEY

Welcome back for what is now our FOURTH year of *Schools Week* - how time flies!

Sadly, we won't be joined this year by John Dickens, our lovable chief reporter, as he is globe-trotting with his wife before coming back to the fold next September.

In the meantime, political star Freddie Whittaker is stepping up to take the chief plate, so get your investigative tips to him please.

In the saddest move of the summer I also had to let Billy Camden take a full-time senior reporter post with sister publication FE Week.

Billy started his journalism career on our very first edition and, as chuffed as I am about his promotion, I know that you (and I) will miss him dearly.

Do not fear, however! We have a brilliant new cub reporter due to start with us very soon, so keep your eyes peeled for an announcement soon.



CATH MURRAY FEATURES EDITOR @CATHMURRAY_

Cath spends her days balancing her roles as Features Editor for *Schools Week* and our sister publication FE Week, and heading up the digital side of things for both publications.

She doesn't mind the juggling act, being a refreshing change from the many years she spent holed up in an office in Andalucia, translating and editing articles for science journals.

In addition to her nerdy obsession with search

engine optimisation, Cath loves encouraging people who are passionate about what they do to get involved in the debate, and in her spare time devours books, blogs and research - insatiably.

Having lived abroad for over a decade - in locations from Paris to Costa Rica - her special skill is to take on an entirely different personality whenever she speaks a foreign language.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER CHIEF REPORTER @FCDWHITTAKER

Freddie has been writing about public policy for most of his career, initially as a senior reporter for the Gloucester Citizen and Gloucestershire Echo, and then as the Oxford Mail's political and local government reporter.

He joined our sister paper, FE Week, in January 2014, and moved to the *Schools Week* team in August 2015, becoming the paper's political reporter in January 2016.

Appointed as chief reporter in August 2017,

Freddie still covers the politics beat, and can often be found tweeting furiously from windowless press rooms at political party and trade union conferences.

He is also a regular contributor to the *New Statesman* on education policy and politics.

Freddie lives in south east London but retains strong ties with his home town of Stroud, Gloucestershire, where he helps run the annual Stroud Fringe festival.



JESS STAUFENBERG SENIOR REPORTER @STAUFENBERGJ

Jess trained as a reporter in Brighton before heading to Norfolk as a business journalist for the Eastern Daily Press.

After training across the paper and local station MustardTV, she returned to London and took freelance shifts at The Independent.

In this time she wrote about education for Al Jazeera, TES, the Daily Telegraph - and *Schools Week* - before taking a permanent role at The Independent then eventually leaving to join the

permanent staff of *Schools Week*.

Data gleaned from Freedom of Information requests and investigations are her bag, but she also loves a good profile interview.

Outside of the newsroom, she surfs in Devon, hikes and spends a lot of time in the pub.

Her special skill is swearing in German.

ALIX ROBERTSON REPORTER @ALIXROBERTSON4

In a past life Alix was a secondary school English teacher and still misses having her own form group. No one in the office ever made a plastic friendship bracelet for her.

Having dabbled in student journalism and set up a magazine at university, she introduced a school newspaper while teaching and is expecting the budding reporters she mentored to steal her job any day now.

Alix retrained as a journalist at City University

in 2013, and a certain Miss McInerney was her first ever on-camera interviewee.

In her first year of work she won a 'MHP 30 to Watch' award, then joined *Schools Week's* sister paper FE Week, where she learned all about vocational education and was a runner up in the CIPR education journalism awards.

She is very excited to be getting back into the world of schools and will be covering everything there is to know about academies.



SAM KING JUNIOR REPORTER @KINGSAMANTHA_

Samantha graduated with a first class journalism degree from the University of Central Lancashire in 2016.

She has always had a passion for journalism and used to make magazines about school life when she was a pupil.

Before joining the *Schools Week* and FE Week team, she spent time interning at Women's Weekly, Sky News, Business Insider and a number of local papers and radio stations.

Samantha is a keen musician and was once a magician's assistant.

These days she can often be found scouring the internet for stories about the weird and wonderful things schools are doing. Oh, and any story that involves a cat.

Now in charge of the Bulletin and Movers & Shakers section, is the best point of contact for anyone with good news to share.

TOM MENDELSON SUB EDITOR @TOM_MENDELSON

Tom is FE Week and *Schools Week's* sub-editor. He has been with FE Week since 2016 and joined the team full-time in July 2017.

He can often be spotted sprinting down Greenwich High Street on his bike.

Tom has but one passion in this life: correcting people's spelling.



PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_MCINERNEY

Brett Wigdortz, founder of Teach First

I have never known what is weird and what is not," says Brett Wigdortz, the man who founded teacher training programme Teach First 15 years ago and, as its chief executive, oversaw its meteoric rise before stepping aside this summer.

Born in Asbury Park, New Jersey – Bruce Springsteen's home town – Wigdortz's north Atlantic twang remains as strong as ever. It means his talk of "social justice" and "ambassadors" for the Teach First programme sound dorkier, almost clichéd, than when spoken in more hushed British tones.

But his self-confessed lack of awareness means he's never been put off as an overenthusiastic cheerleader. Besides, he simply doesn't accept that missions to overcome social inequality are somehow "un-British".

"Go to the William Wilberforce Museum, and you can see a very British movement in the 19th century that helped Britain become one of the first countries to end the slave trade," he enthuses. "Or, you know, there's the anti-apartheid movement from 30 years ago that was quite powerful in England. And, you know, no-one is smoking indoors in Britain today, and that's not just a magical thing; that happened because a whole movement of health professionals worked together to ensure that second-hand smoke wouldn't damage people's lungs and hearts anymore."

