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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017 | EDITION 122



Photo: Swindon Advertiser

Bright Tribe to walk away from troubled Whitehaven Academy

- **Beleaguered trust steps aside after chief resigns**
- **RSC: It's 'clear' Cumbria school needs new sponsor**
- **Decision follows campaign from parents and staff**

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Bright Tribe academy trust is to give up Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria, following intense pressure from school staff and parents.

The beleaguered trust announced its decision on Thursday, hours before a community meeting where campaigners were due to discuss whether it could be forced out, and just one day after the resignation of the its chief operating officer Mary McKeeman.

Janet Renou, the regional schools commissioner for the north of England, said it was "clear" that a new sponsor was required "to deliver the improvement needed". A search for a new sponsor is now underway.

Bright Tribe has faced significant criticism from parents, staff, politicians and even pupils over its running of the school, which has been in the trust since January 2014.

The school was placed in special measures by Ofsted in October 2016, and an open letter signed by teachers last week revealed two thirds of the school site is now so dilapidated it has been closed, while the remaining third has "declined" to the extent that even the "slightest rainfall" puts it out of action.

They also complained of "minimal budgets" for textbooks, poor outcomes for learners, broken windows, leadership changes and lacking support from the trust.

The trust was lambasted by the local MP Trudy Harrison, a member of the education select committee, after she was physically escorted offsite by staff when she arrived to check on flood damage last week. During her visit a child was injured by falling debris.

Bright Tribe defended its record at the school and criticised "historic underinvestment" in the buildings, but said it believed "alternative sponsorship" was now the "most appropriate route for the school's continued improvement journey."

SCHOOLSWEET

MEET THE NEWS TEAM

schoolsweek.co.uk

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

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

**Tom Mendelsohn**
SUB EDITOR@TOM_MENDELSON
TOM.MENDELSON@LSECT.COM**Freddie Whittaker**
CHIEF REPORTER@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Alix Robertson**
SENIOR REPORTER@ALIXROBERTSON4
ALIX.ROBERTSON@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Jess Staufenberg**
SENIOR REPORTER@STAUFENBERGJ
JESS.STAUFBENBERG@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Pippa Allen-Kinross**
REPORTER@PIPPA_AK
PIPPA.ALLENKINROSS@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Sam King**
JUNIOR REPORTER@KINGSAMANTHA
SAMANTHA.KING@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK**Shane Mann**
MANAGING DIRECTOR@SHANERMANN
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

THE TEAM

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

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NEWS

Adapted exam papers up 26%

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Ofqual has recorded a dramatic 26-per-cent increase in the proportion of GCSE, AS and A-level exam papers that were adapted to make them accessible for candidates with a disability, illness or special educational need this year.

This change is due in large part to a rise in the use of "non-interactive" electronic question papers, it claims.

The exams watchdog has also revealed that it has investigated schools making a lot of requests for extra time in exams, as these have also increased in recent years.

The overall number of approved access arrangements rose by five per cent in 2016-17 to 392,955. In total 48,080 exam papers were modified in the summer 2017 exams, up from 38,115 the previous year.

Modified papers are prepared for pupils with, for example, visual impairments or language comprehension disorders, in order to fairly enable them to show their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The number of non-interactive electronic question papers used in 2017 was 20,815, an increase of 47.5 per cent on the year before.

These question papers can be read aloud by computer software, and there was also a 41.3 per cent increase in the number of pupils using computer readers, from 8,110 to 11,460.

According to the Joint Qualifications

Council handbook on access

arrangements, it is "not necessary to formally assess the candidate's reading accuracy or reading comprehension or reading

speed" before allowing them to use a computer reader, even for English exams. A school's special educational needs coordinator must demonstrate the candidate has an impairment.

SEND consultant Barney Angliss said the rise in the use of computer-aided options could be because they don't require additional staffing.

"Are schools making their decisions about which access arrangements to offer pupils based only on the resources available?" he said.

"That suggests that pupils' special needs are not being correctly addressed; schools seem to be using generic approaches to the provision of access arrangements."

Extra time in exams is still the most popular type of access arrangement, making up 57 per cent of all approved arrangements, compared with 55 per cent last year. This year, 15.7 per cent (223,405) of pupils had 25 per cent more time, up from 12.4 per cent.

Ofqual is investigating, and says it will

Number and proportion of each type of access arrangement for the 2016/16 and 2016/17 academic years

Type of arrangement	Number		% change	% of students taking exams	
	2016/16	2016/17		2016/16 cohort	2016/17 cohort
25% extra time	206,405	223,405	▲ 8.2%	12.4	15.7
Reader	86,950	86,765	▼ 0.2%	5.2	6.1
Scribe	43,205	41,960	▼ 2.9%	2.6	2.9
Exam on coloured paper	13,755	17,805	▲ 28.0%	0.8	1.2
Computer reader	8,110	11,460	▲ 41.3%	0.5	0.8
Other arrangements	14,505	11,760	▼ 23.3%	-	-
Total	372,930	392,955	▲ 5.4%	-	-

work with exam boards to examine why so many more students are being given extra time.

