

### LARGEST ACADEMY **CHAIN SET TO EXPAND, OR IS IT?**

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### **NO changes to the grammar schools** response since JUNE - so where is it?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

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### NEWS Why is the DfE still sitting on its grammars consultation response?

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Exclusive The Department for Education is still refusing to publish the response to its consultation on grammar schools, even though submissions closed almost a year ago and the document has not changed since June, Schools Week can exclusively reveal.

The 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation ran throughout autumn 2016 in preparation for the planned introduction of new grammar schools. A tender was placed for a research company to complete analysis of the results within a short period of time. and the response was expected in the first months of this year.

However, the response has not been published, disrupted by a general election in which the Conservatives failed to secure another majority leaving them unable to forge ahead.

Schools Week's formal request to see the response was rejected, but the rejection we received revealed the document was last edited on June 8, the day of the general election.

Officials have since denied any breach of the strict rules that ban civil servants from engaging in party-political activity during the election period.

The DfE said publishing the document at this stage would likely have a "corrosive effect on good government" because it is still a "draft", despite the lack of updates.

"The government is still considering how best to progress the policy proposals set



for everyone in light of the responses to the

consultation, and so this document is not a reflection of final government policy," said a spokesperson.

The government won't say what was changed in the document on election day or why, but insists the update was made "in line with the guidance issued by the Cabinet Office about the work of civil servants during the election period".

Beyond grammar schools, several other key policies hang on the response, including expectations on private schools and universities to support the state school sector, and a plan to lift caps on faith-based admissions in free schools.

The government said it has already outlined its position on the various proposals in the consultation in parliament and will "announce more details in due course".

The delay to the response is also a bone of contention for school leaders who put significant time and effort into their responses. In May, Anne Lyons, the president of the NAHT union, complained of delays.

The consultation ran for three months, closing on December 12 last year. Under the government's own consultation principles. departments are supposed to respond "within 12 weeks of the consultation" or "provide an explanation why this is not possible".

On the basis of these guidelines, the response should have been published in early March, but was pushed back by the government and then delayed again by local and national elections. Officials now say further details will be out "in due course".

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, branded the delay "the latest indecision from a government in chaos".

"Over a year after opening a consultation the government are incapable of even forming a response," she said. There are also "serious questions" about what was changed on election day, and why.

Rayner also referred to delays to other consultation responses: "Time and again the department have failed to publish responses in reasonable time. The government should get a grip, and finally publish their response."

In July, Schools Week reported that the delay to all outstanding responses put together totalled eight years.

#### **EDEXCEL CHANGES** MIND ON COMPUTER SCIENCE DO-OVERS

Pupils who have already started a GCSE computer science task that was replaced at very short notice do not need to start from scratch. Edexcel has confirmed.

Earlier this month the exam board abruptly announced that it was changing the coursework component in the wake of a security breach, and that some schools would have to find up to 20 additional hours in their timetables in order to repeat the assessment

But Edexcel has now changed its mind after news coverage prompted seven schools to complain about the situation.

The board confirmed that a "small number" of schools at which pupils had already started the coursework component of its computer science GCSE will be allowed to continue their work.

"We have been contacted by a small number of schools whose students have already made a start on the GCSE computer science NEA task," a spokesperson said.

"We will ensure no learner is disadvantaged by allowing schools that can show they've started the existing assessment to continue. All other schools should use the new NEA Task circulated last week."

Drew Buddie, a computer science teacher and former chair of Naace, the education technology association, said last week the change would be an "utter nightmare" for schools and that "heads should roll".

Edexcel's spokesperson apologised for "the inconvenience this error has caused", and reaffirmed the company's "absolute commitment to ensuring that all students receive the appropriate mark".

### KS2 re-mark submissions way down year on year

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Fewer primary tests submitted for appeal this year achieved a change in marks, which assessment experts believe is because markers are "more confident" than in the first year of the new, more rigorous tests.

Reviews of key stage 2 reading, maths, and spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) test papers this year resulted in mark changes just 8.5 per cent of the time - a fall from 9.8 per cent last year.

Maths re-marks were the most successful, according to data released by the Standards and Testing Agency yesterday, but were less successful than last year. Whereas 12 per cent of maths tests submitted last year received in a mark change, just 10.3 per cent were successful this year.

For SPAG, 10.3 of re-marks were successful this year compared with 12 per cent last year. And in reading, just 7.4 per cent were successful this year, compared with 8.6 per cent.

Julie McCulloch, a primary specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said markers would be more "familiar, and more confident" with the marking scheme this year than last year,



when tests were made tougher for the first time.

"It was the first time the markers had marked those tests, so now they will be more familiar with them second time round. That could explain the drop in successful appeals," she said.

An application for a re-mark is considered successful if a pupil moves from below the expected standard to reach it or above, or where there is a change of three or more marks.

The proportion of tests that schools submitted also fell this year: 1.9 per cent of the total were sent in last year, and 1.4 per cent this year.

The drop in submissions was sharpest for the reading test. Of all reading tests taken last year, 3.8 per cent were submitted, but this dropped to 2.6 per cent this year. By contrast, submissions for SPAG re-marks only dropped from 1.2 per cent to 1.1 per cent, and for maths from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent.

Appeals against reading tests spiked last year because many teachers felt the language had been too "old-fashioned" and difficult, said McCulloch. These

complaints were backed by Ofgual last month when it released a report stating the 2016 reading test had been "unduly hard" for pupils with low attainment or special educational needs.

This year the three tests were more consistent in difficulty, which likely led to fewer appeals, said McCulloch.

But the reading test still triggered by far the most re-mark requests: 15,420 appeals were submitted for reading, alongside 6,244 for SPAG and 2,990 for maths.

Michael Tidd, a headteacher and primary assessment blogger, said teachers felt the reading test last year was particularly "harsh".

He also cautioned against McCulloch's stance that schools were more comfortable with marks this year, pointing out successful re-marks were low last year too.

Rather, teachers may have found that

submitting for re-marks was "mostly a waste of money" and have given up on trying, he said.

"I think people will just be looking more closely at which tests they will bother to submit," he suggested.

This was the second year that pupils in year 6 have sat the new national curriculum tests

### NEWS

#### ACADEMY SLAMMED FOR 'STAGE, NOT AGE' CURRICULUM

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

A beleaguered academy which teaches pupils by "stage, not age" has been put into special measures by Ofsted, after inspectors were left unimpressed.

The report, which is particularly critical of the school's curriculum model, will be a fresh blow to the trust on the back of a string of difficulties.

Two years ago, a government investigation found breaches in safeguarding, pay processes and bullying at Cuckoo Hall Academies Trust.

Now, after a visit in July, Cuckoo Hall primary school in north London, the first school in the trust, was rated 'inadequate', three years after it received a 'good' judgment.

Three years ago, the trust chair suspended the executive head and school headteacher along with one of the trust's directors after allegations of "gross misconduct".

The chair was then removed in December 2014, prompting the trust's director to tell Schools Week about the investigation's "false" allegations.

The trust was then subjected to a damning report from the Education and Funding Agency in February 2015, regarding a series of allegations including safeguarding, bullying and SATs results.

Some of these were upheld, including one that found some staff had started at the school without DBS checks, as well as a family member appointed to a senior post in the trust, and evidence that some bullying processes were not followed.

In the same month, the trust was also hit with a financial notice. It was however eventually cleared by the Standards and Testing Agency over allegations of inaccuracies in its SATs results.

The latest Ofsted report has attacked the school's approach to the curriculum, which teaches pupils according to their ability rather than age group.

The school's "stage, not age" model places pupils from different year groups in classes based on their reading, writing and mathematics ability, but inspectors insisted this "does not meet pupil needs".

Pupils who leave the school at the end of key stage 2 "are not prepared well for the next stage of their education", Ofsted found, and progress in reading and mathematics is in the bottom 10 per cent of all pupils nationally.

Ofsted recently launched a nationwide focus on school curriculum. Its director of education, Sean Harford, asked schools to present clear evidence about their curriculum choices.

Teaching assistants at Cuckoo Hall are left to teach literacy and numeracy to "large groups of children", while full-time teachers have an "inaccurate view" of the quality of teaching, the report found.

Meanwhile funding for pupils with special educational needs is "not spent well" and provision is not good enough.

However, inspectors noted that pupil welfare and behaviour was good, and that acting headteacher Florinda Shamolli had created a "positive" atmosphere.

The Cuckoo Hall academies trust runs five schools in London.

### Autism free schools eclipse other SEND provision

#### JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive Autism-specific free schools are continuing to dominate new special free school approvals, with more than half of those in the pipeline having it as a focus.

However, SEND experts are openly asking whether this one area of need is receiving too much attention.

"We need to know what analysis has been done to show 65 per cent of all new special schools should focus on autism, and how the need of other groups of pupils is going to be met," said Simon Knights, the director of Whole School SEND, a membership body that supports SEND provision in schools.

Of the 29 special needs free schools open since 2011, 62 per cent have autism as a primary or secondary focus, figures obtained by Schools Week show.

Among the 40 new special schools with approval to open, meanwhile, 65 per cent are autism-specific.

Special schools catering for needs other than autism are getting shorter shrift, figures from the New Schools Network, a charity which supports free schools, show.

Two schools for pupils with speech and language communication needs are already open but no more are planned at present.

Instead, speech and language needs will be a secondary focus for two new autismspecific schools, and in one social and emotional health-specific school.

Chris Rossiter, the director of the Driver Youth Trust, a literacy charity for SEND inclusion in mainstream schools, said there was a risk teachers will become familiar with autism, because other needs such

FOCUS OF SPECIAL SCHOOL: TO BE OPENED	NO. OF SCHOOLS
AUTISM	17
AUTISM; MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	2
AUTISM; SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITICATION NEEDS	2
AUTISM; SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	4
AUTISM; SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES; PROFOUND AND MULTIPLE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	1
MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	3
MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES; SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	1
SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	3
SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS; SPEECH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS	1
SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	3
UNKNOWN	3
TOTAL	40

as speech and language issues are "more nebulously defined".

Autism is wrongly perceived as "more complicated" than any other kind of need, he said. Instead, many pupils with special educational needs are ending up in alternative provision due to "behavioural" issues, leaving them with less access to specialist intervention for their needs.

"There is not the same infrastructure or perception for other difficulties," he said. Knights wants a countrywide analysis to check that special schools with particular focuses are opening in those areas in which they are most needed.

Barney Angliss, a consultant specialising in SEND, said the government should watch the "onward march" of autism-specific providers to assess what kinds of theoretical interventions were being used to help pupils

"It would be interesting to know whether DfE has considered how to assess their efficacy as autism interventions, not just their business model." he said.

The five autism-specific schools which opened this year are the Bridge Satellite Provision in north London, Purple Oaks Academy in Northampton, Quest Academy in Warwickshire, SGS Pegasus in Gloucestershire and the Wherry School in Norfolk.

One other type of need - severe learning difficulties - also has more schools in the pipeline. So while there is just one special free school focused on severe learning difficulties currently open, three more have the go-ahead for the future.

### Crackdown on recruiters cold-calling in school hours

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Teachers are being targeted by "unprofessional" cold calls from recruitment agencies during school hours - and the government has vowed to investigate some of the firms responsible.

The schools minister Nick Gibb said his department will "explore" the concerns raised by schools about the behaviour of some agencies, after a Conservative MP raised the issue in parliament.

Last year, one in five schools dealing with recruitment agencies reported a predominantly negative experience.

Lucy Frazer brought the matter up in parliament after she heard from heads in her constituency who said teachers were being cold called by recruitment agencies on school lines during working hours, and had received emails from headhunters on their school accounts

This has been described as "unprofessional" by the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo), which represents recruitment organisations operating in the education sector.

Nick Bowles, APSCo's head of stakeholder engagement, urged schools facing unprofessional practices from agencies to complain to the relevant professional



body. In many cases, this will be APSCo, although some firms are represented by other organisations, like the Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

"Our own APSCo members adhere to a strict code of conduct that is bespoke to the education sector." said Bowles. "This code of conduct for education recruitment firms has, at its very core, honesty, integrity and professionalism and should be used as an indicator of best practice."

According to Gibb, research is underway to strengthen the DfE's understanding of the issues schools and their staff face when dealing with agencies. Its conclusions will inform the development of the government's new national teacher vacancy website.

Nicky Morgan promised a new jobs board service in 2016, a measure included in the Conservative Party's general election manifesto earlier this year.

However, Gibb said the research had also highlighted concerns in schools "about the cost and practices of recruitment agencies". Schools will also benefit from a new

commercial framework, which will include measures "designed to improve the conduct of some agencies". As reported by Schools Week in May, the government is in the process of developing a national pool of trusted supply teacher agencies.

Valentine Mulholland, the head of policy at the National Association of Head Teachers. said her organisation had been urging the government to do more to protect schools from poor behaviour by agencies.

"School leaders need to be able to rely on recruitment agencies that act in a professional, open and cost-effective way," she said. "The new landscape in teaching relies on such agencies, so it is crucial that they adhere to the highest codes of conduct."

The union has also expressed concerns about the amount schools are spending with recruitment agencies. Last November, its annual recruitment survey found that although the proportion of headteachers admitting to using agencies dropped from 56 per cent in 2015 to 44 per cent in 2016, the average spend still worked out at £3,221.50 per vacancy.