Wigdortz was in his late twenties, organising a start-up bank he had created for the lower-middle classes in Jakarta, when his bosses at McKinsey suggested he spend a year in London in order to improve his knowledge of financial markets. Arriving in the capital, he found financial projects thin on the ground and was instead put on a project looking at how businesses could help schools in London which, at that time, were struggling with recruitment and poor academic outcomes.

"I said, 'oh great, my family are all teachers,' and I was really interested. That was a life-changing moment, basically," he recalls. "A very coincidental one. Sometimes I think about the film *Sliding Doors*, and somewhere out there a version of me finished up working in Jakarta and then went on to banking in Singapore."

Two years later, Teach First took its first cohort of graduates into classrooms and never looked back. That first group involved 186 graduates; this month over 1,400 trainees started in classrooms.

Wigdortz says he always dreamed the programme would be "big" but kept it quiet. "I never said 'we'll definitely get 3,000 people' because people would have thought I was even madder and crazier than I already thought I was," he says.

Fifteen years on, it is easy to forget the barriers the programme faced in its first few years. Teach Firsters were shunned in staffrooms by staff angry that "unqualified" teachers were allowed their own classes. Newspapers wrote angry columns. The name particularly irked, as the phrase "teach first, do something else later" became a common refrain from teachers angry that the marketing suggested participants should go on to work in private business in the future.

Yet Wigdortz was undeterred. He wanted the first cohort to be around the 200 mark and for it to grow each year. He pushed to get the programme into primary schools, and into Wales. He has worked on the Teach For All board that has put a version of the programme into 45 countries across the world.

"I NEVER SAID 'WE'LL DEFINITELY GET 3,000' BECAUSE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT I WAS EVEN CRAZIER THAN I ALREADY THOUGHT I WAS!"

What are the lessons he learned during this growth?

"Don't worry about the valleys of death, because there's always a hill of happiness around the corner," he says gleefully.

Anyone who has ever watched Wigdortz speak on stage will have heard this phrase before. He regularly uses it to motivate newbie teachers through their first year.

He has also faced some hairy situations himself. When setting up Teach First, the organisation needed a university to train its teachers. They put out a tender, but no-one bid. One organisation put in a half-bid but only for 50 teachers and only if they could do the training via video.

Wigdortz turned to Sonia Blandford, a leading education academic, in the January before trainees were due to start in June. Through "entrepreneurial spirit" and a lot of negotiation, Canterbury Christ Church University agreed to step in and take the graduates. The whole programme had to be designed in just five months.

"It was a pretty good programme actually," Wigdortz says. "Not as great as it is now, but I think we did a pretty good job in that first summer."

For nine years Dame Julia Cleveden chaired the organisation and helped him to see the importance of looking out for his staff. "She would ask why a person was looking stressed and if had I spoken to them," he says. "If a person was ill she would ask if I had sent flowers. Beforehand I wouldn't naturally have thought of that; I was a strategy consultant, and I saw people simply as a way of implementing a strategy."

In his autobiography, he has also written of his overly optimistic decision not to recruit a finance director in the first year, but instead to hire a "head of alumni".

"If I had to do that over, I would have raised more money and hired both early on," he admits.

Challenging Wigdortz on any of TeachFirst's issues is a disappointing strategy. He recognises "valid criticism" over the academic side of programme – that's why it now offers a postgraduate diploma (an extended PGCE). On its expensiveness, he points out that heads are repeat customers and many credit trainees for helping improve their schools. He spins every critique to a positive.

So why leave when he's so enthusiastic and optimistic about its future?

"The first thing to say is, for my whole life, I'm always going to have a relationship with Teach First and I'm really excited to be honorary president and the founder," he says, in a tone far less creepy than it sounds on paper. "I say this

BRETT W

to ambassadors – you never get to leave this movement!"

Second, he explains how his great uncle went to law school in his sixties: "He graduated at 63, and practised law for 20 years into his eighties. He helped homeless people and asylum seekers. I learned from that the importance of always learning through life, and being open to doing things very differently, not just sitting on your laurels basing things on your past success."

So what will he do now?

"I don't exactly have a plan," he admits. "I really want to focus on something that can make disruptive, transformational change."

Parenthood has focused him on early years and what can be done to help children get ready for school. He also worries about childhood obesity, employability, social mobility, and vocational training. If those sectors aren't ready for disruptive transformation, history suggests that minor inconvenience isn't going to stop him from having a go anyway.

In the meantime, however, he says one of his biggest points of pride are the spin-off Teach First programmes in other sectors: Frontline in social work, Unlocked in



Brett Wigdortz

WIGDORTZ

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

What is your favourite book?

It used to be 'Catcher in the Rye' until I got older and realised what a jerk Holden Caulfield is. I recently read 'Stranger than we can imagine: making sense of the 20th century' and found it really insightful.

What would you do if you were invisible for a day?

I'd be pretty fascinated to see what my kids get up to in school each day...

If you could have a superpower what would it be?

I would love the ability to time-travel and see what things were really like in the past and possibilities in the future.

Describe a party you went to as a child

I grew up in the Jersey Shore and remember a beach party as a teenager where we tried to light a bonfire and almost got arrested. Most of my other childhood parties involved bowling, mini-golf or being scared a girl would ask me to dance.

What do you eat for breakfast?

I always force a banana on my children. I'm more museli, fruit, and yogurt.

prisons and Police Now all operate on a model aped from his first programme.

"That's the dream. I mean it. It's amazing. They are having such a positive effect on so many people. Doing so much good. It is brilliant to know we had anything to do with that," he says.

OPINION



SIMON FOULKES

Education consultant,
Lee Bolton Monier-Williams

Ofsted vs DfE: Who calls the tune under the law?

There is some confusion over the growing divide between the accountability required by the Department for Education and Ofsted, writes Simon Foulkes

While schools wait with bated breath to see how the new DfE accountability measures will affect them, the head of the inspectorate has been making a series of pronouncements that have put her increasingly at odds with the philosophy behind these measures.