"We intend that centres which, without obvious good reason, make particularly high or low use of extra time are contacted and asked to review their approach," it said in a statement.

Exam papers with larger, bolder text or which were printed on coloured paper increased in use by 17.6 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.

However, the number of papers in braille or with tactile diagrams decreased by 4.9 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively.

The number of pupils using a scribe in their exams also declined by 2.9 per cent to 41,960 in 2016-17, while the number of pupils using a reader dropped by 0.2 per cent to 86,765.

Angliss warned large-text scripts or coloured paper may be being handed out simply "to engage pupils who are lacking in confidence about exams" or "so schools can tell parents that their child is getting access arrangements".

Island school finally gets a sponsor

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The only secondary school on the remote Isles of Scilly in the south-west is forming a multi-academy trust with a standalone academy school 28 miles away on the mainland, after it was put into special measures.

Five Islands School, an all-through boarding school, made the front page of *Schools Week* last year after its 'inadequate' Ofsted rating triggered an academy order, even though it is at least a three-hour ferry journey from the southern tip of Cornwall. Worse yet, between November and March, it is only accessible via a 15-minute aeroplane trip costing £100 each way.

But now the voluntary controlled school has agreed to join Mounts Bay Secondary Academy in Penzance, in a new trust called Leading Edge Academies Partnership.

It's actually a second option, after trustees couldn't agree conditions to let it join the trust running Trevithick Learning Academy, which has supported Five Islands over the past year.

According to the government data on planned academy changes, Five Islands should have converted at the start of November with Trevithick Learning Academy on mainland Cornwall as its sponsor.

Sara Davey, the executive headteacher of Mounts Bay, claimed both schools were



Five Islands School

The isolated nature of the school can make improvement tricky, however. Jo Yeates, its interim headteacher, has struggled to find cover for sick staff because of the isolation.

Interviewing new staff is also "tricky, as it's quite expensive", and the school is forced to use Skype.

Meanwhile the school is also on the hook for

originally planning to join Venture, which runs Trevithick, but that Five Islands decided "trustee proposals were not agreed to everyone's satisfaction". She said she did not know what they were.

Five Islands now expects to convert to academy on March 1, once a land issue regarding boundaries is resolved, and the Leading Edge trust will incorporate shortly afterwards.

Ofsted dropped the school from a grade three to a four last year, because pupils were underachieving and misbehaving, and some senior positions remained vacant.

In 2013, a report investigating a former headteacher who had been wrongly suspended, caused the former education secretary Michael Gove to recommend the school join a multi-academy trust on the mainland.

aeroplane flights. It covers 20 per cent of the £100 ticket for any teacher travelling to the mainland, which Yeates herself does every few weeks to see her family.

School trips are also "interesting" to organise, she said. Pupils stay overnight at Mounts Bay academy to participate in events on the mainland rather than get the three-hour ferry both ways in one day. The ferry costs £10 for a child and £50 for an adult.

Altogether, the cost of covering staff and pupil journeys is "a lot for the school's coffers," she said. "It affects us significantly."

Davey has spoken to Derek Thomas, the Conservative MP for St Ives, to suggest that the Isles of Scilly get extra "weighting" for funding to account for its high transport costs. *Schools Week* approached him, but has not received a response.

IN brief

OFSTED STATS SHAKE-UP WILL AFFECT SCHOOL GRADES

Ofsted wants to change the way it presents statistics about school inspections, including the past grades of turnaround academies, which *Schools Week* recently highlighted were being scrubbed from the record.

It is consulting on changes to its statistics in order to make its data more comprehensive and accessible. The plans do not change the timing of inspections, the use of data during inspections, nor the look of Ofsted reports.

One proposal is to include the previous ratings of schools which become an academy or are taken over by a new sponsor, wherever possible.

The change would mean a two-point decrease in the percentage of 'good' or 'outstanding' primary schools, and a three-percentage-point decrease among secondary schools. Combined, the drop will be two percentage points.

In July, *Schools Week* revealed that over 700 schools were missing Ofsted grades after their records were wiped when they converted to become academies.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE RESITS INCREASE BY 29%

The number of students resitting English language GCSE has risen by almost a third in the first year of the reformed exams, despite a drop in the overall number of resits.

Ofqual statistics show there was an overall drop of 19 per cent in GCSE entries for the November resits, from 84,450 to 67,985.

However, there was still a sharp rise in the number of entries for the English language exam, with resits increasing by 29 per cent from 25,610 in 2016 to 32,970 this year.

Resits for maths fell by 41 per cent, from 58,840 to 34,790. Just 13 per cent of the entries were for the higher paper, and the remaining 87 per cent took the foundation paper.

This year marked the first year the reformed GCSEs were available in English language, English literature and maths, graded on a scale of 9 to 1 instead of A* to G.