When asked about their experience of working with agencies, half the respondents said their overall experience had been "a balance of both positive and negative experiences", while one in five reported a predominantly negative experience.

# Exclusive

### NEWS Spielman: 'Let inspectors into MATs'

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted wants to change the way it inspects multi-academy trusts (MATs) from September 2018, according to a senior inspector.

Stephen McMullan told the annual conference of the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services in Grantham on Wednesday the watchdog was "considering" new ways of inspecting and evaluating MATs. These changes could be implemented as soon as next year.

At the moment, Ofsted can only undertake "focused inspections", which involve visiting a handful of a MAT's schools and culminate in a letter to the trust.

But Ofsted's chief inspector Amanda Spielman this week demanded increased powers to inspect MATs in their entirety, telling the Commons education select committee that the current system only gives inspectors a "limited" view.

In recent years, focused inspections have identified worrying levels of underperformance at some of England's largest MATs. Fuller inspections have however been the subject of significant debate.

Spielman's predecessor, Sir Michael Wilshaw, wanted Ofsted to inspect the central services of trusts as well as their schools.

New guidance in 2015 set the parameters

of focused inspections, allowing Ofsted to look at groups of schools in one trust, but stopped short of allowing inspections of trusts as organisations.

Spielman told MPs on Tuesday that it was "important" for Ofsted to be allowed to conduct more extensive inspections.

"I think the view we can get just by looking at subsets of schools in a MAT is very significantly more limited than the view we would get by looking at the whole of a MAT," she told MPs, claiming that MATs are "highly integrated operations" at which Ofsted needs to "look properly".

The prospect of more comprehensive inspections of MATs was welcomed by academy accountability campaigner Janet Downs, from the Local Schools Network.

"Ofsted does inspect local authorities' school improvement programmes, and their special needs provision overall, so MATs should be the same," she said.

But others have warned that Ofsted may face issues with resources and a clash with the regional schools commissioners if it is granted more powers over MATs.

In a recent blog, Robert Hill, a former policy adviser to Tony Blair, warned that Ofsted's diminished funding meant resources for inspection were "now very definitely finite". "Any formal

inspection role

for Ofsted would be bound to put the relationship between the respective RSC and Ofsted functions under intense scrutiny," he added.

Tensions between Ofsted and the schools commissioners were also mentioned during the committee hearing.

Spielman admitted she only met Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, for the first time last week, despite having been in post since January.

She insisted that any "fuzziness" in the relationship between the two bodies was on "their side of the fence", a comment likely to exacerbate tensions ahead of a meeting between inspectors and commissioners next week.

Spielman also wants Ofsted to be allowed to inspect all types of alternative provision.

A Schools Week investigation recently revealed that Ofsted can only visit providers that are registered as schools, but a "very large proportion" of alternative provision happens in unregistered settings.

Spielman said many of these unregistered schools do not offer full-time provision, which meant they are not obliged to register as schools, a matter of "great concern". She requested a change in the law governing independent schools, to allow Ofsted to inspect more AP.

"We are very uncomfortable about providers being able to say they are not offering full-time provision and so, therefore, they are exempt from registration and inspection," she said.

### Ofsted not yet ready to abandon 'outstanding'

Amanda Spielman

#### FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted is still not ready to scrap its 'outstanding' grade, more than a year after its new boss spoke of her discomfort about it.

Amanda Spielman told the parliamentary education committee on Tuesday that issues with Ofsted's grading system may not be addressed until its new framework is implemented in two years.

The 'outstanding' category has been criticised for giving a false impression of the schools which earn it, and putting unnecessary pressure on improving schools which should instead focus on achieving a 'good' grade.

Spielman said last year that she wanted to discuss removing the top grade, as she was "quite uncomfortable" with "some of the effects" it has on the school system.

However, Spielman told MPs that she did not have an "easy answer", due to a conflict between the views of schools and parents.

She said her "level of discomfort" was unchanged, and said the schools community was very clearly still in favour of scrapping the rating.

However, parents are "in a rather different place", and Ofsted is now working out how to "reconcile" the two groups,



but finding a balance helpful to both sides is "a real challenge".

"This is why we have a number of pieces of research going on that are helping us to work out how to triangulate this, but I don't have an easy answer," she said.

Ofsted has been looking at "all the different ways" it operates in the system, Spielman told MPs, and grades are only "one piece of that".

When pressed by Hull MP Emma Hardy, a former NUT activist, on whether grading could be changed to reward schools that take in more pupils with special education needs or those who have been excluded, Spielman said this was an "interesting suggestion for the new framework".

Despite the potential wait

until the new framework in September 2019, Spielman's approach has been welcomed by leadership unions the National Association of Head Teachers and the Association of School and College Leaders.

Paul Whiteman, NAHT's general secretary, welcomed her desire to "engage in debate on the 'outstanding' grade, as part of a strategy to reduce the negative consequences of high stakes inspections".

"We look forward to working with the chief inspector on this in the coming months," he added.

Scrapping the 'outstanding' grade will require a vote in parliament, according to Geoff Barton, ASCL's general secretary, who speculated that it was therefore "unlikely to happen quickly, if at all".

"We are nevertheless encouraged that Ofsted is taking a radical long-term look at the way it works and the judgements it makes," he said.

If the grade is abandoned in 2019, it will be the second time in seven years that the grades used by Ofsted have been changed. The old 'satisfactory' category was

scrapped in 2012 and replaced with 'requires improvement'. At the time, chief inspector Sir Michael

Wilshaw said he wanted to send the message that "satisfactory is now unsatisfactory", and that more schools should be aiming for 'good'.

#### CONTROVERSIAL GRAMMAR UNDER COUNCIL SCRUTINY

#### ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

A council investigation into a grammar school that allegedly forced underperforming A-level students out will be published by February 2018.

The headteacher of St Olave's grammar school, Aydin Önaç, has also been suspended "without prejudice", according to the new chair of governors.

Bromley council confirmed it has been working "very closely" with the new chair of the school in Orpington, which hit the headlines for ordering pupils to leave its sixth form if they received disappointing grades halfway through their A-level courses.

"The council has appointed an independent person to look into concerns raised, though we cannot comment further about the investigation at this time," said a spokesperson. "The findings will be reported to the Department [for Education] in January/February 2018."

In a statement, the new chair of governors Dr Paul Wright wrote: "I have been informed that the London Borough of Bromley will be conducting an investigation of St Olave's grammar school in respect of concerns that have been raised over recent weeks.

"In light of this, and in order to protect the integrity of the investigation, Mr Önaç has been suspended from all of his responsibilities as headmaster of the school."

In August, The Guardian revealed that St Olave's had withdrawn places for 16 pupils after they failed to get three Bs in their internal examinations sat halfway through their courses. Government guidance states that local

authority-maintained schools are only allowed to exclude pupils due to behavioural issues, and that it is unlawful for pupils to be sent away because of their attainment.

Parents of pupils at the school sought legal action, and judicial review proceedings have been opened against the school's governing body on behalf of affected families.

The school backtracked in September after the exclusions were made public, and a statement issued on the school's behalf by the diocese of Rochester said it had written to all parents of pupils affected to offer them the opportunity to return and continue their studies. Wright said the suspension of Önaç as the school's leader was "without prejudice" and

"does not presume any particular outcome". "We are committed to full transparency and

will be cooperating fully with the local authority in this matter," he said.

St Olave's is one of England's highest achieving schools, with 96 per cent A\* to B grades in its 2017 A-level results, and 34 students gaining straight A\*s in at least three subjects.

### **NEWS**

#### HOW 'NUDGE THEORY' COULD PREVENT OBESITY

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

A study into using so-called "nudge theory" to encourage parents to pack healthier lunches for primary school students will publish its findings this month.

Funded by Public Health England and carried out by researchers from the University of Derby, there are high hopes that the lowcost, low-intensity theory of behavioural modification could have a real effect on childhood obesity in the UK

Nudge theory uses positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions to influence the decisions of groups and individuals, in some cases demonstrably more effectively than direct enforcement.

For this particular study, three sets of materials were designed using different behavioural insights to raise awareness of foods with added sugars and suggest healthier options. These were delivered to parents of children aged between seven and 11 at 17 separate primary schools in England over a four-week period.

Photographs of the pupils' packed lunches were taken before the study began, during the intervention and three months afterwards, and at the end of the study, researchers surveyed parents to explore how their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about healthier packed lunches had changed.

The pictures are now being coded for nutritional content and analysis is underway to discover whether the nudges have encouraged parents to change their behaviours and make healthier lunches for their children.

The final analysis will look at the differences between the lunches from before the study began, during the study and after it was completed. It will focus on the number of boxes containing sugary food, the average number of sugary food items, the average grams of sugar in the lunch boxes and the proportion of lunches that contained fruit or vegetables.

The study was inspired by the rising rate of childhood obesity. In the UK, 9.3 per cent of children aged four and five are classed as obese, rising to 19.8 per cent of those aged 10 to 11.

Just one per cent of school packed lunches meet the national recommendations for school meals in England. Eighty-two per cent contain unhealthy snacks and 61 per cent include sugar-sweetened drinks.

According to a preview of the study, which is entitled 'Using behavioural insights to improve the healthiness of children's packed lunches', we currently lack evidence on ways to improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches.

If the study, which will appear in the European Journal of Public Health later this month, identifies improvements, these could have "potential implications for child health, nutrition and obesity rates".

### England's largest academy chain tries to hit 'unpause'

SCHOOLS WEEK

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

dALIXROBERTSON4 **Exclusive** The Department for Education is in talks with England's largest academy chain about handing over more schools, even though it's on a "pause" list that limits its expansion.

The Academies Enterprise Trust is in "active discussions" with the DfE about taking on more primaries.

Officials say that although the trust remains on the pause list, it is allowed to take on schools rated 'good' or better on a "case-by-case basis".

AET insists it has undergone a period of improvement and is once again ready to expand, but the move has been branded "preposterous" by the National Education Union.

Launched in 2008, AET initially only sponsored three schools, but expanded rapidly in the early 2010s, sponsoring 30 schools in 2011, and 76 in 2012.

In 2013, amid concerns the trust had expanded too quickly, the government placed it on the list, banning future expansion until fears were addressed. The following year, the trust faced

criticism from Ofsted and was handed a financial notice to improve by the Education Funding Agency.

Three years on, AET insists its fortunes have taken a turn for the better, following a change in management which saw Julian Drinkall became chief executive last November.

"This year has been a period of significant

improvement for AET," a spokesperson told *Schools Week*. "The financial notice to improve has been lifted, a new management board is in place under the leadership of the new chief executive, and the board of trustees has been overhauled."

He added that "real improvement in performance" could be seen throughout AET's stable of schools, especially in the primary sector.

"As such, we are now in active discussions with the DfE exploring growing the number of primary schools in the trust, focusing on areas where it makes sense to do so," he said.

However, the DfE said the trust "remains on pause and is not allowed to sponsor any more schools unless exceptional circumstances arise".

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the NEU, did not mince words on the possibility of fresh expansion.

"The news that AET is to be allowed to expand again is unsurprising given the government's obsession with the academy model, despite a recent spate of high profile academy trust failures," he said.

He is particularly concerned because AET was stripped of two schools – Everest



Community Academy in Basingstoke and Cordeaux Academy in Lincolnshire – in June.

"It is preposterous that at the same time as some schools are being removed from AET they are being told they can take over others," he said. "The money being wasted on turning more schools into sponsored academies would be better spent investing in schools and in teachers."

Ofsted's initial criticism of AET back in August 2014 centred on its failure to provide effective support for its schools. Inspectors said the "rapid expansion", together with a lack of strategic leadership, had "hindered improvement".

Two months later, the trust was issued with a financial notice to improve by the EFA. AET gave up eight of its schools between December 2014 and April 2015, claiming they were "geographically isolated" from the main bulk.

Another focused Ofsted inspection of AET's academies in November 2015 determined that it was "failing too many pupils".

AET currently runs 64 academies: 29 secondary academies, 32 primary academies and five special academies.

### Agnew: 'MATs should have between 12 and 20 schools'

#### PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA\_AK

Trusts should merge and expand in order to run between 12 and 20 schools, even if it means a loss of autonomy, the new academies minister has said.

Lord Agnew told the North Academies Conference in Gateshead that he believes the "sweet spot" for multi-academy trusts (MATs) is "somewhere between 12 and 20 schools, or something like 5,000 to 10,000 pupils".

The Inspiration Trust, a MAT he founded and once chaired, has 14 schools.

He also used his first major public speech since he was appointed to urge northern MATs to "think seriously about teaming up", and pointed to the 66 MATs in the region with two or fewer schools, and the 86 single academy trusts.

He accepted the mergers would mean a "certain loss of autonomy" for some trusts but he was "certain" such expansions would "strengthen educational provision".

The minister said his personal experiences at the Inspiration Trust taught him that expansion allows trusts to "harness the energy of individual teachers and deploy them across several schools" and that the "collective firepower of a bigger group makes a huge difference".

But MAT expansion is a contentious issue. Ofsted has repeatedly argued that expanding too quickly has led to poor performance at several academy chains, and nearly 60 chains are on a pause list to prevent additional growth.

Not everyone agrees. Jon Coles, the chief executive of United Learning, believes MATs should be larger yet, and claimed that 20 schools is "too small".