Speaking on The One Show last week, Amanda Spielman said that focusing purely on examinations was not “an education” so much as a “sticker collection”. She also announced in the spring that Ofsted would be looking for a “broad and balanced curriculum” – something that seems out of kilter with the DfE’s insistence on the Ebacc.

And here lies the \$64,000 question: when Ofsted and the DfE clash, where does the balance of power lie? Who gets to have the final say over what a good school looks like?

“ In law, Ofsted is an independent body

In law, Ofsted is an independent body, reporting to Parliament. The secretary of state (SoS) interviews candidates in the public appointments process, and recommends one for appointment as chief inspector. The law is complex and a more detailed explanation is available online here <http://9nl.es/OfstedDfE>

In brief, the SoS has the power to vary the terms of appointment of the chief inspector, and the terms of relations between the chief inspector and Ofsted itself. Nonetheless, Ofsted is proud of its independence, and the content of its reports and annual report.

According to law, Ofsted reports must cover pupil achievement at a school, the quality of teaching, the quality of leadership and management, and the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils must also be considered, and the extent to which the needs of the range of pupils at the school are met, including pupils with disabilities or having special educational needs.

These are its statutory duties, but while the detail of how this is achieved is not spelled out in legislation, it can be found at Ofsted’s website, including in the ‘School inspection handbook’ and the ‘Common inspection framework’.

The current inspection framework makes no mention of DfE accountability measures, but the department does set certain criteria through statutory instruments, for example the accountability measures by which ‘achievement’ is defined.

While Ofsted relies heavily on the professional judgments of its inspectors, DfE accountability measures aspire to be more mechanically objective. For both primary and secondary, in both maintained schools and academies, ‘floor targets’ are identified through the performance tables, whereby schools not meeting the minimum standard are categorised as ‘coasting schools’, and therefore eligible for intervention under the powers in section 60b of the Education and Inspections Act. Such schools may also be inspected by Ofsted to give further information about their circumstances and appropriate next action.

Government guidance on the accountability measures, and on ‘schools causing concern’, makes it clear that action subsequent to entry into the ‘coasting’ category is not automatic, and the regional schools commissioner (RSC) will consider all the circumstances in question, and what support may be most appropriate. This could include measures involving the local authority or other maintained schools, for example, as well as becoming an academy within a MAT.

However, the SoS, acting through the RSC, does have powers to require schools eligible for intervention to become academies.

The SoS is also now required to issue an academy order in respect of schools found by Ofsted to require significant improvement or special measures (though an academy order is not the same as the signing of a funding agreement, and may subsequently be withdrawn).

For academies failing the accountability measures, the consequences are that the academy be closed or rebrokered to another trust.

Sadly, none of this really helps schools decide who they ultimately need to please – and who will ultimately win the philosophical power struggle.



MARY RIALL

Chairman, John Madejski Academy

The academy transfer system needs fixing

The system for rebrokering schools needs reforming to better support vulnerable schools and pupils during the transition to a new academy trust, argues Mary Riall

Inadequate’ academies are too often left unsupported for long periods while their transfer to a new multi-academy trust is negotiated, even though we could make simple changes to address this.

I have personal experience of this process. The school of which I am chair – the John Madejski Academy (JMA), a standalone academy in Reading – was placed in special measures in October 2015 and instructed to join a multi-academy trust as soon as possible. Nine months later, it had official approval to join a MAT, pending a financial agreement with the DfE.

The move fell through, though, and we are now waiting to see whether a financial settlement can be agreed with a new MAT. The process has taken nearly two years, and the impact of this period of limbo has been profound.

The DfE’s sole focus has been to ensure a swift transfer, without stopping to consider other factors. The knock-on effect is that we have received minimal external support and no school improvement funding, alongside pressure to significantly cut costs. For the first nine months, our uncertain future combined with a demoralised, unsupported leadership team and low income was devastating for a school fighting to improve.

We are now improving, having recruited well on the premise of joining a successful MAT, but as an orphan we remain held back by the impact of an uncertain future and no funding support.

This story is not unique. This time last year, eight schools were In February, The Guardian cited 12 schools still waiting on a sponsor after two years. Failing schools need a spotlight on improvement, and the DfE’s current obsession with negotiating transfers to MATs diverts attention and resources away from this fundamental need.

Sustainably brokering schools and MATs will never be a quick task, and we need a shift in focus to ensure the limbo period is used for the following improvements.

Leadership support: Failing standalone academies are particularly vulnerable, dependant on goodwill support from local authorities and MATs. They need skilled, short-term leadership assistance to

implement immediate changes.

Clear communication: Leading a school through a transfer is complex. School leaders will have only partial knowledge of the negotiations towards joining a MAT yet they are responsible for delivering a positive message of progress to the community.

A new MAT can be seen as the solution to every problem, increasing the negative effect of delays and creating unrealistic expectations. You need clear advice on how to communicate the transfer process to all stakeholders, and the RSC’s office should be

“ We need to accept that a successful transfer takes time

responsible for managing this process.

Sound chain of command: the RSC, DfE and ESFA are all points of contact. It is often unclear who communicates with whom, both within and between these departments. Governors’ roles in sourcing a MAT aren’t clear either; we lost precious months before the DfE made its choice.

Transfer funding: There is no additional funding for schools during the transfer period. In contrast, as pupil numbers inevitably fall, cuts have to be made and debt is likely to increase. The policy appears to be to hang on by your fingernails until a MAT is found. This places a stranglehold on school improvement and makes financial planning almost impossible. A clear funding agreement for the transfer period would reap huge benefits.

MAT growth is complex; as national schools commissioner Sir David Carter wrote recently, “there is no single way to create a MAT”. The unintended consequence, though, is that it leaves too many children in schools surviving under a cloud. We need to accept that a successful transfer takes time.