ATTAINMENT GAP WIDENS IN RECEPTION

The lowest-attaining pupils did slightly worse than their peers in reception this year, reversing a trend of improvement seen since 2013.

Early years foundation stage profile data shows the attainment gap between the lowest-attaining 20 per cent of pupils and all pupils widened to 31.7 per cent this year, up from 31.4 per cent in 2016.

This is due to a slight fall in the average point score of lower-attaining pupils, from 23.3 in 2016 to 23.2 this year. This had risen from 21.6 in 2013. The average point score for all children remained at 34.5 this year, the same as it was last year.

The attainment gap had steadily fallen in recent years, from 36.6 per cent in 2013 to 33.9 per cent in 2014, and from 32.1 per cent in 2015 to 31.4 per cent in 2016.

NEWS

EEF: TEACHERS NEED TO LEARN ABOUT RESEARCH

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Teachers need “structured and intensive support” to engage with new research if outcomes are to improve, according to new findings from the Education Endowment Foundation.

Three randomised controlled trials, funded and published by the EEF, found that passive methods currently used to educate teachers about research are not leading to changes in classroom practice or pupil outcomes.

The first two experiments, named the ‘Literacy Octopus’ trials, involved a set of 12,500 schools receiving evidence-based resources in a range of formats, and a second set of 823 schools receiving the same resources along with “light-touch” support, including seminars on how to use them.

The resources included research summaries, magazines, webinars and conferences, all designed to support literacy teaching in primary schools, and were provided by four delivery partners – the Institute for Effective Education, Campaign for Learning, the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, and NatCen Social Research with ResearchEd.

Independent evaluators found that neither approach affected attainment for the 10- and 11-year-olds whose teachers took part.

The third trial, Research Learning Communities, involved 119 primary schools. Two teachers were nominated in each school as “evidence champions” and attended workshops on research in specific areas of interest to the school, such as phonics teaching, delivered by UCL’s Institute of Education.

These champions developed school improvement strategies using what they had learned, to support other teachers in their schools to engage with the research.

Again, evaluators found no evidence the programme led to improvements in outcomes for 10- and 11-year-olds.

However, there was some tentative evidence that being in a Research Learning Community increased teachers’ engagement with research.

The conclusion from all three trials was that, in general, light-touch interventions without any face-to-face contact are unlikely to affect how teachers engage with research, and more direct strategies are needed to change classroom practice and improve outcomes.

Sir Kevan Collins, the chief executive of the EEF, said that while academic research has “enormous potential to improve pupil attainment and save schools money”, it is important that it is properly accessible for teachers and school leaders.

“We need to make sure that research findings get into the hands of teachers in ways that are most likely to have an impact. We know how challenging this can be,” he said.

“Today’s reports tell us that light-touch interventions are unlikely to have an impact on pupil attainment and getting teachers to engage with research is far from straightforward.

“We need to focus our efforts on more targeted and structured approaches to disseminate evidence and support teachers.”

Ofsted backtracks on controversial headscarf policy

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Ofsted has sought to reassure faith leaders that Muslim pupils won’t be “singled out” at inspections, following a fierce backlash over guidance that advised inspectors to question younger girls who wear the hijab to school.

Instead, headscarves will be discussed with groups of children as a “theme”, as inspectors try to address concerns about schools that include head coverings as an optional or compulsory item in uniform policies.

The inspectorate will meet with representatives of the Association of Muslim Schools before issuing updated “final guidance” on the matter.

Earlier this month, chief inspector Amanda Spielman (pictured) told the *Sunday Times* that inspectors would “talk to girls who wear such garments to ascertain why they do so in the school”. She had met Muslim women who campaign against the hijab in schools, and who raised its inclusion in some uniform policies as a “matter of concern”.

She expressed particular concerns about the “sexualisation of young girls”, as most Islamic teaching only requires the hijab to be worn after girls reach puberty.

But Ofsted has faced fierce criticism over the move from campaigners, who claim it will cause individual Muslim children to be singled out.

In an open letter, 1,136 academics and faith leaders decried the guidance as “unacceptable”, “reductive” and “racist”,



and demanded that Ofsted retract its recommendation. They argued that “no schoolchildren should be targeted for action on the basis of their race, religion or background”.

The letter accuses Ofsted of applying a harsher “level of scrutiny” to Muslim women and parents, and accuses it of being swayed by “partisan” groups and discriminating “on the basis of race, religion and gender”.

“The Ofsted decision reduced the hijab to a symbol of sexualisation and ignores other interpretations ranging from a display of faith of a symbol of empowerment and resistance,” they wrote.

“Constructing women and children who wear the hijab as being either sexualised or repressed is both reductive and racist in its reproduction of colonial and Orientalist tropes.”

The letter also warns that Ofsted risks “reinforcing an anti-Muslim political culture”

and describes the decision as a “kneejerk, discriminatory and institutionally racist response that will violate civil liberties and create a climate of fear and mistrust in schools”.