Speaking at the Festival

of Education in the summer, Coles said the economies of scale for the 46 academies and 13 independent schools in United Learning's stable meant the trust could train 100 new teachers each year and provide a "substantial" amount of resources to staff development.

Sir David Carter, the national schools commissioner, has meanwhile suggested that 1,200 pupils is an acceptable minimum.

During his speech, the new minister congratulated MATs and sponsors for improving struggling schools but said those bidding for funding to expand their trusts via takeovers would need a "strong track record" to access the cash.

However, an investigation by *Schools Week* last month revealed the DfE's own guidance on the new £53 million MAT development and improvement fund contradicted itself; trusts will only be assessed on their plans for turnaround and not specifically on their "track record" of school improvement.

Without expansion of their schools

numbers, the Department for Education is increasingly concerned academy trusts will become financially unviable. *Schools Week* analysis has revealed that auditors are increasingly sounding the alarm on academy trusts at risk of running out of money, and chains raiding their reserves and planning fresh expansion

to pay off deficits.

The government's academies report for 2015-16, published last week, also showed that "emphasis of matter" opinions from auditors, which highlight financial concerns, rose by a third from 92 to 122.

In September, the schools minister Nick Gibb was forced to admit that 9,400 schools – more than a third – reported a financial deficit last year.

Agnew gave a thumbs-up to two northern academy trusts for their "rapid school improvement", naming Zoe Carr of WISE Academies and Rob Tarn, the CEO of Northern Education Trust.

Northern Education Trust was slammed by Ofsted in March, in a report which claimed the trust had taken over too many schools with "deep-rooted shortcomings and systematic failure" and then "failed to secure urgent and necessary improvements".

Tarn took over as chief executive of the trust on September 1 this year.

FRIDAY, NOV 3 2017

Not

knowing

### NEWS ECDL ALTERNATIVE TURNS AWAY SCHOOLS

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An insight

after levels

Schools urged to enter pupils for a fast-track 'GCSE'

into life

JESS STAUFENBERG **@STAUFENBERGJ** 

huge number of **Exclusive** learners that were

The number of schools offering a level two IT qualification has shot up after teachers have turned to the course in droves as an alternative to the discredited European computing driving licence.

Last year, 7,769 schools registered to run the level two qualification in IT user skills in open systems and enterprise, but this year more than 14,000 will be certified, according to TLM, the exam body which offers it.

Demand is so high that TLM has apologised for turning schools away from the course, simply because it does not have the capacity to assess them all.

One senior school leader who previously entered pupils for the ECDL certificate - a fast-track IT qualification now removed from the performance league tables asked TLM to sign pupils up, and was told the exam was full "because of the ECDL debacle"

The leader claimed that the limit on places would give some schools an "unfair advantage" in improving their progress scores

A TLM spokesperson told Schools Week the body was "truly sorry" it could not offer the qualification to more schools, and that it would be impossible to "take on the

taking ECDL". The alarm was first sounded on ECDL when the number of pupils passing the fast-track

course shot up by 350 per cent between 2014 and 2016. At the time. Ofsted warned

inspectors to

check that classes were not entered into qualifications like it just to boost league table performances.

In March, the government removed the ECDL qualification from accountability measures from 2018.

However, like the old ECDL, the TLM qualification falls into "bucket three" of the Progress 8, meaning that it, as a level two certificate, is worth the same as GCSEs in subjects such as art and drama. TLM's spokesperson insisted, however, that it is

TLM is now planning to replace the current course with a "more inspiring" one from 2019, its spokesperson confirmed. A recent Ofqual survey determined that

TLM's user skills qualification was rigorous, said the TLM spokesperson for the regulator confirmed that a report will be published on November 21.

According to TLM's own figures, nearly 14 per cent of pupils who sat the exam got a U grade, which is higher than the IT GCSE equivalent, in which only 2.8 per cent of pupils got the lowest grade.

However, a bigger proportion of pupils pass the GCSE, and they do it at higher rates. Many more get an A\* in TLM's course (7.9 per cent) than at

GCSE (3.5 per cent), while the pass rate is eight percentage points higher for TLM compared with the GCSE.

Schools Week attempted to confirm the grades for the TLM gualification with Ofgual, the Joint Council of Qualifications and the Federation of Awarding Bodies, but was told in all cases that results are not held.

Stephen Wright, the chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, said that although it was "unusual" for an awarding body to lack the capacity to take on more schools, it did sometimes happen when a "popular qualification is withdrawn and they get more interest than they can handle".

#### LONG HOURS AND MARKING LOAD DO NOT MAKE TEACHERS LEAVE

JESS STAUFENBERG @STAUFENBERGJ

Long hours and lots of marking are not the factors that make teachers want to leave their iobs, according to new analysis of data from a survey.

Instead, it's the feeling that workload is "unmanageable" that affects decisions to quit.

The finding has been drawn from a 2013 survey about working conditions in England's schools, and challenges views held by teaching unions that a large workload drives teachers awav.

In fact, teachers' working hours and the amount of marking and feedback they do was not linked to job satisfaction or a desire to move schools, according to Sam Sims, the researcher at Education Datalab who wrote the new report.

Sim admitted his finding was "surprising" given other surveys have shown most teachers are dissatisfied with their working hours.

When the government commissioned its own research into the issue two months ago, workload was identified as the "most important factor" for teachers leaving the profession. Of the 1,023 teachers who left the classroom for good since 2015, 75 per cent said workload was the reason they left the profession.

A separate analysis of the same dataset used by Sims – the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey - by another think-tank, the Education Policy Institute, found that secondary school teachers in England work 48.2 hours a week on average, longer than all but two of the 34 countries surveyed.

Yet the new analysis of responses from 953 teachers in England suggests it is their "assessment of whether their workload is manageable" that is key to job satisfaction.

Teachers with similar workloads "differ" in opinion on whether their work is manageable depending on the resources and support given to them, Sims suggests.

Other factors, particularly the "interpersonal aspects" of working in a school, also have a significant impact on job satisfaction.

The quality of leadership has the "strongest association" of any factor on both teachers' satisfaction and their desire to leave a school, the research found.

The next most important factor for job satisfaction is teachers co-operating with one another, another person-centred factor.

Other crucial factors include scope for career progression and whether teachers feel prepared for the subjects and classes they are assigned to.

Encouragingly, neither a school's Ofsted grade, nor how deprived the area it is in, has much effect on teachers like for their jobs or desire to quit.

Sims concluded that if key working conditions like leadership, co-operation and career progression are sorted out, "schools should be able to sustain a stable body of staff".

Nevertheless, job satisfaction for teachers in this country is below that of comparable nations such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, researchers found.



he added.

London, said more schools were applying

His own SCITT does not accept them because none have proper whole-class teaching experience, he said. To join the course, applicants must have at least two years' classroom teaching experience across at least four year groups. Teaching assistants are not allowed to apply for the same reason.

"But some providers do take them."

providers which accept teaching assistants, and two of these assessed the highest

Last year, Hibernia College, owned by the applicants through the assessment-only

around £2,000 per applicant for the service,

Derek Boyle, director of the Bromley Schools' Collegiate SCITT in south-east to have Special Educational Needs coordinators signed off, as QTS is now a requirement of the role.

"You need to be doing whole-class teaching, planning, and assessing," he said.

Schools Week has found at least three number of trainees last year.

TES Institute, qualified nearly twice as many

route compared with the year before. At 280, up from 153, this was the highest of any provider.

Stephen Pinches, the institute's global director, said that allowing "teaching assistants, ungualified teachers and other classroom staff" to "make the jump to qualification" was good for the school system, particularly when delivered by top providers.

The University of Derby is the secondlargest provider, passing 80 assessmentonly trainees. Its website says the course is ideal for a "cover supervisor, higher-level teaching assistant or supply teacher".

The University of Warwick, which qualified nine teachers, offers the same: however a spokesperson said teaching assistants must have experience teaching across the curriculum for at least 70 per cent of a full timetable. Cover supervisors must also have been teaching for two years.

Of the providers, 28 per cent are rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted, and the rest are 'good'. Schools Week could not find Ofsted reports for four providers (the Astra SCITT, GORSE SCITT, Lincolnshire Teaching School Alliance and Sutton Park SCITT).

But two providers have not been inspected for eight years, longer than the usual sixyear inspection cycle for ITT providers: the George Abbott School SCITT in Surrey, and the Beauchamp ITT Partnership in Leicester, were both last inspected in 2009.

An Ofsted spokesperson said the six-year inspection cycle will end in 2018 and a new ITE inspection framework will be launched in 2019.

The onward march of the 'tick-box' teachers JESS STAUFENBERG

#### @STAUFENBERGJ Investigates

The number of teachers qualifying through a 12-week "assessment-only" route is rising, fuelling fears that providers are letting applicants without proper experience qualify for a price.

Two years ago 912 people were awarded QTS through assessment alone, but that figure rose by 13 per cent to 1,034 last vear, new data obtained by Schools Week shows

Four years ago, just 429 people qualified in this manner, but now more than 80 training providers have assessors who can look over a trainee's evidence portfolio, observe their lessons and sign-off their qualification.

Some of these providers even allow cover supervisors and teaching assistants to qualify as full teachers within three months, even though the government has said it only wants "experienced" ungualified teachers to enter the profession this way.

The route was originally intended for overseas trained teachers or those moving from private schools but Alan Smithers of the University of Buckingham claimed the parameters of the assessment had now been stretched "too far" by some providers.

"They are advertising that they can 'upgrade' a teaching assistant but without providing the nub of the training," he said.

While it is appropriate in some cases, the route is, he believes, "being used as a short-cut".

Providers are also incentivised to pass teachers, as they usually charge schools

not an "easy" option.

#### SCHOOLS WEEK

### NEWS IN brief

#### WELLSPRING TO OPEN 4 NEW AP FREE SCHOOLS

Wellspring Academy Trust is consulting on plans to open four new alternative provision free schools – the most any trust will run.

The trust took over Springwell Lincoln City Academy, Lincolnshire's sole PRU, in April. It accommodates 250 five- to 19-year-olds.

Wellspring now intends to reduce the number of pupils at the PRU and will instead accommodate them at its new free schools. Only 38 free schools offering AP have opened

so far, and the most any trust runs is two. Dave Whitaker, the executive principal of Springwell Learning Community, part of the Wellspring Academy Trust, said the schools

will not create additional AP places, but will offer "better provision". "It's a very rural area, the transport links aren't good, the children spend a lot of time

aren't good, the children spend a lot of time travelling, and so we are just trying to repair things," he said.

#### TEACHERS UNEQUIPPED TO MANAGE MENTAL HEALTH

School leaders lack the time and expertise to vet the counselling services they procure, according to a review published last week by the Care Quality Commission, the regulator of health and social care in England.

In January, Theresa May promised every secondary school in England would get free mental health training and improved support from local health services.

But this is only enough to train 3,000 secondary school teachers over three years. The CQC said many teachers feel unprepared

to manage mental health problems. Some schools are improving the way they manage mental health by holding joint meetings with specialists. In one example, year 12 pupils mentored others in their school, with the support of local mental health services.

The report is the first phase of a major thematic review requested by the prime minister in January.

The findings will inform the government's green paper on children and young people's mental health, which is expected before the end of the calendar year.

#### SCHOOLS WILL NEED MORE NON-EBACC TRAINEE TEACHERS THAN EXPECTED

More trainee teachers will be needed for non-EBacc subjects next year than expected, a government report has admitted – following a drop in take-up of EBacc subjects among pupils.

GCSE data published two months ago revealed an unexpected drop of 1.5 percentage points in subject take-up for the first time in five years.

Now the DfE has released allocations for teacher-training places which show that non-EBacc teachers will be in more demand in 2018-19 than previously predicted.

An additional 1,440 teachers will be needed next year, with the biggest increase in design and technology, up from 751 this year to 949 next year – a 26 per cent increase.

Art and design and business studies both had more than a 10-per-cent rise in expected need. PE, music and drama – none of which are in the EBacc – were also all allocated more places.

### Cognitive science needs fair scepticism

ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Teachers need to be sceptical about applying popular but "untested" cognitive science theories to education, a panel of experts has warned.

A debate at the Battle of Ideas festival on Sunday explored whether cognitive science – the study of the mind and its processes, such as memory, problem-solving, and communication – can "save education".

Panellists claimed that using the discipline, which combines ideas from psychology, computer science, linguistics, philosophy and neuroscience, to influence teaching and learning methods should be approached with caution.

Among them was Nick Rose, Teach First's senior officer for knowledge development. He spoke in favour of the use of cognitive science but asked teachers to use professional judgment to ensure its benefits were realised.

Psychology is "full of speculative, spurious and tentative ideas", he warned, adding that a "careful and considered approach", taking into account how thoroughly researched different ideas are, should be adopted.

Cognitive science has become increasingly popular in education circles, and the concept has even been raised a number of times by the schools minster.

In his speech at the international summit on the teaching profession in March, Nick Gibb said teachers should "pursue wellevidenced teaching methods" and "have up-to-date knowledge of cognitive science and the implications for what and how to teach".

But Nick Dennis, a governor at Greenwich Free School, who has researched the application of experimental and cognitive psychology, warned that people "have really latched onto" ideas from cognitive science.