The government must take responsibility for the brokerage period by intervening and meeting the school’s immediate needs to drive improvement. The impact will be great: success will see the demand lessen and meanwhile fewer children will lose precious school years to the impact of political change.

England has fallen behind as an international EdTEch player, so is it time to bring back a centralised body to oversee the sector, asks Tony Parkin

It is two decades since the Blair Government swept to power on the mantra of "education, education, education" and the belief in the power of education technology to transform. EdTech went on to enjoy significant amounts of thinking and money, which included a new quango called Becta (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) to help steer policy into practice.

There had been some form of agency looking at educational technology since the original National Council of Education Technology was established in 1967, by the Department of Education and Science. NCET continued as an advisory body through shifts in name, policy direction, new projects and amalgamations until 1997, when the incoming Labour government decided it needed something more closely aligned to government education policy.

For over a decade activity blossomed: things like the National Grid for Learning and large procurement programmes saw technology ramped up across education. Serious effort was put into researching what worked, and publishing the findings.

By working with other agencies, such as the National College and the Teacher Training Agency, Becta helped ensure that essential professional development accompanied this technology growth.



TONY PARKIN

Education Technologist

Bring back Becta? It's better than this...

Indeed it steered funding towards a multitude of initiatives and projects through a wide range of partner organisations that met its criteria for driving the education technology agenda.

Projects such as the Self-Review Framework, which still supports schools, were developed through collaboration of many organisations, and achieved a consensus for a robust framework that all could support. As someone who was involved, I can confirm that these were heady and optimistic days.

Sadly, all this progress was not to last. An incoming Tory government had warned of cuts to come, through what was known, though not affectionately, as the "bonfire of the quangos". Becta was one of the first against the wall, though it did go out in a blaze of glory with the Home Access Programme, one of the most efficient and

effective education technology initiatives I have witnessed.

“**Reliance on market forces has seen the collapse of many excellent organisations**”

Since then... nothing. Reliance on market forces has seen the gradual collapse of many excellent organisations which helped education grapple with the logistics and pedagogies of education technology,

including several of the regional broadband consortia. Brave spirits have organised strategic initiatives, such as ETAG (the Education Technology Advisory Group) and FELTAG (for Further Education), but their work has largely been ignored.

The only obvious recent policy has been to leave education technology to market forces: a thousand flowers bloom, only to wither. There's no sense of direction or coherence, no economies of scale, and no procurement leverage. In one laughable pig-in-a-poke procurement exercise set up by the DfE, it bought iPads at a price a schools could beat just by visiting Amazon.

Lots of wonderful things are happening in the EdTech sector, including various excellent startups, and organisations like BESA that are doing their best from the industry side. But with a UK market that's too small to support the investment model that venture capital seeks, everything seems an uphill struggle. There is little sign of research informing practice, nor of practitioners in the EdTech space, whether developers or teachers, getting the scale of support needed to gain widespread classroom traction.

We cast envious eyes across the Atlantic. In a domain where once we were the international leader, other countries have overtaken us. I have never been a great advocate for central control, but in this situation should we bring back Becta, as some now demand? And if not, what else would get us back to the international forefront of digital pedagogy, and equity back into English classrooms?

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Event

ResearchEd 2017:

On September 9 the education community gathered at Chobham College for researchED. It's an international project founded by former Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman. Schools Week rounds up some of the best bits of the event.

OFSTED TO INTRODUCE 'REMOTE' BOOK SCRUTINY

Ofsted is considering a new approach to book scrutiny, in which off-site inspectors will look at scanned versions of pupils' books.

The watchdog's chief inspector Amanda Spielman told researchED about this and other areas of development she intends to focus on in the coming months.

She described book scrutiny as "something which is very useful when it is used in the right way" in one of the closing sessions at the event.

"Like so many things, you put too much weight on it and it buckles, use it in the right way – it's really valuable," she said. "There are things we can do to isolate the book scrutiny process – both to test whether inspectors' conclusions are consistent with each-others', and whether it gives a valid picture of teaching quality and pupils' progress."

Spielman added that new scanning software could also be used to share book scrutiny amongst inspectors, rather than leaving it to the person visiting the school under inspection.

"There's rather good scanning quality now, so the views of other inspectors, remote from the live inspection, could be drawn in to test out the judgments of inspectors on site," she said.

"That could be used both in the context of a particular inspection, for training

and for research processes, and to test the overall reliability and validity. We might get several things from the same bit of scrutiny."

Spielman said this scrutiny could also be used "to evaluate curriculum quality" to "make sure we have the kind of curriculum that we want across the full range of subjects".

She discussed Ofsted's current curriculum review and explained some of the areas currently under examination, which she said are hard to explore in individual inspections.

"Our main focus this year is the curriculum, which is especially important for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds," she said, stressing that "this is not about creating an Ofsted-prescribed curriculum".

"Inspection does have to be

able to evaluate whether a curriculum is working well," she conceded. "It's not an introduction of preferred styles by a backdoor."

The first round of fieldwork on the curriculum review is complete, she confirmed, and her first commentary is expected "later this month".

Meanwhile, another Ofsted survey found "there isn't really a good shared language for discussing the curriculum".

"Even the most commonly used terms seem to mean different things to different people, so we'll be doing some work on that," she said.



Amanda Spielman



How committed teachers

Natasha Porter, chief executive of Unlocked Graduates, discussed the difference teachers can make by working in prisons, and how they can help prevent reoffending.

Almost half of prisoners (47 per cent) have no qualifications and nearly one third has a learning difficulty, according to a government review published last year to which Porter contributed.

She told Schools Week that the response from researchED delegates was "heart-warming", and that several people came forward to say they were interested in prison work and asked how to get involved.