A spokesperson for Ofsted said Spielman had issued the recommendation after identifying the issue of primary schools including the hijab in school uniform policies as a “matter of concern” to “a group of Muslim women”.

In a letter to *The Times* earlier this year, the women wrote that sanctioning the veiling of “Muslim girls as young as five” by including it in school uniform policies is “an affront to the historical fight for gender equality in our secular democracy and is creating a two-tiered form of non-equality for young Muslim girls”. The group later met with Spielman and other senior officials to discuss their concerns.

The inspectorate now intends to hold further discussions with inspectors, MPs, school leaders and Muslim groups, before publishing final guidance.

“We are aware that discussing the reasons why children wear certain garments related to their faith in school is uncomfortable for some, and that doing so would be controversial,” a spokesperson said.

“However, as an inspectorate we have a responsibility to take seriously concerns about pressures children face in schools, and to ensure there is no detriment either to their learning or to their preparation for life in modern Britain.”

‘LOW-COST’ PRIVATE SCHOOL DELAYED BY A YEAR

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Exclusive

England’s first “low-cost” private school has apologised for delaying its opening date a second time, after the government told it to improve the site proposed for its location.

The Independent Grammar School: Durham was due to open in September, offering parents a “traditional private education” without the “frills” for just £52 a week.

However, with a month to go, its principal Chris Gray told parents that the Department for Education hadn’t responded to its application, and said the school would instead open in January.

Now he and his business partner James Tooley have been forced to apologise to parents once again, after inspectors found issues with the building, including technical problems with the toilets.

The pair are now aiming to open next September, a year later than first proposed.

Gray told *Schools Week* that Ofsted visited the school to complete a regulation check that it met the independent school standards.

Its curriculum and other policies all passed, but inspectors had “concerns about the premises”.

The pair have personally invested, along with outside backers, in a lease on a “beautiful” refurbished former church with a “spanking new” interior, but inspectors



The Independent Grammar School: Durham

flagged the fact that the toilets were not the right size for children. He would not provide further details of the building issues, nor reveal how much money had been invested in the building so far.

Christchurch Durham, in the city centre, has a vaulted main hall which will be the assembly, the sports hall and a performance space, around which there are four classrooms, as well as a library and a resources area. To begin with, the school will open for pupils in reception up to year 4 pupils.

Parents learned the news last month in a message on the school’s website.

“We realise this is the second time we’ve pushed back the opening and deeply apologise for that,” the school wrote. “It has, however, been beyond our control.”

Some parents have moved house to live near the school in the hope of winning a place, Gray said, claiming that he had made it “clear” that the school may “never happen”. However, both men believe it will go ahead, and recently held a parent’s evening to answer further questions and seek enrolments.

The school won’t release details on the school’s financial model, which Ofsted does not inspect as it is part of the independent school standards.

Parents will be charged £2,700 a year, well below the independent school average of more than £12,000 a year.

Gray said there had been around 100 expressions of interest from parents so far, and that teachers would be “paid decently” from the funds.

Tooley, a professor of education policy at Newcastle University, previously told *Schools Week* that he hopes to “build a chain” of low-cost private schools across the country.

He is founder of a social enterprise called Omega Schools Franchise, which runs a pay-as-you-learn education model in Ghana, and has also set up schools in India and Liberia.

Meanwhile Gray resigned from his last school, Grindon Christian Hall in Sunderland, which converted from an independent school to a free school in 2012, after it was rated ‘inadequate’ in 2015. He had been in charge for 14 years.

NEWS

Exam reforms save schools a packet on late entries

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

Schools saved more than £1 million in exam entry fees last year by entering more pupils on time, even as the cost of exam entries crept upwards.

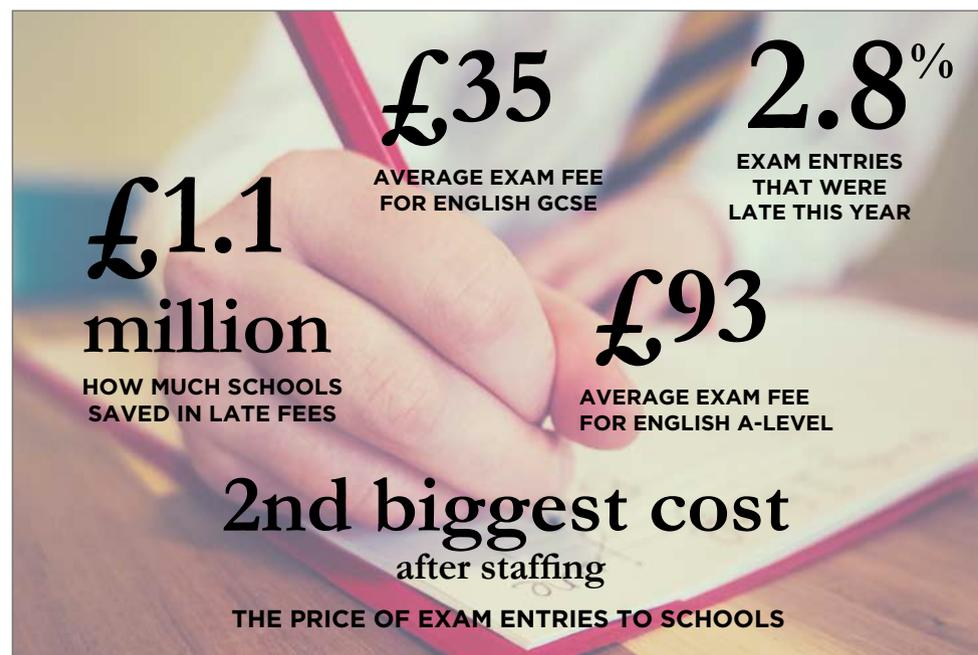
The proportion of late entries fell from three per cent last year to 2.8 per cent this year across GCSE and AS/A-level entries, Ofqual's latest figures show.