This is partly because "it doesn't cost very much money to try to implement [them], you can do it pretty quickly", he said.

Dennis pointed to various education blogs in which teachers have been applying cognitive

science approaches in the classroom before the methods have been proven.

Dave Perks, founder and principal of the East London Science School, agreed: "This is mainstreaming very, very fast now."

"This stuff is now being given to teachers in pamphlets," he added. "They are ingesting it directly. The test will be over the next four or five years; whether it works or not and how is up for grabs."

Learning styles, an approach that argues people tend towards one of seven different ways of learning, and Brain Gym, a system that claims different movements and pressure points on the body can help to stimulate brain function, were among the approaches criticised as fads masquerading as proven scientific approaches.

Wendy Berliner, the joint chief executive of the Education Media Centre, a charity raising



public and media awareness of education research, warned teachers are being "confronted by a sea of information".

She said a lot of teachers would "do pretty much anything" to help their children learn and do well in life.

"There is a problem in getting high quality science across to teachers, which is why they will grab at something that can be sold as a product, like Brain Gym or Learning Styles," she added.

Berliner believes scientific research needs to be "well founded" and tested before it is put into practice, not just seized on as "the new nirvana" for helping children learn.

"There are so many of these things that have come up over the last 30 years," she said. "If everything had been taken on board, schools would be even more chaotic than the government sometimes makes them."

### School social services referrals significantly up

#### ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4 Investigates

Schools referred 11,000 more vulnerable children to social care services this year than last– an increase of more than 10 per cent, the latest government data has revealed.

In 2016-17, schools referred 114,530 children to social care services, up from 103,670 last year.

Pupils are referred when it is believed they require social care services in order to achieve a "reasonable standard of health or development", or to prevent significant or further harm. This can include children with disabilities, those who have been abused or those whose families are unable to support and care for them.

Enver Solomon, the director of external affairs at the National Children's Bureau, told *Schools Week* that investment and research is "urgently" need.

"We urgently need to understand the increase in referrals from schools, and whether it is because of a rise in the number of cases of abuse and neglect, a lack of support being provided to families from other services, or whether teachers are getting better at spotting the signs of a child in urgent need," he said.

More cash will be required to make sure that children referred by schools get "the right support at the right time".



Last year Schools Week reported that schools were increasingly under pressure to become "mini welfare states" that supported vulnerable pupils as child poverty increased. The latest figures show schools are second only to the police as a source of referrals to social services in 2016-17, making 177,470 referrals. Health services were the third most common source of referrals, dealing with 93,330 cases. Overall, 646,120 referrals were made for over 570,000 children in 2016-17, an increase of four per cent on the previous year.

Richard Watts, chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people board, said children's services are now "at a tipping point". Last year saw the biggest rise in the number of children going into care in seven years.

"With 90 children coming into care every day, our calls for funding to support and invest in these children and their families are becoming increasingly urgent," he said. An investigation by *Schools Week* earlier this year revealed a surge in primary children going into care in cities outside of London. Inside the capital the number of children in care dropped dramatically, leading to claims this proved that poorer families were being pushed to more rural and coastal areas.

Educational outcomes for children referred to social services and categorised as "in need" are low.

In 2016, only a quarter reached the new expected standards in the national primary tests compared with around 40 per cent of other children. At GCSE, only 19 per cent pass five subjects including English and maths, compared with 58 per cent of other children. Their average attainment score across eight subjects is half that of other 16-year-olds.

The DfE data is drawn from the children in need census, which collects information about every child referred to children's social care services every year, as well as any cases already being dealt with by local authorities at the beginning of the year.

The overall number of children in need decreased from 394,400 in 2016 to 389,430 in 2017, a fall of 1.3 per cent. However, the percentage of children in need with a disability has increased this year from 12.7 per cent in 2016 to 12.9 per cent in 2017, ending a five-year downward trend.









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### NEWS

#### **AGNEW'S NEW 'BRITISH** VALUES' CURRICULUM FREDDIE WHITTAKER

**@FCDWHITTAKER** 

The Department for Education is developing a curriculum of "fundamental British values" to help teachers train pupils to resist extremism, according to the new academies minister.

In a letter to education professionals and seen by Schools Week, Lord Theodore Agnew has set out plans to develop new "resources and guidance" for teachers.

This new "curriculum" will assist school staff in promoting fundamental British values and "building pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies", he said.

It will be done via existing subjects. For example, he claimed that the chronological teaching of British history could help "foster integration" and that history lessons could teach pupils about the evolution of parliamentary democracy and religious tolerance.

Other subjects affected include RE, PSHE and citizenship

The move follows calls from a senior government official that British laws, history and values be promoted in the core school curriculum.

Dame Louise Casey's review of community cohesion and extremism, published last year, found that segregation and social exclusion had reached "worrying levels" in some parts of Britain. She said more weight should be attached to British values, and to a syllabus that teaches skills and assesses school performance.

In his letter, Agnew invites teachers and other education professionals to join an expert advisory group. Group members, who will not be paid, will be consulted on the "specification of resources", and will meet for the first time in early November.

Once developed, the resources will be published on the Educate Against Hate website. He said that teachers have told the DfE that they lack the confidence and knowledge needed to promote fundamental British values through the mainstream curriculum. Ofsted inspectors have also found evidence of inconsistent and ineffective approaches to promoting British values.

The proposals have been cautiously welcomed by the Association of School and **College Leaders** 

Anna Cole, its parliamentary specialist and an expert on the government's British values agenda, said the resources would be useful as long as they were adaptable to an individual school's context - and non-statutory.

"We haven't seen these resources but we welcome any high-quality resources that are non-statutory and that can be adapted to context to help schools deliver in this important area," she said.

She said the resources had the potential to save teachers "time, workload and stress". and could give them confidence to "discuss these very important and difficult issues with children and young people in order to safeguard them and prepare them to thrive in a diverse global society".

### **REGIONAL COMMISSIONER COSTS SPIRAL TO £30M**

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

The cost of schools commissioners has ballooned from just £4 million when the roles were established in 2014 to £26 million last year. Schools Week can reveal.

And the price for the commissioners and their teams is expected to rise again during the current financial year. to an estimated £31.2 million, according to figures obtained through a Freedom of Information request. Fears that the eight regional schools

commissioners' budgets would spiral out of control were first raised in February last year, after the government admitted that staff and administration costs had risen to more than f.650.000 per region.

Schools minister Lord Nash confirmed that each of the eight commissioners received £520,000 every year to spend on salaries and expenses for between eight and 10 employees, on top of £40,000 for events and communication, and £100,000 to compensate the employers of members of the headteacher boards.

Jonathan Crossley-Holland, an education consultant and a former director for children's services at Sheffield city council. said the increasing costs were evidence that RSCs had become a middle tier of oversight for schools.

"These are enormous increases," he said. "When Michael Gove announced the setting of RSCs in 2012 he was adamant that they



were not a new middle tier. Clearly, this is what an RSC now is.

"What is very disappointing is that this has happened by stealth without a proper public debate about their role and how they can be held accountable locally.

A Department for Education spokesperson told Schools Week the increase was because the RSCs were taking on more staff.

"The increased costs reflect a restructure within the department in 2015/16 to ensure the wider work on academies was more aligned with the regional schools commissioners' activity," she said.

"As the number of academies and free schools has increased, the eight RSCs have recruited strong teams to support their work to provide effective oversight of schools and advise the national school commissioner

and ministers."

When the national schools commissioner and the RSCs were first established in July 2014 to oversee the growing numbers of academies across country, set-up and running costs came to just £4.1 million. The funding was taken from the DfE's existing budget and covered July 2014 to March 2015.

The combined costs were similar during the 2015-16 financial year, at £4.7 million, but the bill leapt to £26.3 million in 2016-17.

In June 2016 Schools Week reported that each RSC was getting two deputy directors. who are paid up to £95,000, while another person was to be appointed to support the new NSC Sir David Carter with his work.

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the growing costs of the RSC network called into question whether it was "fit for purpose".

She pointed out that the size of the regions managed by the RSCs, and the rapid growth of many of the largest MATs, made it hard to keep up with what is going on in each academy.

"At key stage 4 we've got over 50 per cent of MATs underperforming. At key stage 2 it's 50 per cent, and the RSCs don't seem to be able to be effective in stopping the scandals which have rocked the system so badly," she said.

"All this growth in the RSCs is a desperate attempt to try and get a handle on an increasingly incoherent and dysfunctional system."

### Black and Asian parents make 'more ambitious' school choices

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Schools located near black and Asian communities have to deal with much choosier parents and cannot rely on children applying simply because they live nearby, according to new research from the University of Bristol.

Analysis on new secondary school decisions data reveals that black and Asian families list more schools on their admissions applications and are more likely apply to schools further away from home. However, they are also substantially less

likely to secure their first choice of school. The research - undertaken by Anna

Vignoles, Simon Burgess and Ellen Greaves - found that 48 per cent of black parents and 35 per cent of Asian parents choose four or more schools, compared with just 10 per cent of white parents.

White parents are four times more like to pick just one school than black parents.

Black and Asian parents are also more willing to choose schools further away from their homes. Only 19 per cent of black parents said their first choice was the school closest to their home, along with 28 per cent of Asian parents. Almost half of white parents (44 per cent) chose the nearest location.

Vignoles told Schools Week that this demonstrates that black and Asian families are making "more ambitious choices" about schools and are "highly engaged" with education.

But by competing for these places, they are much less likely to get their first choice, particularly because so many schools select pupils based on proximity. This means that 90 per cent of white pupils get into their first-choice school, but only 66 per cent of black pupils and 72 per cent of Asian pupils.

Allana Gay, a deputy headteacher who co-founded the BAMEd teacher networking group, said she was "one of those parents" with high ambitions and that black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) parents often want

to "avoid" the disadvantages faced by their children in schools, which for some groups includes lower academic achievement or higher rates of exclusion.

Schools in deprived areas also need significantly more funding, she added. "Only then will they also become the

schools of choice." The research controlled for factors that could influence the differences. For instance, ethnic minority families tend to live in urban areas which have more school choices and more competition for places.

Notably, the report found that households with children eligible for free schools meals made a similar number of choices to those not eligible, and they were similarly likely to receive an offer from their first-choice school

However, parents whose children were eligible for free meals typically chose schools



with lower academic attainment.

In an expert column for Schools Week, Vignoles writes: "This potentially indicates that such parents prioritise other factors over school quality but it also reflects the fact that poorer students live nearer to lower-quality schools. While the school choice process is clearly actively used by poorer households, it is not able to overcome the disadvantage of being unable to afford to live near a better school.

She concluded that more choices on application forms and less use of proximity to determine admissions would improve access to the best schools for all families. In particular, the researchers want all local authorities to offer six preference spots:

"It would be a very easy tweak," she said. The research did reveal that parents are generally highly engaged in finding a good school for their child.

**SCHOOLS WEEK** 

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### How do you know you're really making an impact?

The *SSAT National Conference 2017: Illuminating learning* will shine a light on what happens in our classrooms. Find out how school leaders can be truly evidence-informed, how a culture of evidence and research can be embedded, and examine the implications of the latest research.

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**Professor Phil Scraton**, who led the research for the recent enquiry into the Hillsborough disaster, exploring how he went about uncovering decades-old evidence and why



The new chief executive of the College of Teaching, former headteacher **Dame Alison Peacock**, considering how we can build a truly evidence-informed profession



CEO of the City of London Academies Trust **Mark Emmerson** looking at the concept of marginal gains in education.

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#### SPLIT YOUR PASS

Split your two-day conference pass between two of your school's leadership team, and attend one day each.

#### **GALA DINNER**

Join us for a drinks reception, three course meal, and



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SCHOOLSWEEK



#### SCHOOLS WEEK

### **NEWS: WHILE YOU WERE AWAY**

#### TEACHER STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT REGIONS NAMED

The government has announced the 25 areas in which it will pilot a scheme to forgive teachers' student loans.

Justine Greening announced that the Department for Education would test out a plan to let teachers of shortage subjects working in areas of the country struggling with recruitment off a portion of their student loans, provided they stay in the job for a sufficient time.

She said the policy would support schools to "attract and keep the best of the teaching profession".

The 25 local authorities in which the idea will be trialled have now been announced. They are: Barnsley, Blackpool, Bracknell Forest, Bradford, Cambridgeshire, Derby, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Halton, Knowsley, Luton, Middlesbrough, Norfolk, North East Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Oldham, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Salford, Sefton, St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent and Suffolk.

These areas, bar north Yorkshire, all also appear in the much longer list of 108 "priority areas" for extra funding.

Multi-academy trusts in priority areas can apply for more funding from the MAT development and improvement fund, which was previously known as the regional academy growth fund.

Trusts will be able to access £53 million of funding, but they must have a "proven record" of turning around underperforming schools.

The new pilot, wherein trainees will have a portion of their university loan reimbursed each year, currently only affects science and modern foreign languages teachers.

In total, around 800 modern foreign language teachers and 1,700 science teachers will be included, and the reimbursement starts from when they begin training, a DfE spokesperson told *Schools Week*.

A teacher on the loan repayment pilot earning £29,000 will receive £720 "cash in pocket" per year, alongside the new loan repayment threshold, which has been raised to £25,000. This is roughly the equivalent of a £1,000 salary increase, the DfE claimed.