She encouraged teachers to consider working as a prison officer, a prison teacher or an education manager in a prison.

"You can really make a difference. Apply for a job as a prison teacher, they are desperate for teachers in prisons," she said.

Porter, who taught for nine years, including a stint at the King Solomon Academy, a "no excuses" school with a strict behaviour policy, founded Unlocked Graduates in 2016, a charity that offers a two-year programme aimed at training

PRIMARY BOYS KNOW MORE ABOUT JOBS THAN GIRLS

Primary school boys are aware of a wider range of future careers than their female counterparts, and are especially familiar with jobs in science, technology, engineering and maths, research from Northumbria University has shown.

Dr Carol Davenport, a director at NUSTEM, a branch of Northumbria University, explained that in taking part in a recent study on the 'careers aspirations of primary children', boys "reported that they knew more jobs than girls", and were more aware of jobs that "involved some form of STEM subject or qualification".

The researchers worked with separate groups of primary school pupils from year 3 and year 5.

Pupils were given 30 cards showing different professions, and were asked to divide them into jobs they knew and jobs they didn't. They then divided the jobs they knew into ones they would like to do and ones they would not.

"It was really interesting how polarised, even in year 3, the children's 'jobs I'd like to do' ideas were," Davenport said.

"Children are limiting their career options



Dr Carol Davenport

very early, and that has social equity or social mobility implications, in part because jobs that tend to be gendered female also tend to be paid less."

Even when looking at STEM jobs only, pupils made different choices. Girls chose biological and healthcare related jobs, such as vet or nurse, and boys chose technology and engineering jobs, such as mechanic or game tester.

Davenport added that the gender split

disadvantages children of both sexes.

"I think there should be an equal push of boys into caring professions and boys into English," she said. "Each gender is a complete spread or spectrum, so there will be boys that want to go into caring professions who are told 'no you can't'."

Hazel Younger, the deputy head at Dulwich College Junior School, who attended the session, said at her school the single-sex environment had helped to break down barriers around gendered activities.

"We have got a thriving sewing club and a thriving dance club and thriving cooking club, because there are no girls there – so the boys can take ownership of those activities," she said.

Janet Clark, education policy adviser at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said at primary school children's options should "be kept open".

"We wouldn't necessarily want to call it 'careers education' because they are very young, but teaching around what jobs people can do and good role models for young people of both genders is really important," she said.

am Academy in Stratford for the fifth annual national conference
teacher Tom Bennett trying to make teachers more research-
vent.

research  ED



Nick Gibb



NICK GIBB SLAMS ACADEMICS REFUSING TO ENGAGE IN RESEARCHED MOVEMENT

Schools minister Nick Gibb slammed academics refusing to engage with researchED during his speech to its annual conference in London.

"The intellectual timidity of those who choose to sneer at researchED, whilst refusing to debate their evidence, stands in stark contrast to the effort that researchED makes to be inclusive for all," he told the group's fifth annual conference at Chobham Academy in east London.

Started in 2013 by classroom teacher Tom Bennett in response to concerns that scientific research was not being used adequately in the classroom, this national conference has grown to over 1,000 attendees – and spawned hundreds of other smaller events across the country and the world.

In recent months critics, have accused Bennett of trying to commercialise the event and of repeatedly inviting a small number of speakers.

He has pointed out the company's status as a non-profit and the "army" of volunteers who give up their time to organise the event without recompense.

In his speech, Gibb said conferences like these were "changing the relationship between teachers and education research" and pointed to researchers with differing views attending the event.

"The research historically presented to teachers was monotone in content and it was seldom used. ResearchED is different,"

he added. "It's a shame some would rather stay in their ivory towers than participate in today."

Gibb praised Bennett for recognising that "wild, unchecked pseudoscience abounds" in education with "bogus fads like learning styles and brain gym the least of it".

However he also used his speech to sing the praises of schools encouraging pupils to take the traditional subjects of the English Baccalaureate, describing it as "a benefit to all pupils, irrespective of prior attainment, irrespective of their background or their sex".

He concurred with recent research from the Institute of Education which showed students pursuing these traditional subjects had a greater probability of staying on to study, to take A-levels and attend university.

However, Loic Menzies, head of the think-tank LKMCo, said when it was released that politicians could use the research "to make over-inflated claims about policies", and argued that this was an example of "circular thinking" rather than a real effect.

"It is certainly no surprise that pupils who chose to study so-called 'academic' subjects at GCSE also go on to the 'academic' study of such subjects at A-level," he said.

A spokesperson for the Edge Foundation also noted the research presumes the only measure of success post-16 is studying for A-levels and going to university.

Gibb ended his speech by reminding delegates: "Evidence and empiricism now trumps dogma and received wisdom."

Teachers can bring down reoffending rates



Natasha Porter

high-calibre graduates to work as prison officers.

But she put paid to the idea that prison education was merely about qualifications.

"It's not about people leaving with a degree or with some kind of certificate in English and maths. It's about developing a love and a passion for something," she said.

"Unsurprisingly, if you develop a love of academics, and if you study, you're less likely to reoffend."

A spokesperson from Unlocked told Schools Week that as well as aiming to encourage teachers to consider teaching in prisons, they are also prime candidates for the Unlocked graduate programme.

The programme is planning to expand into prisons for under-18s next year, and the organisation would love to see more teachers considering prison officer work, as many of their skills are directly relevant.

"We put education at the centre of the training," they said.

After the event, Porter said: "It's particularly great to know that teachers are so engaged because we're hoping to expand the Unlocked Graduates scheme into prisons holding under-18s soon.

"Our graduates are already in adult and women's prisons and the need is perhaps even more urgent for young people.

"I'm looking forward to seeing some of the faces from the researchED audience making the move to become prison officers where their education experience is desperately needed.