For every pupil entered late, schools must pay a premium to exam boards. The cost of an exam doubles if a pupil is entered late and can triple if entered very late, at each of OCR, Pearson, WJEC and AQA.

This summer continued a downward trend in AS-level certificates since they no longer count towards A-level grades, while the reformed GCSEs in English and maths changed entry patterns.

This year, the average entry fee for English language GCSE and maths GCSE was £35 across all exam boards. Given nearly 440,000 late GCSE entries across all subjects, *Schools Week* estimates schools paid £15.4 million in late fees on top of the regular cost of entry.

Last year, we calculate more than £16 million was spent, which works out at around £4,700 for every secondary school in England. Charges for English and maths GCSE were £33 on average, and there were 487,000 late GCSE entries, making the cost



almost one million pounds higher.

AS/A-level fees are pricier: £95 on average, which for the 83,975 late entries means schools shelled out £7.9 million.

Last year A-level exams cost £93 on average. There were 90,845 late entries, at a cost of £8.4 million. Overall, we estimate schools and colleges spent around £23.3 million on late fees this year, compared with £24.4 million last year, a saving more than £1 million.

A substantial drop in the number of pupils entering for AS exams means that

less was spent on exam entry fees overall, not just late costs. Around 800,000 fewer exams were entered last year, as pupils returned to taking all their exams at the end of their courses. With AS fees averaging around £50, this is an estimated saving of £40 million, or around £12,000 per secondary school or sixth form.

Jill Stokoe, a policy advisor at the National Education Union, said the cost of exam entry fees was the second highest for schools after staffing, and late fees are affected by factors such as sick pupils,

pupils moving to higher-tier papers, or taking on new pupils late in the year.

Exam boards have steadily increased their entry fees in recent times. AQA said its rises for next year will be in line with inflation: its English and maths GCSEs will increase by three per cent for 2017-18, while its English and maths A-levels will rise in price by five per cent.

Pearson is raising the cost of its English GCSE by 10 per cent, and its maths GCSE by four per cent. The English A-level will increase by eight per cent, and its maths A-level by nine per cent.

At WJEC, costs for both GCSEs and the English A-level, will all rise by four per cent. WJEC doesn't offer A-level maths in England.

At OCR, the costs for entry to English and maths GCSE and A-levels will increase by three per cent, which a spokesperson blamed on inflation.

Suzanne O'Farrell, an assessment specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said her union is "not persuaded" the administrative burden of late entries justifies "such large costs".

Exam boards should reduce charges especially when a pupil changes tiers, "particularly given qualifications are undergoing such major changes".

The union is now going to raise the matter with Ofqual.

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SCHOOLS WEEK

NEWS

Ability grouping in primary schools - a 'necessary evil'?

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Testing pressures are forcing primary school teachers to group their pupils by ability, even when they don't believe it will raise attainment.

Eighty-one per cent of reception teachers divide their classes into ability groups to teach phonics, new research from the National Education Union and UCL's Institute of Education has found.

However, just 52 per cent of respondents believed that grouping by ability actually works, according to the report, entitled 'Grouping in early years and key stage 1', which surveyed 1,373 teachers and involved interviews with teacher focus groups at four schools.

In year 1, 78 per cent of teachers group their pupils in phonics, 72 per cent in maths and reading, and 68 per cent in literacy. By year 2, 72 per cent of teachers set their pupils for phonics, 71 per cent for reading, 66 per cent for maths and 60 per cent for literacy.

Alice Bradbury and Guy Roberts-Holmes, the study's authors, said previous research has confirmed that grouping does not improve attainment overall, while mixed-ability teaching produces higher attainment overall.

Children are aware of which ability group they are in even when they are very young

or when teachers attempt to disguise the hierarchy, the research found, which can have a negative impact on their mental health.