The announcement followed Greening's speech at a Teach First conference, in which she insisted social mobility was "centre stage" of her department's work.

She also admitted that the 12 "opportunity areas", which will focus further funding into certain social mobility "cold spots", might also need to be expanded, after a headteacher at the conference asked her why the north-east did not yet have such an area.

### Greening: North-east needs an opportunity area

#### **JESS STAUFENBERG** @STAUFENBERGJ

More opportunity areas will be added to the 12 already on the list "over time", Justine Greening (pictured) has indicated, agreeing with criticism that the north-east needs one.

In an interview in front of an audience at a Teach First conference last Tuesday, the education secretary said she "hoped" more areas would be given funding to tackle entrenched inequality between pupils. Her interviewer, a headteacher from the north-east, challenged her on why there were no planned opportunity areas in her region, which faces significant disadvantages.

This question brought cheers and applause from the audience. Greening said she was "as passionate as

[the audience] are about the north-east", and especially concerned about social mobility there.

"When I talked about 'tilting' the policies [at the Department for Education], a lot of them are focussed in the north-east."

For instance, the new tuition fee loan forgiveness scheme for certain trainees will run in Middlesbrough, a particularly deprived part of the region, she said.

However, none of the current opportunity areas which access extra funding from the DfE cover the north-east.

Greening pointed out that the 12 current opportunity areas had been chosen from the

"cold spots" identified by the Social Mobility Commission, and "marrying" these with policy priorities for the DfE.

The opportunity areas were intended to cover various types of geographical areas, including rural and coastal regions, she said, adding that she "hoped" the north-east would join this list.

In her speech, she claimed that social mobility was now "centre stage" for the DfE, and that qualified teacher status must be strengthened.

The government must help "lift teaching as a career" and "shout" about the fact it is "is one of most rewarding careers anyone can go in to", she said.

But to convince graduates, the DfE "needs to improve the existing offer for teachers", particularly through improving QTS so trainees feel they are moving into the "next stage in development", rather than being abandoned, when they start in their new schools.

These policies – Greening mentioned



the £10 million earmarked for new national professional qualifications – make "phase two" of the government's education programme.

Where the first phase of widespread academisation was represented by "the reforms that really started the race to the stop", this second phase is focussed on reducing regional disparities in educational outcomes, she said.

"If the task before was inner city comprehensives and London; actually now it's about regional disparities," she said.

### Rayner: Teaching apprenticeships 'not a priority'

#### **FREDDIE WHITTAKER** @FCDWHITTAKER

The teacher apprenticeship will "not be a priority" under a Labour government because it will not stem the tide of people leaving the profession, the shadow education secretary has said.

Angela Rayner (pictured), speaking to Schools Week after her speech to the Teach First conference, said she wants vocational training to have "equal parity" with academic training, but does not believe the government's new route into teaching would affect the retention crisis.

The teaching apprenticeship, which is planned on a limited basis from 2018, "does not hit the problem" of the high numbers of teachers abandoning the profession, she said.

"If you ask me in terms of my priorities, and politics is a game of priorities, the apprenticeship route into teaching is not a priority," she said. "Keeping teachers in the classroom and the workload issue, that's the priority."

In her speech, Rayner told delegates that many teachers do not have enough money to live on, nor time to see their own children because of workload.

"That's the issue. It's not necessarily about the routes into teaching, if I'm honest," she told *Schools Week*.

The apprenticeship route has been mired in criticism ever since the government announced that non-graduate teaching



assistants would be able to take a separate apprenticeship to become qualified teachers.

Anne Milton, the skills minister, said in July that this apprenticeship for TAs would run alongside the postgraduate apprenticeship for teachers, both of which will protect the "professional status of teaching".

Unions are worried that opening teacher training to non-graduates could reduce the status of the profession. Rayner, however, disagrees, and insisted that academic training and apprenticeship training were equally worthwhile.

As such she said wouldn't "necessarily scrap" the government's plans on apprenticeships, and pledged to "look at" them, since she has "absolute faith" in the parity of both types of training. That said, she added that she "wouldn't like any kind of route that dumbs down the profession".

She also committed to pressing ahead with plans for a nationwide roadshow to hear the public's views on proposals for a National Education Service.

The exact dates for this roadshow will be announced after the budget on November 22, she said. Even if a general election were announced, it would still go ahead before all policies were implemented.

The National Education Service envisions schooling or training for citizens "from the cradle to the grave" like the NHS, she has previously said.

The roadshow will be for politicians to "shut up and listen" to the public's views, she added.

#### Six things we've learned about academy finances (from the annual accounts)

The Department for Education has for the first time published consolidated annual reports and accounts for the academies sector.

The report relates to the 2015-16 year, and gives an overview of the finances of England's academies. Here are some of the key findings.

### 02 ACADEMY BOSSES ARE PAID £150,000 or more

According to the annual accounts, 102 "trustees", a category which can include chief executives and principals, were paid more than £150,000 a year in 2015-16. This includes bonuses but excludes pension costs.

This includes seven people at trust level and 95 people in academies themselves.

This represents a slight decrease on the previous year, when 111 trustees were paid in excess of £150,000.

Remuneration bands	Number of trustees employed at trust	Number of trustees employed at academy
£1-£60,000	178	5,566
£60,001-£70,000	25	709
£70,001-£80,000	14	514
£80,001-£90,000	18	444
£90,001-£100,000	12	374
£100,001-£110,000	14	298
£110,001-£120,000	5	182
£120,001-£130,000	6	115
£130,001-£140,000	5	63
£140,001-£150,000	3	50
£150,000+	7	95
	287	8,410

#### ALMOST £59 MILLION WAS PAID OUT IN Exit packages

Academies and trusts paid out £58.7 million in exit packages in 2015-16. This is up considerably from £51.6 million in 2014-15.

Of the 5,598 staff departures, 2,699 (48 per cent) were compulsory redundancies and 2,899 were "other" departures.

In the previous year, 4,689 departures were agreed, of which

1,964 (42 per cent) were compulsory redundancies.

	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages agreed
< £10,000	1,856	1,713	3,569
£10,001 - £25,000	645	908	1,553
£25,001 - £50,000	174	253	427
£50,001 - £100,000	23	22	45
£100,001 - £150,000	1	3	4
Total number of cases	2,699	2,899	5,598
Total cost (£m)	£24.7	£34.0	£58.7

### RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS HIT £120 Million

Academy trusts paid out more than £120 million to "related parties" – companies or individuals with links to the trust – in 2015-16.

- This includes 70 payments of more than £250,000 and 25
- payments of between £200,001 and £250,000.

Trusts also received £73 million in payments from related parties.

	Number of related party transactions Number	2015/16 Payments to related parties £000
£1 to £50,000	2,636	24,627
£50,001 to £100,000	183	12,585
£100,001 to £200,000	119	16,006
£200,001 to £250,000	25	5,662
£250,001+	70	61,922
	3,033	120,802



#### DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING MADE UP Four Per Cent of Academy Funding

Although income from the DfE and its various component bodies made up 88 per cent of the £18 billion income taken by the academies sector, around four per cent came from donations (£300 million) and "fund-generating activities" (£400 million).

The rest of the funding came from capital grant income of £1.9 billion, and "other" sources, which provided £800 million.



### ACADEMIES ARE HOLDING MORE CASH

The sector held assets valued at £52.7 billion as of last August. Of these, land and buildings made up 86 per cent, while cash holdings formed six per cent.

Cash holdings in the academies sector totalled £3.2 billion in August last year, up £86 million on the previous year.

However, the government said this is still only equivalent to an average cash balance of £560,000 per individual school.

The level of cash balances is also likely to be higher in August than at other times of year "due to the high proportion of capital improvement works conducted over the summer months", the DfE pointed out.



#### PENSION LIABILITIES ALMOST DOUBLED

The academies sector reported pension liabilities of £7.4 billion at the end of 2015-16, up from £3.8 billion in the previous year.

According to the DfE, the main factor behind this was "actuarial losses" of £3 billion, based on "changes in both demographic assumptions and the discount rate".

#### IN brief

#### PE AND SPORT PREMIUM FUND DOUBLED TO £320M

Funding for physical activity in primary schools has jumped from £160 million to £320 million a year after the Department for Education doubled the PE and sport premium. Public health minister Steve Brine said the money would come from "the soft drinks industry levy", more commonly known as the sugar tax.

Previously each primary school received a flat rate of £8,000 to spend on sport programmes, with £5 added for every pupil.

Now the fund has doubled, schools with 16 or fewer eligible pupils (aged five to 10) receive £1,000 per pupil, while schools with 17 or more eligible pupils receive £16,000 with £10 with added per pupil.

The gov.uk website suggests the funds should be spent on introducing "new sports, dance or other activities".

The money may not be used to employ coaches or specialist teachers to cover planning, preparation and assessment.

#### **'CREATE PART-TIME JOBS FOR TEACHERS AGED 50+'**

Secondary schools must urgently create more part-time opportunities to prevent older teachers leaving the sector, according to new research by the National Foundation for Educational Research.

Older teachers are increasingly leaving the sector, with the proportion of teachers over the age of 50 decreasing from 23 per cent to 18 per cent between 2010 and 2015 at primary schools. Secondary schools had a similar decrease, from 24 per cent to 19 per cent.

The proportion of teachers moving between schools also increased two percentage points over the period, increasing recruitment costs and staffing uncertainty.

Carole Willis, NFER's chief executive, believes greater flexibility via part-time working could be one solution.

"We recognise there could be logistical challenges faced by schools in accommodating more part-time teachers, but finding a way to overcome these difficulties may provide a major boost to teacher supply," she said.

The education secretary is meanwhile due to hold a flexible working summit to look for other solutions.

#### DFE MAKES FORMER CO-OP BOSS NEW LEAD NON-EXEC

Richard Pennycook, the former chief executive of the Co-operative Group, is the newly appointed lead non-executive board member for the DfE.

He steps into an £800-a-day role which was vacated by Sir Paul Marshall over a year ago, and joins three other former businesspeople and one college principal on the board.

As the lead non-executive board member, Pennycook will "offer robust advice and challenge". The position pays £20,000 for 24 days' work per year.

The department has praised Pennycook's "first-hand experience" in change management and staff engagement, and in "creating a workplace driven by core values".

He said he was "honoured" to have been appointed.

Previous non-executive board members at the DfE have included John Nash and Theodore Agnew, who both went on to be granted peerages and become ministers in the department.

### NEWS



# EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

## Changes at Ofsted are slow as icebergs

Back in 2012, during the English GCSE scoring debacle, Amanda Spielman, then the chair of Ofqual, told a committee of MPs what had happened. Her view was that children's performance increases slowly over the years – like how glaciers move.

In her new(ish) role as chief inspector of schools, Spielman is moving glacially herself. Ofsted's new corporate strategy was published last month and it's a long-term plan for change based on research and evidence. A plan for MAT inspections will not come to fruition until next year. Scrapping the 'outstanding' grade – something Spielman said she wanted more than 18 months ago – won't occur before 2019, if at all.

Most surprising of all is that Spielman will only meet the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter for the first time next week. Schools have felt caught between inspectors and commissioners for some time. The latter focus ruthlessly on exam outcomes on spreadsheets, while inspectors are increasingly using visits to examine the curriculum and the promotion of 'Fundamental British Values'. Yes, I'm rolling my eyes about that part too, seeing as it's still not entirely clear what that it really means. For experienced school leaders, whose teams are wholly competent and whose pupils are well versed in expectations, it is easy to balance curriculum and exam outcomes. There's enough time to make the progress required by the commissioners while also adding the bells and whistles Ofsted wants. That's what makes outstanding schools 'outstanding'.

For school leaders struggling whose pupils are behind due to past poor teaching and teachers whose knowledge of the new curriculum is patchy, things are tougher.

Three years ago I visited Dame Rachel De Souza, the CEO of Inspiration Trust in Norfolk. She talked about her first headship at Halyard High School, where to ensure results increased from a dispiritingly low base she hired an amazing maths teacher and put him on a stage, with a microphone, drilling an entire year-group for two hours every day. That sort of dedication took the school from having 15 per cent of pupils passing GCSEs to something like 45 per cent. Had regional schools commissioners existed in those days, it would have got them off her back.

But this focus on results comes at a cost to other activities because time is limited. Most schools have increased their maths time for GCSE students because there is now more content to cover. Most primary schools have increased their time for English lessons because spelling, punctuation and grammar wasn't a major focus in the past, but now it is. These teachers are doing the right thing in the sense that they are following what the elected government has said should be their priority.

It is possible that, as teachers get used to things and a longer-term focus on teaching across all age groups enables leaders to relax, that a broader curriculum can happen. And that's why I don't deny that Ofsted should be opening the door on a conversation about it. However, for school leaders in some of the most difficult situations, commissioners and inspectors are now in conflict, and it's not entirely clear who should be watched more closely.

Furthermore, it's not clear whether Ofsted and the commissioners agree on who is responsible for what when it comes to monitoring school performance. Grilled by MPs this week in her role as chief inspector, Spielman said any "fuzziness" about remits was on the commissioners' "side of the fence". She's not wrong. Clear rules around commissioner decisions and interventions are still missing.

However, where commissioner monitoring is the equivalent of parking their tanks on Ofsted's lawn, the inspectorate's plan to inspect multiacademy chains is a role-reversal. Ultimately it looks as though both are going to end up monitoring schools and trusts. That's an awful lot of clipboards and spreadsheets, especially for two groups which don't actually have the power to close schools.