"They were shocked at just how direct the line is from people in prison to those who were failed in childhood – including by schools."



REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
OF THE WEEK

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



Our reviewer of the week is
Andrew Old, a teacher and
blogger @oldandrewuk

Four things PISA tells us about after-school learning

By @edudatalab

Researcher John Jerrim looks at the PISA data concerning the amount of time students spend on learning after school. It turns out that social class affects the type of learning in several ways: both in terms of what subjects are studied out of school, and the resources available for that learning. This may contribute to some of the differences between social classes we see in exam results.

Six ways to help struggling readers in your classroom

By @HoratioSpeaks

This blog looks into whether secondary level is too late to address students' needs if they struggle with reading. There are a number of suggestions of ways teachers can support literacy in the secondary classroom, several of which I haven't heard before. The author also avoids recommending any of the more common but ineffective literacy initiatives I've encountered.

Views

By @Trivium21c

If anyone can be neutral about how chairs should be set out in a classroom, it will be a drama teacher. Martin Robinson discusses his own experiences of using very different types of classrooms, and comments on arguments on social media about classroom layout in other subjects, observing that "teaching and learning are important acts that need focus and concentration... on the subject being taught".

When did we start narrowing education?

By @Xris32

This post discusses how government policy, accountability processes and culture can lead to a narrow focus on a minority of school subjects at the expense of others. The author argues that there is nothing wrong with trying

to be good at a lot of subjects, and observes that "university" once referred to a "universal" education.

The dangers of oversimplification

From razorbladeinthecandyfloss.
wordpress.com

I think that very often in education we refuse to accept some straightforward facts because we are obsessed with looking for nuance and treat rare exceptions as more important than what generally happens. However, in this post, a teacher argues that when we discuss the importance of effort, we do oversimplify. For all the talk of "grit", it is not enough simply to try harder; what you do in order to try hard is even more important, they argue. "Rather than telling students to keep trying, we should be telling them that achieving their ultimate goal might require them to try out different, fully specified techniques and approaches, leaving earlier work aside."

The reading department

By @curricteamlead

An anonymous head of English observes that "reading about education has been seen by at least some in my department, and in my school, as an almost fanatical interest in our profession." They argue that teachers should be encouraged to keep reading and discussing ideas about education.

How many people believe learning styles theories are right? And why?

By @DTWillingham

Cognitive psychologist Dan Willingham has probably done more than anyone else to warn educators that learning-style theories are not science. Here he relates some of the research showing how widely it is believed that people have individual learning styles and discusses why this belief persists. "I think learning-styles theory is widely accepted because the idea is so appealing," he writes. "It would be so nice if it were true. It predicts that a struggling student would find much of school work easier if we made a relatively minor change to lesson plans – make sure the auditory learners are listening, the visual learners are watching, and so on."

Why didn't you tell me? Five things I wish I had been told sooner

By @joeybagstock

This post reflects on the things teachers should know, right from the start of their teaching careers. These are not big things, or complicated theories, but little bits of advice like "don't talk over students whilst they work" that might make one's teaching more effective.

BOOK REVIEW

Taught Not Caught

By: Nicky Morgan MP

Publisher: John Catt

Reviewed by: Lucy Powell MP



The former secretary of state for education, the Conservative MP Nicky Morgan, has written a book on "educating for 21st century character". I can hear the cries already from under-pressure teachers and heads wading their way through this year's latest data set: "if only she'd thought about that when she was in charge" or "if we weren't having to deal with huge budget-cuts, teacher shortages and the biggest upheaval in exams in a generation, we might be able to think about character" and so on. These criticisms are all reasonable.

However, to be fair to Morgan, she has written a well evidenced, argued and clear book on why developing character and all that it entails is critical to equipping children and adults for the changing world – and, as she argues, for closing the gap between the advantages and expectations of those in private schools and those in the state sector. Given her profile and prominence within the Conservative Party, her tome must surely carry significant weight within ministerial ranks.

She did not choose this topic for her first big intervention in the education field since leaving office at random. While she and I crossed swords on many occasions as adversaries in the Commons, not least on her plans to force all schools to become academies, I was well aware both of her attempts to make character education a higher priority and her desire to make PHSE compulsory in all schools. Unfortunately, she was consistently blocked by David Cameron.

Her book draws heavily on frontline case studies, and she has clearly done her homework, with visits and discussions with heads and teachers. As such, she provides an extensive probe into the issues from a position of experience, without the I-know-best-based-on-my-own-narrow-experience-

and-ideology approach we often hear from some of her past and current colleagues.

The first part of the book explores what we mean by character education and asks whether it is measurable. Morgan takes from the leading research as well as from a number of schools to highlight some key themes: resilience, self-confidence, self-reflection and aspiration.

While the thrust of her book is clear, that character education needs to be an explicit, not implicit, goal for schools and educators, she seems keen that character does not become a "measured" aspect of school life, for fear of unintended consequences. I couldn't help but wonder whether this was her pulling

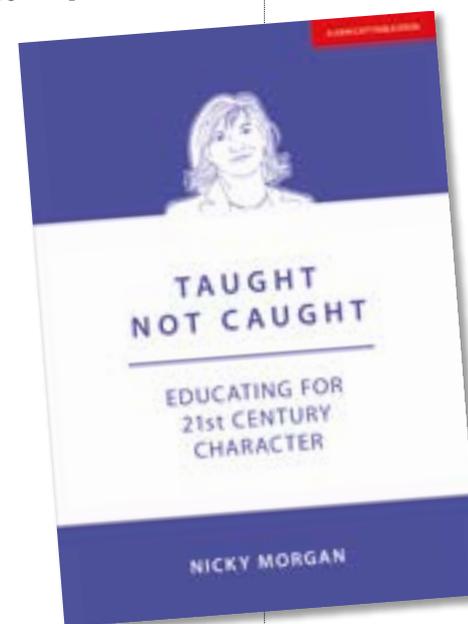
her punches or trying to avoid further political meddling, or both. Depending on your point of view, this is either a strength or weakness of the book; it is less of a handbook for delivering character education and more of a political case for increasing its importance.