But almost three quarters of teachers in the survey (71 per cent) said that grouping by ability is "easier for the teacher", and interviewees reported that it helps classroom management and highlights differentiation to senior leaders.

"Teachers feel conflicted about the use of grouping," Roberts-Holmes said. "Though in their hearts they disagree with it, sometimes because they themselves had been grouped as a child and remember how it had affected their self-esteem and confidence, here they are as a teacher doing the same thing to children."

One teacher participating in the research said grouping "benefits some children at the expense of others".

"However, in a climate of results I also think it is a necessary means to an end in many circumstances," they explained.

Researchers also warned that further tests for primary school pupils – such as the new baseline test for reception pupils – will only encourage further "labelling of children".

The report recommends that policy experts "reflect upon the introduction of further assessment into primary schools, and consider the impact of grouping practices".

Dr Mary Boustead, the general secretary of



Mary Boustead

the National Education Union, said ability groups could have a "damaging effect" on children, with low-ability labels "becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy and achievement gaps widening between disadvantaged pupils and their peers".

"The findings make for challenging reading, and we hope will open a discussion

into the underlying drivers of these practices and how they can be mitigated," she said. "High-stakes accountability testing and chronic workload are significant factors, which the National Education Union will work hard to address."

Recent research from Teacher Tapp, an app used by 1,435 teachers that gathers information about their work, suggests the negative impact of exam pressure on primary teachers and pupils extends to secondary level.

Its data revealed that just nine per cent of secondary teachers feel key stage 2 test scores accurately reflected their pupils' academic standards.

This mistrust is due to a feeling that pupils are overprepared and given "excessive support" during tests.

Secondary school teachers were asked if their pupils had told them any stories about their primary SATs exams, and around a third reported hearing about classes given extra time or teachers pointing out errors.

Meanwhile, questions to primary school teachers found that one in three had been asked to undertake some form of cheating during SATs.

Despite a lack of faith in the results of primary assessments, 64 per cent of secondary teachers said their school created ability sets by using KS2 data, raising further questions about the efficacy of ability groupings.

NO STAPLES AND PINS THIS CHRISTMAS IN CASE OF ASBESTOS

Schools should avoid using pins and staples to fix Christmas decorations to classroom walls and ceilings in order not to disturb asbestos in the walls.

In March, *Schools Week* revealed that on at least 90 separate occasions in the last five years, the carcinogenic compound had been disturbed at schools in a way that could affect the health of staff and pupils.

Nearly one in five schools are failing to manage asbestos properly, and the government has had to intervene in more than 100 schools found to be a "significant cause for concern".

Now the Joint Union Asbestos Committee, an organisation representing nine teaching and support worker unions, has issued new guidance to remind schools of their responsibilities relating to the deadly substance ahead of the festive period.

According to guidance from the Department for Education, pressing staples or pins into walls or ceilings containing asbestos can result in the release of harmful fibres, which, if breathed in, can cause diseases such as mesothelioma – an aggressive form of lung cancer – many years later.

Around half of school staff say they don't know whether their school buildings contain asbestos. If it is not known whether asbestos is present, the law says that it "must be assumed that it is present, until it can be proved otherwise". Any school built before 2000 is likely to contain asbestos.

Schools should ensure the message about decorations is reflected in their "asbestos management plan", and give staff "timely reminders".

Summer-borns suffer from phonics streaming

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Schools are using phonics to divide primary classes into ability groups – and pupils born in summer are paying the price.

Phonics teaching involves six phases in which children learn how to read and spell using progressively harder phonemes and graphemes – sounds and the letters that represent them.

But the National Education Union has found that schools are using the phases as a way to divide pupils into groups according to how good they are.

Researchers surveyed 1,373 teachers and spoke to teacher focus groups at four schools.

Eighty-one per cent of reception teachers used groupings in phonics, as well as 78 per cent of year 1 teachers, 72 per cent of year 2 teachers and 58 per cent of teachers at nursery level.

"Schools are conflating and transferring notions of ability onto phonics companies' phases – the phases are not about ability," said Guy Roberts-Holmes, co-author of the final report, 'Grouping in early years and key stage 1 – a necessary evil'.

Teachers participating in the research raised concerns about how class groupings can widen "gaps in attainment" and worsen inequalities that already exist in the system, such as the underachievement of summer-born children.

"There is wider statistical research that

shows that who goes into lower-ability groups is summer-born children, boys, pupils from low income backgrounds," said Alice Bradbury, another co-author.

As well as materials provided by the government to help prepare pupils for the phonics screening check in year 1, schools frequently use phonics schemes from private companies, which also determine their grouping policies.

In one case study, children were grouped by phonics phases across the school, meaning some key stage 2 children were placed with others in key stage 1. At another school, children's access to books was determined by their level in phonics, and their reading choices were allocated by phase.

Louise Johns-Shepherd, the chief executive of the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, said equating ability grouping with the phonics phases "has to be harmful for our very youngest children".