The simplest solution would be for Ofsted to continue inspecting schools and commissioner groups to monitor multi-academy trusts, with commissioners able to recommend closures to the ESFA, which does hold termination powers.

> Sadly both sides are now in a battle for power, and it's going to be slow progress to find a solution. Glacially slow, even. Let's just hope that next week they can find a middle ground – although given their regions aren't even in concordance this might be too much to hope for.

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The above vacancy closes at midday on 17 November 2017. The assessment process will be held on 30 November 2017 & 1 December 2017.

Job description/person specification and details of how to apply can be downloaded from our website: www.eastnorfolk.ac.uk/jobs



#### **Essential requirements**

- Honours Degree (2:1 or above)
- Recognised teaching qualification
- Sound understanding of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework in areas relating to teaching and learning, student outcomes and leadership and management
- Expert knowledge of teaching, learning and assessment
- Successful experience of leading, performance managing and empowering and developing staff in a Sixth Form College, High School or FE College
- High quality leadership and management skills
- Confident communicator with excellent numeric, verbal and written communication skills including ability to negotiate and influence successfully
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- Shortlisting notification: Monday 13th November
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- Contact e-mail address: vacancies@larkrise.oxon.sch.uk

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We are open to conversations and applications from people both inside and outside of Oxfordshire; and from groups underrepresented in the national school leadership workforce.

#### **Application Procedure**

To apply, please complete the OCC application form, - and email your completed form to vacancies@larkrise.oxon.sch.uk

#### Visit our website for more details

Please note, the 'Selection Criteria and Job Description' document includes instructions and details to guide you in filling in the application form. Please read the instructions carefully to ensure that your application can be considered fairly.

Larkrise Primary School and Oxfordshire County Council are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.

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#### We have a desire to be in the top 1%.

Our systems ensure you can really focus on your core purpose – teaching, in a sustainable way, reducing your workload through:

- tight, robust and no-nonsense behaviour systems
- all detentions are centralised, including homework detentions
- a feedback policy focused on whole class feedback, eliminating the need for hours and hours of marking
- highly visible and supportive senior leaders

66

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

#### (OFSTED, June 2015)

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This is an excellent opportunity for an ambitious practitioner, who wants to lead the Psychology A Level (which is very popular) and assist in the leadership of the Humanities Faculty, making a real impact on further driving up attainment and progress in Humanities. As a rapidly growing academy, that will be at full capacity in 2019, and as a newly designated NCTL Teaching School, you would be joining us at a very exciting time and become part of a vibrant learning community that will offer you fantastic opportunities for CPD, career development, future promotions and for you to be able to make your mark. You would be able to study for the NPQML/NPQSL and have excellent progression opportunities to eventually become an Assistant Principal as the Academy, Teaching School and MAT continue to grow. As a Teaching School, you would also have the opportunity to become a Specialist Leader of Education (SLE).

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#### 'Students make exceptional progress.'

#### (OFSTED, June 2015)

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#### 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: Apply immediately, interviewing shortly. Learn more about Magna Academy at: **www.aatmagna.org** 

#### **EDITION 118**

# **READERS'**

#### DfE to collect more data on excluded pupils

Bobbo James // @bobbojames981 This is a good move, but I suspect that schools also use AP as a way of avoiding/ reducing permanent exclusions! Schools are trying their best.

#### **Campaigners: 'Don't wipe old Ofsted** reports'



Mark Watson, Gloucestershire

In an age where keeping these reports accessibly online through gov.uk would cost next to nothing what is the point in removing them? All it achieves is to stoke the conspiracy theories, and it's not as though they are deleted from history – a quick FoI request would result in all requested reports being provided.

#### Janet Downs, Bourne •••

Disappearing Ofsted reports make it easy for

schools to rewrite history. I had to request deleted reports from Ofsted for the predecessor school of Burlington Danes to show ARK was being misleading in its claims about the predecessor school. There have been numerous examples of such misleading claims. Perhaps school leaders would be more reluctant to make them if they knew their remarks could easily be checked.

#### Upskilling for compulsory RSE needed before 2019

#### Suzanne Norman, FACEBOOK

I thought we were going to be given mental health training?

#### Helena Barron, FACEBOOK

PSHE needs to be trained in general. So many teachers still think it's circle time in primary, playing games like fruit salad and going round a circle saying what makes them sad. I would like to see proper teaching in PSHE covering mental health, sex ed and relationships in detail.

#### **Dunelm? Dunno: Furniture firm's** mysterious meeting with the DfE

The One About Sue // @OneAboutSue They also own Kiddicare, so it's not guite as random as it seems...

#### £53m MAT growth fund open to trusts without proven record



Nicholas Marshall // @Nick5307 I think that this figure of good and outstanding schools should be triangulated with performance data. Good schools but not good outcomes.

#### **MATs struggle to recruit management** roles as they grow



#### Why is the best CPD held at the weekend?

#### Ian Taylor, Bristol ...

If you are a teacher it's very obvious why CPD is not held on a weekday in working time. You have to set work for your classes and then mark it when you get back. The work you set often displaces and interrupts what you would normally be teaching. The school has to pay for a supply teacher which costs more than the CPD, so the headteacher is unlikely to approve the CPD.

Tracey Ralph // @TraceyRalph3 I completely agree. Weekends should be personal, private, relaxing family time. CPD should be prioritised in school time.

#### **Robot TAs coming to a classroom** near you



Lynne Holland, FACEBOOK Hope it can cope when a kid has a meltdown

Mark Stenton // @mgs0970 Stopped reading at 'software based'. Until it's a classroom R2D2 I'm not interested.

#### **Teachers wanted to work in youth** prisons

Simon Marsden // @sipmar That's a good idea because we obviously have too many teachers in schools...

#### Huxley & Utkinton Head // **@Huxleyhead**

A career I was always interested in - but decided it was better to use my time to try and prevent them ending up there in the first place :(

# DO YOU HAVE

However big or small, if you have information or a story you think our readers would be interested in, then please get in touch. For press releases make sure you email our news email account, and don't be afraid to give us a call.

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### Why is the best CPD held at the weekend?

### **REPLY OF THE WEEK**

### ... Naureen Khalid, **Greater London**

Speaking from a governor's point of view, Saturday events allow us to participate. Those of us who work may have to take time off work to attend to our governance duties. It would be hard for many of us to ask for more time off so we can go to conferences. Most of the governors I know pay for their own travel etc. when attending conferences. Even if we claim expenses, it's cheaper to travel at weekends thus saving us (or the school) money.

I think what's needed is a mixture of weekday/evening/weekend events so people can choose ones which suit them most. Plus, crèches would be good too as some organisers such as **ResearchEd have started providing.** 

### **REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS** WEEK MUG!



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### PROFILE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

### Matt Hood, director, the Institute for Teaching

or a man in his early 30s, Matt Hood has had a lot of jobs.

But as the inaugural director of the Institute for Teaching chats excitedly from a sofa in his trendy Holborn office building, it quickly becomes apparent exactly how he's managed to fit so much in.

The same energy and work ethic that once saw him don a bear costume for a few extra quid working at pub chain Brewster's shines through to this day.

"You used to get paid a bit extra if you were willing to humiliate yourself in the costume," he admits. "I literally don't give a shit. I can make anything you want out of balloon animals, I can do face painting, and I'm really good at pass the parcel."

Balloon animals and Brewster's bears aside, Hood is deadly serious about his mission.

This week, the IfT begins recruiting its first cohort of 250 "expert teachers", who will eventually earn their master's degrees through tailored, small-scale professional development.

The institute is very much Hood's brainchild. It was in a report, commissioned by the IPPR think-tank, that he last year called foran organisation like it to be established.

But when he first started concocting solutions to the teacher development problem three years ago, while assistant head at Morecambe's Heysham High School, he never really imagined he'd end up in charge.

It was a conversation with a friend who had just achieved a "black-belt" professional qualification in engineering that first got him thinking.

This friend had been through a learning programme lumbered with "ridiculous" martial arts-related terminology. He was still an engineer – not a manager – but had experienced a "sustained period of clearly structured, accredited professional learning over a period of time".

"This increased his salary but allowed him to keep doing what he does, which is building things," says Hood, who identified this lack of a "sequence of learning" as a problem in teaching he hopes to solve.

"I think we spend about a billion pounds a year trying to help teachers to keep getting better," he says, matter-of-factly. "I don't think that there is a lot of evidence that that billion pounds is spent very well at the moment."

One of his issues with "badges" such as "advanced skills teacher" and "lead practitioner" is that the schools community spends a lot of time trying to recognise expertise in the system, but puts "nowhere near as much" work into planning pathways to earn that expertise.

Following his IPPR report, the eight teaching schools and academy chains that funded the research asked him to set up the very organisation he'd called for.

In a way, it's hardly surprising that someone with experience of three very distinctive sectors within education has ended up here. At 32, he's already been a teacher, a teacher educator and a policy wonk at the Department for Education, and he talks with the enthusiasm of someone who's only just getting started.

He grew up poor, in Lancashire, part of a "big, complicated, non-nuclear family". A "decent chunk" of his childhood was spent living in a caravan, but he

didn't know any different and "had a great time". His early memories include helping his mum, a teaching assistant, stuff envelopes in their caravan, and sitting the 11-plus at the Lancaster Royal Grammar School. It was on the day of this important test that he observed the "high-stakes" nature of selection, and he has opposed it ever since.

He'll never forget the boy in tears at the gates, whose mum was "really going at him" about the importance of passing the test.

"My mum, being the wonderful lady that she is, basically just said, as loud as she possibly could within earshot of this other lady, that she did not care at all whether I passed or failed this test as long as I did my best, that's all that matters," he recalls.

Nevertheless, he did pass, and as a result, despite the "hilarious complications" of being gay at an old-fashioned boys' grammar, he got an "incredible education".

From school he went on to study politics, philosophy and economics at the University of York, which apparently makes him "generally not very qualified but really good at blagging things".

After graduating, he did Teach First. It was his back-up; he'd applied to the civil service graduate scheme, but he got special permission to defer his Whitehall job for two years.

"I never planned to be a teacher," he admits. "Then two months later I was in Edmonton in Tottenham, in one of the schools that just doesn't exist anymore. Like, six per cent at five A\* to C, including maths and English. That's nine children. Those schools just don't exist anymore."

Two years later, Hood was in the Department for Children, Schools and Families. He worked on Labour's efforts to raise the participation age, "which has since happened with no enforcement". Then the 2010 election happened – and Michael Gove.

He describes it as a "total transformation", and remembers finding the "munchkins" – the cartoon characters that once adorned the DCSF logo and large parts of its buildings – in a skip in the basement.

Despite his own politics – he describes himself as a "relatively centrist, Hillary Clinton, flag-waving, Labour gay" – Hood is a fan of some of Gove's reforms. His move to scrap equivalencies in league tables is high on the list.

"All my year 10 kids were doing BTEC business studies, which was worth four GCSEs," he recalls. "Just bollocks! It's not worth four GCSEs."

He points to the English Computer Driving Licence test, "which I actually thought was a driving test for a while". "I was like, 'I don't even know what this bullshit qualification is'," he jokes.

In early 2011, he returned to Teach First, this time to set up its north-east office in Newcastle. He was there

for less than two years before he moved to the charity Achievement for All as director of policy.

MATT

In July 2014, he moved to Heysham as assistant head, tasked with helping the school join a multi-academy trust. The irony of where he had ended up has not escaped him.

"I was the free-school-meals kid who went to the grammar school, and then went on to become an assistant head at the secondary modern down the road, and bash the privileged grammar school at just about every opportunity I could get," he laughs.

But despite having attended a grammar school, gone to a redbrick university, entered teaching through a route designed for elite graduates, and working in the heart of government policy, Hood admits to having felt "totally out of place" for much of his life.

At sixth form, when picked to be part of the UK delegation to the Modern European Parliament, Hood attended events at the prestigious private school Stowe.

"They had fox hunting," he says, in disbelief. "Like, hounds on the grounds, croquet on the front lawn. I went to supper in a hall that looked like Michelangelo painted the ceiling, you know?"

He got good at pretending to fit in, and "swotting" when he didn't recognise cultural references. Now he faces a new chapter in his life, and along with it, a new challenge. He's back in London, where his teaching career first

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"I WAS THE FREE-SCHOOL-MEALS KID WHO WENT TO THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AND THEN WENT ON TO BECOME AN ASSISTANT HEAD AT THE SECONDARY MODERN DOWN THE ROAD"







# HOOD

started. Living with his partner Josh McAlister, also an ex-Teach Firster who now runs the social worker training charity Frontline in King's Cross, he walks to work in Holborn every day.

There, in modern, open-plan offices which he admits are "far too cool" for a bunch of edu-nerds, Hood leads a team of 30 teacher education curriculum designers. They are testing and refining a five-year curriculum sequence they hope will help create the ultimate "expert teacher".

They hope to reach 1,000 professionals a year by 2020, and want to become a university in their own right so they can accredit their master's gualification.

The IfT opened applications for its expert teacher programmes this week, a prospect both "exciting and terrifying" for Hood.

"I'm a teacher from Morecambe, so it's an interesting change of pace," he says. "It feels like we're on the cusp of it being there."