The second half makes the case that improving character improves results, can close the social mobility gap and is necessary for the new world of work. Nicky implores schools to

be the driver of the agenda by prioritising character education in the knowledge that results follow.

I think here's the rub, and it's why those on the frontline have a point: schools under pressure from Ofsted and the DfE will say, with good reason, that until they improve their results, often in very difficult contexts, this "add-on" will always be seen as just that. Moreover, schools dealing with new exams and assessment frameworks will struggle to implement new methodologies and policies on character.

Overall, Morgan's book is an important intervention into the debate about what education is for and, given her profile, will allow for this debate to broaden from the last few years of ever narrowing outcomes. She makes a strong case in a readable and relevant style. While it isn't a handbook on how to deliver character education across a school, it is thought-provoking, and will hopefully push this agenda in government and within the educational establishment.





Week in Westminster

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

SATURDAY:

Despite having one of the most important jobs in education, chief inspector Amanda Spielman proved today that she's not above handling some lost property admin.

Spielman was one of the headline acts at ResearchED (see page 23) along with hundreds of other edu nerds.

After her speech, Spielman took to twitter to share a picture, exclaiming "see me to collect your notebook".

Let's hope the little yellow book in question wasn't full of scathing remarks about her presentation.

As one tweeter put it: "Oh my god if you found my notebook - I'd die!!!"

Week in Westminster is sad she didn't find our notebook.



MONDAY:

Education questions in the House of Commons today.

Justine Greening has predictably got the hang of not answering questions, in favour of shouting insults at the opposition, much like that annoying year 5 kid who always blames the other child next to her.

In a blatant attempt to deflect criticism over the news that Wakefield City Academy

Trust is to shed all 21 of its schools, Greening launched a scathing attack on the Labour Party's record on education in Wales and demanded an apology.

The blatant non-sequitur had Labour MPs booing. Notably, however, the people of Wakefield went without answers as to who is responsible for the whole thing.

TUESDAY:

Week in Westminster attended an event today about the "future of England's school system".

Toby Young, head of the New Schools Network, was on stage and mentioned his ill-fated headship programme (see page 12) and Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, revealed his new eight pathways programme – (see page 4).

But our favourite event was a panel which discussed the importance of diversity in education. A panel made up of five white blokes. The irony.

THURSDAY:

Regular Schools Week readers will have noticed that Thursdays are usually busy days for government statistics.

So busy, in fact, that we have moved our press day here at Schools Week towers so we can include all the juicy data stories the education department pushes out on a Thursday morning, every week, at 9.30am.

But – oh no! Week in Westminster waited

hungrily for a planned data release on academy transfer costs, promised by the DfE's schedule, aaaand... we were stood up!

The data never came, and officials pleaded ignorance. What's the betting that next week we learn they have moved their big data releases to a Friday?

On the upside the department did reveal its new School Direct marketing kit, which is full of postcards, flyers and posters for schools to advertise their vacancies. It's a surprisingly useful pack and shows how effective the programme might be if central government ran the application process as was originally envisaged.

Of course, the government's pretend-love of autonomy means it can't actually bring itself to help organise employment for teachers who want to train on the job – which is especially weird given that the schools minister Nick Gibb is happy to tell schools how they should do almost everything else. Tooodle-pip until next week!

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Joanne Bartley
Age 47
Occupation Campaign support officer, Comprehensive Future
Location Kent
Subscriber since January 2016

Fly on the Wall is a chance for you, the subscriber, to tell us what you love (and hate) about *Schools Week*, who you'd like to spy on and, of course, what the world of education would look like if you were in charge...



FLY ON THE WALL

Where do you read your copy of *Schools Week*?

I read the digital edition on the sofa in my pyjamas when I get up with my early-rising son.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most?

Editor's comment: Laura doesn't hold back! I love the way she has a feisty position on everything, and backs it up with smart reasons.

If you could wave a magic wand and change one education policy, which would it be?

I'd end the 11-plus.

Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

Justine Greening. She seems straightforward and smart, and I think she'll listen and do the right thing rather than come up with her own wild schemes. I also have a tenner on her to be future PM...

What is your favourite story or investigation reported in *Schools Week*?

I liked it when *Schools Week* reported A-level results from secondary moderns. I get sick of the assumption that all schools are the same and that top grades are the only purpose of education.

What would you do if you were editor of *Schools Week* for a day?

I'd create an entire edition that showcased the education ideas that everyone agrees on.

Favourite memory of your school years?

I was probably the shyest girl in school and rarely spoke to teachers, but Mr Matthews, my form teacher, shared my love of programming ZX Spectrum (pictured) games. He encouraged my interest in a hobby that had nothing to do with school but was very fulfilling. Years later I made a couple of web apps. It's still just a hobby, and still just as fulfilling.

If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing?

I might set up a social enterprise, with a wild idea for something involving sanitary products.

Favourite book on education?

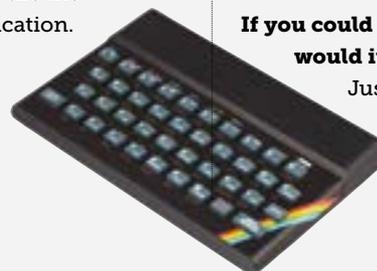
I read *Educating Ruby* and was inspired by its idea of expanding education. Exams matter but I like the idea of a broader form of education with many ways to find success.

What new things would you like to see in *Schools Week*?

Twitter fight of the week, a comical feature highlighting the most ridiculous slanging matches.