Splitting children into these groupings could lead to them "missing out on key experiences that will enable them to become lifelong readers, with all of the academic and socio economic benefits this brings".

Teachers involved in the study were concerned that summer-born children, who can be up to a year younger than their peers, are "always being kept into lower groups" and are "not getting access to role models for language" or having "the same kind of school experience as other children",



Bradbury added.

In some examples, the groups with the lowest ability were being taught phonics by a teaching assistant, while other groups were "taught in corridors and broom cupboards".

"You can see the concern about 'sedimenting' of learner identities; you get labelled very young and then that builds up through the school," she said.

"It sets a ceiling for a child," added Roberts-Holmes. "They feel that they can only achieve to a set level."

The research recommends that leaders assess the need for grouping practices, "particularly for younger children who may have their learning limited or be labelled in their first years of school".

NEWS

New iGCSE circumvents 'two religions' rule

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Increasing numbers of pupils are being entered for an international religious studies qualification which allows them to learn just one religion – in spite of government rules that require GCSEs always to include two religions.

The reformed religious studies GCSE has been taught since 2016, and is required to include the systematic study of at least two religions. It overturned previous rules allowing schools only to teach one faith.

But *Schools Week* has learned that Pearson's iGCSE in religious studies, which allows a mono-faith focus, increased in popularity by 40 per cent last year, with entries expanding from 436 pupils in 2015 to 608.

Schools such as Yavneh College, a Jewish faith academy in Hertfordshire, switched to it from the normal GCSE, which counts towards headline accountability measures, even though the iGCSE won't count either towards accountability or performance tables.

Spencer Lewis, the school's executive headteacher, told *Schools Week* the he felt the iGCSE was "an appropriate course that will interest and challenge" pupils.

"While it is true" the iGCSE allowed a focus on one single religion, he claimed that this

Silver lining guys... we'll still feature whether it's Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism



is "not the motivating factor" for the switch, and that pupils would still learn about other world religions.

The school did not respond to questioning on why it made the switch if these other religions were still being taught.

Deborah Weston, a research officer at the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, said she could see why Pearson was offering the course "from a market point of view", but suggested it was a "business decision" as opposed to one based on the "principle of what RS teaching should be like."

A spokesperson for Pearson, the for-profit international exam board, said its RS iGCSE had been "informed" by the Department for Education's requirements, but the company had to make sure the content was "appropriate for schools worldwide, delivered in many different cultural contexts".

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of Schools and College Leaders, said he understood why Pearson's qualification might be appropriate for schools operating in other cultures, but believes it is "at odds with us as a society" in multicultural England.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, who chairs the Accord Coalition, which campaigns against religious selection in schools, said it would be "highly detrimental" if more schools

were to switch, going as far as to ask the DfE to "intervene to prevent this loophole being exploited".

This is not the first time faith schools have been accused of cherry-picking which religions to teach.

Two years ago, the Bishops Conference, which oversees Catholic schools, decreed that its secondary schools should all only teach Judaism and Christianity to meet the government's requirement to teach two religions, regardless of whether teachers had trained in other religions.

But the spokesperson for Pearson said that while most questions in the iGCSE could be answered "from the perspective of one religion", pupils also needed "knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion", as well as of non-religious beliefs.

DfE misses (nearly) all of its teacher training targets

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

The government has not trained enough teachers for any Ebacc subjects except history, official statistics have revealed.

The data shows teacher supply model (TSM) targets were missed almost across the board, despite the fact that the overall number of people beginning postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) courses rose by 1,145 from 26,750 last year to 27,895 for 2017/18.

In the same period, the TSM target has increased by 1,670.

The government released the figures on Thursday, just days after the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) shared the findings of its annual recruitment survey of school leaders, which warned that the "recruitment pipeline is leaking at both ends".

Of the Ebacc secondary subjects, the worst hit was computing, which had just 66 per cent of the required entrants. Physics managed just 68 per cent of its TSM target, and maths recruited 79 per cent.

History was the only Ebacc subject to exceed its target, recruiting 102 per cent of the required trainees.

Non-Ebacc subjects have not fared much better, recruiting on average just 69 per cent of the required trainees.

Although recruitment of trainee PE

teachers exceeded expectations, meeting 113 per cent of the target, just 33 per cent of the required design and technology teachers began training.

The government did hit its target for primary teachers, recruiting 106 per cent of the TSM target.

The executive director at the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, James Noble-Rogers, described the figures as "extremely worrying" and said the government "must take some of the blame".

"In its headlong rush to introduce a crude and unsustainable model of so called 'school-led' teacher training it destabilised the teacher supply base on which the country depends," he said.

"Had this been done with a little more thought and less antagonistically, things could have been very different."

He said the government must now encourage schools, universities and SCITTs to work together to maximise recruitment and retention by offering better professional development.

NAHT general secretary Paul Whiteman warned that long hours and low pay were putting graduates off applying for teaching, and were forcing current teachers seek new careers.