#### IT'S A PERSONAL THING

#### Your favourite weekend activity

Crossfit. I spend quite a lot of time doing this ridiculous physical activity. I really enjoy doing that on my weekends and then walking, so basically being active.

#### Your favourite book

I'm a nerd so I'm just a huge Lord of The Rings fan. I think the second is probably my favourite of the three.

#### Your favourite cuisine

I'm holding myself back because Andy Burnham drives me mad with this answer where all he wants to talk about is how much he likes a certain northern food. They ask, what's your favourite biscuit? And he says pie. But I am a huge pie fan. In a pub, a good pie.

#### The job you enjoyed the most

Day to day, teaching I enjoyed the most. I think the second year... the first year was horrendous, it was really hard.

#### Top holiday destination

Copenhagen. It's just really cool and fun, and we have a great time every time we go.



#### SCHOOLS WEEK

**FRIDAY, NOV 3, 2017** 

### **OPINION**

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LAUREN BELLAERA Director of research and impact. The Brilliant Club



### CHRISTINE BAYLISS Education consultant

### How to test interventions 3 tips to successfully in your own classrooms

Don't get hung up on methodology - good classroom research starts by establishing meaningful, measurable outcomes, explains Dr Lauren Ballaera

t's August in a classroom in west London and eight new teachers are discussing ways they can use education research to improve outcomes for their pupils.

All of them are PhDs – mainly mathematicians and physicists - who are training as teachers through the Researchers in Schools programme, so they are no strangers to advanced research methodologies. Still, translating these to schools comes with its own set of challenges. "My head of department wants to know if this particular intervention works or not." says one participant. "How can I give her a clear answer without being over-simplistic?"

It's a good question, and one which speaks to a common (though false) dichotomy between those scientific research

### **Carrying out** research in schools is particularly challenging because of the 'noise'

methodologies that are impractical for most schools most of the time, and "softer" methodologies that help schools reflect but don't really get at whether something actually worked.

Carrying out research in schools is particularly challenging because of the "noise" – the other things that are happening besides what you are trying to measure - and the difficulties associated with defining and measuring pupil outcomes. But by carefully selecting what we measure, schools and teachers can use research and evaluation for practical decision-making. This is the "what".

Firstly, identify pupil outcomes that relate to the intervention in guestion. It is often easy to assess outcomes that aren't aligned with your intervention, but seem relevant. For example, defining key-stage attainment as your primary outcome, when your intervention is in fact tapping into a broader range of skills and behaviours.

Then, explicitly define pupil outcomes,

remembering that there is often more than one way to define an outcome so select a definition that works for your context. Finally, ensure that the outcomes can be meaningfully measured. Where possible,

using reliable measures is preferable, but there will be instances where this is not possible. For example, there might not be an existing measure for the outcome, or the way in which the outcome is measured is specific to a certain context and thus existing measures cannot be used.

If these are the guiding theoretical principles, then what does this look like in practice - the "how"?

One way for schools to define pupil outcomes is to engage with the research literature, which can be particularly hard given teachers' workloads. However, there are quick and easy mechanisms, such as the Education Endowment Foundation's Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which has been used by 51 per cent of senior school leaders

Another way is for initial teacher training to train individuals to become intelligent consumers of research, as outlined in a recent Teach First report.

Helping teachers engage with research helps them to consider what outcomes are best to focus on within a particular intervention, but this still leaves the question of how can these outcomes be measured? Pre-existing measures are available for a range of outcomes, including critical thinking, creativity, grit and meta-cognition. Where measures are not available.

assessments can be developed for bespoke purposes. However, designing assessments that are reliable and valid is time-consuming and requires knowledge of psychometrics. One way to check that an assessment that you have designed is measuring something meaningful is to see if it correlates with an existing related measure.

For example, in a study on critical thinking, I helped to develop a test for the social sciences because one did not already exist, as well as using a standardized general critical thinking test. Comparing patterns of results on both tests allowed me to see whether the new social sciences test generally measured critical thinking.

There's never been a better time for practitioners to engage with research, but in the first instance do not get hung up on research methodology. Instead make sure that you start by looking in the right place for the right thing - meaningful measurable outcomes related to your intervention.

# sell a primary school

Primary schools that proactively market their services can look forward to real dividends, suggest education consultant **Christine Bayliss and marketing expert** Antonia Chitty

s the annual secondary school admissions round draws to a close, the primary process steps up a gear. More and more schools, maintained as well as academies, are realising that maximising intake is key to addressing the challenges of squeezed budgets.

A proactive approach to pupil recruitment will help make the figures add up. In Kent for example, in 2017 each pupil generates an additional £2,740 per annum; just over £19,000 if they remain for seven years. Many schools have gaps in pupil numbers, and filling those places could allow a school to continue to offer extracurricular activities or retain a valued staff member

So what makes parents choose a school? If you discount proximity and siblings, we have found that a school's reputation and a warm welcome from the staff and headteacher are key considerations. In fact, reputation is the most important factor when rejecting schools

The Ofsted report is important to families who are unfamiliar with the school, and a much stronger consideration than school league tables.

Parents are not impressed by a glossy prospectus, preferring an informative and attractive website to provide the information they need about a school. They want to visit the school, meet the headteacher and staff who will be teaching their children and meet existing pupils.

So what does a more proactive approach to marketing school places involve? Here are Antonia and Christine's top three tips:

#### Know your prospective parents

Only one of the schools we worked with systematically collected the names and contact details of parents who attended open events or asked the school for information. So long as a sign-up sheet has the data protection declaration about using personal information, you can follow up every event with an email reinforcing your key messages and inviting questions.

Given the deadline for applications for reception places is January 15, you could follow up by sending out an invite to a Christmas event or end-of-term celebration. People need more than one contact before

they take action and apply; get this right and prospective parents will feel valued and commit to your school.

#### Harness the power of social media

There is wariness around using social media to promote a school, but we know the benefits far outweigh negative implications. Setting up a school Facebook page and a Twitter account is free advertising. Facebook pages are easy to use and geared towards organisational content. You can even boost posts with cheap advertising to target your audience.

### 66 🗕 **Reputation is the** most important factor when rejecting schools

Twitter works on a slightly different model but is extremely effective in raising a school's profile within the community. We know that there are negative aspects to social media, and our advice is that you must have someone monitoring accounts on a daily basis to quickly deal with any negative posts. You can implement settings that require approval for posts. This means that you can deal directly with any negative comments and nip issues in the bud.

#### Know what works

It surprised us that so many schools don't regularly monitor their website data or look at the Facebook or Twitter analytics. Data is key to improving the way your marketing works. If you are not getting many hits on your pupil recruitment pages, try looking at how a parent would navigate to those pages. Change the navigation if it is counterintuitive, and don't forget you should regularly seek feedback from parents who entrust their children to vour school.

A subscription to an online survey company will repay itself over and again if it gives insight into what is working to attract parents. Just remember successful marketing is all about telling your audience about what a great school you are and then following through to meet parent's expectations. Work out what you do well and keep doing it.

The schools commissioners have morphed into a privileged, parallel middle tier with no discussion on role or accountability, argues Jonathan Crossley-Holland

hen I first submitted a Freedom of Information request to the DFE on the annual cost of the regional schools commissioners, I believed the figures would clearly indicate, in the absence of policy announcements, how the Department for Education saw the school system would be managed in the future.

The idea that our network of more than 23,000 schools, operating in hugely different contexts, could be overseen from the DfE's central London headquarters was always a nonsense, so I expected a significant increase in RSC activity as the percentage of schools that are academies neared 50 per cent.

Even so, the figures were startling: in 2015/16, the RSC's first full year of operation, the cost of the whole project was £4.7 million. This rocketed to £26.3 million in 2016/17, a 500-per-cent increase, and then to £31.2 million in 2017/18 (a further 18.5 per cent). And this is just the cost of the RSC infrastructure, not the funding it oversees.

When Michael Gove announced the RSCs in 2012, he was adamant that they would not be a new "middle tier" of oversight. His vision was one of autonomous groups of schools, deregulated as far as possible, competing for pupils, collaborating on school improvement and operating within a new, more prescriptive set of curriculum



### JONATHAN **CROSSLEY-**HOLLAND

Education consultant and former director for children's services at Sheffield City Council

### Excuse me, which is the real 'middle tier'?

and assessment requirements and standards, all policed by Ofsted. This is not how it has panned out: the RSC system clearly is now a new middle tier operating alongside local authorities – which are still (barely) responsible for the majority of schools.

The expansion of the RSC's office is another move away from the original Govian model, as are a range of other DfE programmes designed to remedy the weaknesses of the original design, such as the regional partnerships the department has set up to tackle low social mobility and school underperformance, through initiatives like the 12 opportunity areas. Bulking up the RSCs is, then, part of a bigger change to the landscape.

Most school leaders, teachers, governors and trustees - whether working in

maintained schools, single academies or MATs - will welcome this rediscovery of the importance of a middle tier. They know that there isn't a single leading OECD education system that operates without one. But they also expect this fundamental shift to be recognised, and to have a proper debate about what the middle tier's role should be - instead of this incremental, undeclared approach.

There are plenty of things a proper, declared middle tier could get on with, including: ensuring a supply of good teachers; school improvement support for all schools, especially those in deprived areas; good continuing professional development for teachers and leaders: and an effective system of support for vulnerable pupils, especially those with special needs.

Two further challenges have to be faced. First, the DfE's strategy of leaving a significant number of schools supported by

" -

### **The RSC system** clearly is now a new middle tier operating alongside local authorities

LAs, while at the same time undermining them, in contrast to its generous support for RSCs. Are there any precedents in other advanced education systems for this strategy, which might need to run for many years, in which there are two middle tiers, one of which is deliberately neglected?

The second challenge is the lack of local accountability of these enhanced RSCs. The Wakefield Trust collapse was a potent example. WCAT collapsed on September 8, and its schools were parcelled out to eight new academy trusts. Parents, staff and governors were not involved in selecting the new sponsors, and were only given a chance to comment by email afterwards in a letter sent on October 10.

In its way, this lack of accountability is a powerful example of "remote elites knowing best" that has become such a potent political issue.

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### REVIEWS

### TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

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



Our blog reviewer of the week is Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean at the Institute for Teaching @HFletcherWood

#### Connecting and organising knowledge in English literature @atharby

Much has been written about the value of knowing texts well, Andy Tharby notes, so perhaps it's now time to consider "how this knowledge might be connected and organised". In this thought-provoking post, Tharby suggests that it is "often more helpful to think of 'analysis' as 'connection'". He argues that too little time is spent on "exploring the whole text and connecting the main ideas" which means that students struggle to organise their knowledge appropriately. As a result, they fail to develop "the kind of broad and conceptual knowledge that helps them to understand that a text is a construct". This post helped me to reconsider how I see the teaching of analysis, and offers a range of techniques teachers can use to help students make these connections.

#### This much I know about overcoming my prejudices to the benefit of my students @johntomsett

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John Tomsett admits to having always found multiple-choice questions "abhorrent", on both instinctual and ideological levels. "The root of my prejudice is, like all prejudices, ignorance," he suggests, showing how Daisy Christodoulou's Making Good Progress helped him understand assessment, and persuaded him of the merits of multiplechoice questions as assessment tools.

"The results have been hugely useful... Before half term, we need to return to the market for loanable funds and quantity theory because 80 per cent of the students failed to answer those MCQs correctly." This is a fine example of using the evidence both to change one's mind and benefit students. Why I love... whole-class feedback and other time-saving feedback strategies @SusanSEnglish

Susan Strachan summarises the findings of a CPD feedback group within her school, which was themed on "learning, trialling and responding to a need to reduce workload for teachers across the curriculum, while also ensuring that students are able to move forward as a result of the quality of the feedback". She discusses a range of approaches and shares examples and templates for wholeclass feedback, code marking and DIRT time. Each approach "has reduced my marking time, had an impact on students understanding and focused the students on improving".

When the revolution came for Amy Cuddy Susan Dominus

Perhaps you've watched Amy Cuddy's TED Talk; 43 million other people have. In it, she shared her research on "power poses": sitting or standing confidently, or leaning back in a chair, hands behind head for example, which make people feel more confident, and reduce their cortisol levels, reflecting stress. This long read explores what happened when Cuddy's study came under investigation by the "replication" movement, which first questioned and then undermined many foundational studies in psychology, rerunning (replicating) studies and disproving many of them.

This sympathetic piece tells Cuddy's story as well as that of the replicators and works out why she became a particular lightning rod for anger; it shows how Cuddy successfully played by the rules in force in psychology, how quickly those rules changed, and the impact that has had in psychology as a whole.

**Teenagers' view of the news** New York Times opinion

A collection of recent student letters to the New York Times makes reading which is by turns angry, impassioned, thoughtprovoking and encouraging. Students share their thoughts on presidential behaviour, free speech, and the behaviour of lawmakers. They decry unacceptable actions by politicians, liberal weakness on free speech, and the bubbles of opinion in which they find themselves. And they encourage us to act on unpleasantness, to give young people the chance to be young and to teach young men to treat women with respect. This is a great reflection of young people's responses to the turbulent environment in which they find themselves.