If you could be a fly on the wall in anyone's office, whose would it be?

Justine Greening. I'd like to check if she is listening to teachers and using evidence to make policy.



School Bulletin *with Sam King*

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in the school bulletin, email samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk



England's outstanding school governors recognised

FEATURED

The biennial Outstanding Governance Awards took place last week at London's House of Commons.

The awards, organised by the National Governance Association, have been running since 2007, and celebrate the work of school governors across England.

The four categories included 'outstanding clerk to a governing board', 'outstanding governance in a single school', 'outstanding governance in a multi-academy trust or federation', and 'outstanding vision and strategy'.

Of the seven schools shortlisted in the single-school category, three – Fairfield Park Lower School in Central Bedfordshire, Sir John Barrow School in Cumbria, and Millennium Primary School in Greenwich – took first place.

Millennium Primary School has gone from bordering on special measures in 2013 to 'outstanding' in its 2015 Ofsted inspection, and now leads the Maritime Academy Trust.

Tiffany Beck, its chair of trustees, said the key to the school's success had been a "relentless" governing body, which put the "best interests of the kids and the school" at the heart of debates.



Millennium Primary School governors

"It's key having an effective relationship between the chair and the head as well," she said. "I think a lot of governors sometimes get carried away thinking they're being helpful by being challenging on the wrong sorts of things."

The winner of the MAT or federation category was the Spring Partnership Trust, based in Kent, while Angie Marchant from Colham Manor Primary School in Hillingdon took the title of outstanding clerk for her "meticulous organisation skills".

Nexus MAT in Rotherham won the outstanding vision and strategy category,

which looked for a governing board that could demonstrate it had engaged the school community in setting its business objectives.

Warren Carratt, the CEO of an academy chain which only formed in 2016, said Nexus' business objectives, which include establishing residential provision for complex pupils and sponsoring schools in need of help, were "ambitious", yet "realistic".

"We've honed a small number of strategic priorities by working really closely with our children, families and school communities to collect information about what's most important to them and where they feel



Nexus MAT collect their award



Angie Marchant gets the good news

things can and should be better," he explained.

Academies minister Lord Nash was in attendance to present the winners with their trophies.

Nominations for next year's awards will open in 2019 to all schools in England.

Pen-pal pair-up incorporated into curriculum



A resident reads her letters

Worcestershire primary school has teamed up with two local care homes to launch a pen pal scheme between residents and year 4 pupils.

The scheme will form part of Franche Primary School's creative writing curriculum, and 120 pupils wrote their first letters in July to residents of both High Habberley House care home and Hollyfields care home.

The first letters fit the theme of "cautionary tales", where pupils asked residents what they were like at school, and whether or not they were well behaved.

"We built it into the cautionary tales topic we've been looking at with year 4," said Katie Sinclair, the creative curriculum lead at Franche Primary. "We asked residents to share stories of their own childhood, so

they might teach younger generations what not to do. We thought it would be a good icebreaker."

Michael Butler, the activities coordinator for the two homes organised the link-up, approaching the school with the idea of the pen-pal scheme as a way of engaging residents with the community.

"I have always sought to include intergenerational activities in our social schedules because this has such a special impact on improving people's well-being," he said. "The pen-pal scheme takes this to a new level, supporting young and old to form deeper, lasting connections.

"The response to the first letters we got through from the children was amazing. One lady even cried with excitement."

The pupils recently received responses



One of the pen pal letters



to their first letters, and will meet their pen pals in person later in the term.

"This is just the beginning of many fulfilling special connections between the two generations," Sinclair said.

The care home has recently appointed additional activities coordinators to help manage the letters when they come in, and each resident received around four letters each.

MENTAL HEALTH FOR EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS



A still from 'Annabel's Story'

BBC Learning is releasing a series of free videos to help teachers introduce the topic of mental health to primary school children.

The five short animated films look at ways to help children deal with OCD, depression, panic attacks, eating disorders and bullying.

Produced by Mosaic Films, a documentary production company, the series, titled 'When I worry about things' animates the voices of children talking about their own struggles and experiences.

"This collection has been created with guidance from clinical psychologists and is designed to support teachers in introducing a potentially challenging subject," said Andrew Tomlinson, an executive producer at BBC Teach.

"The idea with this series was to offer a solution by starting the discussion on behalf of the audience, therefore lifting the stigma surrounding them and acting as a tentpole around which issues and solutions could be discussed easily and openly."

The videos are targeted at children aged eight and above, and are accessible via the BBC Teach website.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5QM6H01X6b3JTQF85GLgbFl/when-i-worry-about-things>

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



DAVID CRESSWELL

Head of sixth form,
Barnard Castle School

START DATE: September 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Head of German at
Radley College

INTERESTING FACT: He was in the Oxford
University dramatic society alongside Oscar-
nominee Felicity Jones and *Dr Who* and *Game
of Thrones* actor Harry Lloyd.



JEREMY HANDSCOMB

Head of school, Holy
Trinity Church of
England School

START DATE: September 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Head of school,
Castle Primary School

INTERESTING FACT: Jeremy has a degree in
meteorology.



TINA EVANS

CEO, Salisbury Plain
Academies

START DATE: August 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Schools improvement adviser for
Wiltshire County Council

INTERESTING FACT: Tina has just met her birth
father for the very first time after 53 years.



HELEN WOODHAMS

Head of small schools,
the Redstart Learning
Partnership

START DATE: September 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Assistant head at the Redstart
Primary School

INTERESTING FACT: Helen used to manage a
holiday company in the Alps.



GARETH NATION

Head of school, Castle
Primary School

START DATE: September 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Deputy head, Ilchester
Primary School

INTERESTING FACT: Gareth has a degree in
ceramics and competes in triathlons in his
spare time.

Get in touch!

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