# BOOKREVIEW

Educating Drew: The real story of Harrop Fold School By: Drew Povey Published by: John Catt Educational Reviewed by: Caroline Creaby, deputy head

**★★★☆** 

Watched by millions of viewers each week over the last half term, Educating Greater Manchester was a fly-on-the-wall insight into life at Harrop Fold, the Salford secondary once known as the worst school in Britain. Drew Povey,

its energetic, straighttalking headteacher has written Educating Drew, his account of leading the school, which I suspect will be as popular with readers as the show has been with viewers.

The overriding theme of the book is Drew's vision: he is not resigned to the challenges of a deprived community, there is no poverty of ambition for his students, and he's

worked tirelessly to engender a sense of hope, possibility and ambition

within the Harrop Fold community. Drew takes inspiration from the post-9/11 architects who sought to reimagine, not simply rebuild, the World Trade Centre, and draws a parallel with his work at the school. Having a vision and seeing it through are two very different things and Drew gives the reader frank insights into the challenges he faced, recalling for example the extent of teacher turnover in his early days as a head; at its peak, Harrop Fold required 30 supply teachers a day.

Drew is not a headteacher found sitting in his office. In Educating Greater Manchester, Drew was seen on the gate at the start of the day, pacing the corridors at lesson changeover and in lessons. In the book, Drew describes approach to leadership as "wandering about", adapted from Hewlett Packard, which provides him with a good knowledge of the school, offers teachers a sense of support and makes him very visible to students, particularly those not behaving as they should. As we learn more about him, it comes as no surprise that he takes this hands-on approach. He has a sense of personal responsibility evident from his early days as a teacher, never shying away

from taking on extra responsibility.

Another strong theme is his belief that schools should never give up on any child. This manifests itself in the school's behaviour management systems and its no-exclusions policy. Drew's reflections on behaviour tend to centre on boys and the particular challenges they can face in deprived families. He is clearly a positive role model for boys and wants to offer them a positive future earned through hard work and success at school. He writes about his own debt to the school teachers who steered him onto the right path; his affection for a particular primary school teacher is genuinely touching.

> Despite the many strengths of the book, at times I found myself in disagreement. For example. I will never be convinced of Harrop Fold's mobile phone policy. I also found myself wanting to know more about curriculum leadership given the significant changes to the vocational qualification landscape. Despite these qualms, however, Drew has not produced a manual on how to run a school, and doesn't

necessarily claim to be right. Educating Drew is an account of how he has led his own school and has offered readers honest, humble and at times genuinely funny accounts of how he has done it.

My final reflection concerns public sector cuts. Drew offers readers a vivid account of what these cuts mean on the front line, from making choices about the number of teachers the school can afford, to how big class sizes are going to have to be. Despite his tenacity and financial acumen, he has to go to extraordinary lengths to resolve his school's budget deficit; he even wrote the book to generate income for the school, and he's giving paid talks.

The fact he is playing the lottery makes my heart sink. I was left thinking about policy makers: are they aware of the extent of this distraction for school leadership teams up and down the country? Despite his seemingly insurmountable financial burden, he metaphorically dusts himself off and continues, spirit undiminished and reminds the reader that he has the best job in the world. If you're looking for inspiration about working in schools, despite their challenges, Educating Drew is for you.





## Week in Westminster

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

### FRIDAY:

Ofqual board minutes from May are published today, and show its members' warm and cuddly side. Worried about the impact of the new GCSE grading system, used for the first time this year, they note the need for "care and compassion" in the watchdog's communication. In particular, it was "important that schools are not criticised for grades which are not as expected this summer". Awww, pass us the hot-water bottles, snowflake.

### SUNDAY: Stuck in half-term holiday traffic.

### TUESDAY:

The new academies minister, Lord Theodore "Inspiration Trust" Agnew, was full of praise for northern academy chains as he addressed the North Academies Conference today.

Zoe Carr, the CEO of WISE Academies, was

#### singled out for compliments. Carr has been a key adviser to Janet Renou, the RSC for the north, since 2014, and has just been reelected to the influential headteacher board (which Agnew now oversees).

Perhaps more surprisingly, Agnew also lavished praise on Rob Tarn of the Northern Education Trust, a chain that has had a difficult few years. The trust was hit with a pre-warning termination notice for three of its academies last August, and was criticised by Ofsted this May for poor performance.. However Agnew cited the trust as an example of "rapid school improvement".

Tarn has only been in place since September, so this improvement must have been very rapid indeed.

Meanwhile in Westminster, MPs were outraged that Ofsted boss Amanda Spielman did not start every sentence of her testimony to the parliamentary education committee with the word "children". Labour MP Thelma Walker said it was "very alarming" that Spielman's list of what she did in her first few months in the job did not mention children but instead used the evil word "framework" – gasp!

Week in Westminster wonders whether her gripes with Ofsted are linked to her work as a teacher. The primary school at which she was deputy head when she was unexpectedly elected this year was given a notice to improve back in 2010.

### WEDNESDAY:

Forget the DfE's official blog, anyone wanting to hear the most positive news out of Sanctuary Buildings needs only to head over to Jonathan Slater's Twitter account.

The DfE's permanent secretary is now a semi-regular tweeter, using the social media platform to espouse the virtues of his department and its work.

This week, he was pleased with the DfE's inclusion on the @BITC 'Best Employers for Race 2017' list. He said "fantastic progress" has been made, but there's still "more to do".

He's right about that: The proportion of senior black and minority ethnic DfE civil servants was 3.3 per cent in 2016, the lowest level in five years. But hey, who's counting?

### THURSDAY:

It's a tough job being chief inspector, as Amanda Spielman is discovering.

Ofsted minutes from July show she had to "clarify her view" on new GCSEs following an interview with the Sunday Times.

The newspaper reported that Spielman was concerned schools were "drilling pupils too narrowly" for the new tougher GCSEs, threatening their chances of getting a broad and balanced curriculum.

During the following week's Ofsted board meeting, Spielman told members she was "aware of the temptation that others have to over- or misinterpret her comments". Bless her. Quick, someone pass that Ofqual compassion hot-water bottle!

Thankfully, the board heard that her communication activities had been "well received" by stakeholders. We think this means "teachers quite like her". Fair comment? Answers on a postcard please.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Micon Metcalfe Age 52 Occupation Head of growth, United Learning Location London Subscriber since September 2014

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...



Where do you read your copy of Schools Week? Saturday morning at home with my coffee.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most? All of it.

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

I would rethink GCSE and A-level reform.

#### Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

Unpopular I know, but Michael Gove. He actually had a clear idea of what needed to change. I think though that subsequent roll-back will mean he won't be seen as successful.

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

I'll never forget that opening story, the free school with 17 children.

What do you do with your copy of *Schools Week* once you've read it?

Quite often I pass it on to a colleague.

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

I might do a George Osborne and use my position to stick the knife in to any education enemies...

#### Favourite memory of your school years?

I had a pretty poor experience of school. Probably what I remember most is a primary teacher telling me to become a lawyer and join the Labour Party. I wish I'd actually followed that through sometimes.

**If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing?** Well, if I had followed advice I might have been a lawyer. As I didn't, I think I might like to be the CEO of a charity.

#### Favourite book on education?

Mostly I will read non-sector-specific leadership stuff, and *From bursar* to school business manager, though old, has shaped my career. Andy Buck's *Leadership matters* is good too.

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

Focus on non-teaching stuff. Disparity in support staff terms and conditions and an investigation into their workload would be good.

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

Sir David Carter, the National Schools Commissioner.

George Osborne

#### SCHOOLS WEEK

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

### Girls take robot wars to China FEATURED

Become the first in the world to send an all-girl team to a new international robot fighting competition held in China.

The team of four 15- to 18-year-olds built a robot called SUSPENSION during the school's extracurricular robot club, which they pitted against others built by teams of professional engineers and amateur robot enthusiasts, at the King of Bots competition in Shanghai in October.

Team mates Juliette Skilling, Sabrina Skilling, Rebecca Ashcroft and Mary Hirst built the 110kg robot out of military grade steel, designing it to compete in a series of knock-out rounds, and to immobolise their opponents' creations.

Producers from the Chinese TV competition approached the school after seeing their appearance on the BBC's Robot Wars, which featured another team made up of robot club members.

"We set up robot club a year ago. Before this, they knew nothing about robotics and had to research the subject before they were able to start building a fighting robot," explained Thomas Walland, a STEM coordinator at the school.

"The students have shown enormous dedication to the club, spending as much time as they can at the weekend and during their holidays designing and building."

Over 100 teams competed in the King of



The team pose for press photos in China



Bots show, which is hosted by the famous actor and martial artist Jet Li. Just one other school team took part, from Japan. The Essex robot didn't win, as a loose connection got them knocked out of the competition.



But it did mean the robot is now in better condition than when it left for China. "The team are quite disappointed about it because they were hoping it would get a good amount of damage so they know what they could improve," Walland added.





### BAFTA QUIZ SORTS THE MAKE-UP ARTISTS FROM THE PRODUCERS

In order to get more pupils pursuing creative careers, BAFTA has launched a careers tool matching their interests and skills with jobs in the film, television and games industries.

The personality quiz poses 10 real-life scenarios, and suggests roles and career paths based on how pupils respond.

Potential roles suggested to participants include prosthetic designers, film producers and composers, as well as makeup artists and lighting technicians, using questions such as "what sort of selfie do you take?" and "how do you like to work?"

"It can be challenging for teachers and careers advisers to give sound, up-to-date advice on getting into these industries as they're evolving so fast," explained Tim Hunter, BAFTA's director of learning and new talent.

"New roles are emerging all the time and the routes into film, games and television can be less formal and structured than in other sectors."

The quiz has been designed to be used as a classroom resource, or a tool for options and careers evenings.

To access the quiz, visit: http://guru.bafta.org/ careers-quiz

### **Black governors network launched**



### Helping BME students into top unis

social enterprise set up by a former Exeter University student is working to increase participation of pupils from low-income and minority-ethnic backgrounds in higher education.

CoachBright UK sends student volunteers into secondary schools once a week to coach pupils one-on-one in confidence building, independence and problem solving, to prepare them for the selfdirected study required at university.

The enterprise was set up by 26-year-old Robin Chu, who found himself struck by the lack of diversity among his peers while at university.

"It wasn't the most diverse place in the country," he explained. "I felt lucky to be there, but I noticed not a lot of people looked like me or had a similar kind of background or experience. That stayed with me."

The scheme – which is currently working with 600 pupils across 50 schools – collaborates formally with Exeter University to recruit volunteers, but has student coaches from universities including Kings College London, London School of Economics, Aston University and Birmingham University.

"It has allowed our pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning by creating a culture of self-confidence and selfdirection," said Matt Jones, the principal of ARK Globe Academy, which is involved in the scheme. "We've seen our first intake of sixth-formers getting off to a strong start, with many cases jumping up an entire grade boundary."



#### The NBGN website

new network will help black African and Caribbean governors in an attempt to increase the diversity of school governing boards.

The National Black Governors Network will pair black professionals interested in becoming governors with schools who are looking to diversify their governing boards via the network's website.

The NBGN was set up by Sharon

Warmington, who noticed a distinct lack of diversity among the school governing community.

"I've been around governance all of my working life but no matter where I've been



I'm usually the only black in the room," she

said. "Governing boards are not reflective of the student body that they're serving, and if young black children are not seeing

themselves reflected at that level, how can they aspire to be at that level." Successes of the network so far include

a 23-year-old graduate being placed at

a primary academy trust, as well as an

entrepreneur in his 30s becoming a governor

for an alternative provision free school.

You can find out more about the network and how to get involved by visiting www.nbgn.co.uk/ EDITION 118



### LISA TOOLEY

Head of school, Sir Charles Kao UTC

START DATE: September 2017

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Assistant head at Burnt Mill Academy

**INTERESTING FACT:** Lisa learnt to ski aged five and ride a motorbike aged nine.



#### RAY BAKER, Headteacher, LSA Technology and

Technology and Performing Arts College

START DATE: January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Headteacher at Siddal Moor Sports College

**INTERESTING FACT:** Ray is a distant relative of actor Larry Hagman and singer Danny La Rue.

### MOVERS 💦 SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



#### HELEN CASSADY

Headteacher, Cottenham Village College

#### **START DATE:** January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Headteacher at Havant Academy in Hampshire

**INTERESTING FACT:** Helen once cycled the length of France in 14 days, and has cycled in Italy, Spain, Austria, Switzerland and southern Germany.

#### Get in touch!

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



#### MELANIE RENOWDEN Deputy CEO, Ambition School Leadership

START DATE: November 2017

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Executive director at Ambition School Leadership

**INTERESTING FACT:** Melanie likes to spend as much time as possible outdoors walking, enjoying wildlife and growing veg at her much-loved allotment.



#### **CHRIS MALONE**

Head of education and learning, Warwickshire County Council

**START DATE:** September 2017

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Strategic lead for education quality at Oxfordshire County Council

**INTERESTING FACT:** Chris is a keen cyclist and regularly cycles to meetings and school visits on her Brompton bike.

# future

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#### SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

						_			l i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i
				1		7		4	Difficulty:
2		6				5	1		EASY
	5			4		8		2	
1		5			7		2		
	7		4			9		5	
3		4		5			7		
	1	7				3		9	
6		9		7					

Difficulty: MEDIUM 6 5 

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

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

Solutions:Difficulty:Next weekMEDIUM

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





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