"The government must make the changes necessary to ensure a workforce that can

deliver the best education for all," he said.

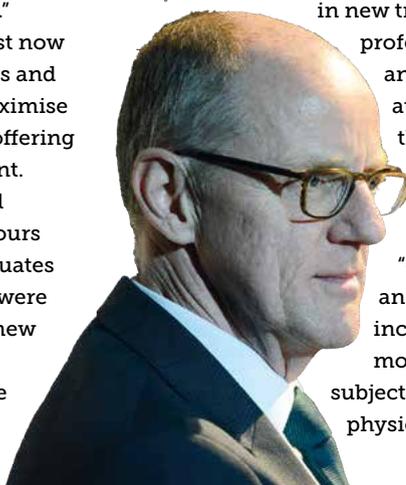
"This should be the focus of all our attention, to attract and retain teachers, pay them properly, treat them well and respect their need for a proper work-life balance."

The NAHT survey of over 800 school leaders showed that 81 per cent of teaching vacancies were difficult to fill, with 18 per cent not successfully recruited.

Sixty-four per cent of respondents said poor quality of applicants was one of the main reasons for struggling to recruit, while half also raised concerns about an overall shortage of staff. Concerns were raised in particular about the recruitment of senior and middle leadership roles.

Schools minister Nick Gibb (pictured) claimed there were now "a record number of teachers in our schools" and the increase in new trainees shows that the profession "continues to be an attractive career" that attracts "the best and the brightest".

He added that the government has recently announced "generous bursaries and other financial incentives" to encourage more trainees into key subjects like maths and physics.



IN brief

MAJOR EARLY-YEARS ASSESSOR DROPS OUT OF BASELINE TENDER

Early Excellence, the early-years company that developed a popular baseline assessment used by 12,500 schools, will not compete to deliver the government's new baseline tests, after it branded the plans ideological and inept.

The tender document for the £10 million contract to develop and deliver new baseline tests from 2020 specified that the new test should not be "an observational assessment which is carried out over time" – the method favoured by Early Excellence and which 70 per cent of primary schools chose to use under the previous policy.

In a statement, the company announced that it "cannot envisage participating in the tender process" and accused the government of revealing "an astonishing ineptitude" and "a narrow ideological view of assessment in the EYFS [early-years foundation stage]".

PRIVATE SCHOOLS BARELY REACH THE MOST DISADVANTAGED KIDS

Just one per cent of private school pupils come from the most disadvantaged households, the chair of the Independent Schools Council has revealed.

Barnaby Lenon told MPs on Tuesday that just 6,000 of 522,000 pupils at ISC member schools receive a 100-per-cent bursary for their school fees – a measure which suggests their families are in the lowest income bracket.

Lenon said the ISC's 1,300 member-schools spend £385 million a year on bursaries for low-income homes, but just those 6,000 pay no fees at all.

Pushed on how many of "the most disadvantaged" receive help, Lenon said that all 6,000 "would be in that category", but was unable to say how many pupils who would be eligible for free school meals attended his schools.

At Eton College in Berkshire, 261 of the 1,300 pupils receive some form of financial support, while just 82 get a 100-per-cent bursary.

NOW OFQUAL WANTS TO DITCH COMPUTER SCIENCE GCSE TEST

The exams regulator Ofqual is proposing that a 20-hour non-examined assessment in computer science should no longer count towards pupils' overall GCSE grades, after "widespread rule breaches" in which tasks from the test were posted online.

Last month, *Schools Week* revealed that the exam board Edexcel had replaced the NEA component of its computer science GCSE after it admitted an error in its security settings meant pupils may have seen the content of the test in advance.

Ofqual says it is "no longer possible" for exam boards to ensure that grades awarded next summer would fairly reflect the ability of students.

Current year 10s and 11s will still sit the test, but it won't be formally marked, and the result won't count towards their final grades. Instead, they will receive feedback on the test from teachers, to help them prepare for exams.

The consultation will run until noon on December 22, with a decision due January 8.

NEWS

Ofsted to talk 'management' not 'hero heads'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted will "publicly acknowledge" the work of entire school management teams, and address its tendency to pin successes and failures on headteachers alone, Amanda Spielman has said.

The chief inspector of schools told the Ark Schools Teach 2017 conference in Birmingham on Saturday that she was "all too aware" of the tendency to overlook the roles of whole management teams and "attribute everything to a leader".

She wants the work of other senior and middle leaders, such as deputy heads, heads of department and school business managers, to get more recognition.

The proposed changes will not affect the inspection process, which already looks at the management of schools as well as leadership. Instead, Spielman wants to change the way Ofsted talks about schools in broader terms through its communications with schools and the wider public.

"I think I can see that, while Ofsted's inspection process has always looked at management and not just at leadership, our public pronouncements probably haven't," said Spielman. "But I'm changing that, and making sure we publicly acknowledge whole management teams, not just leaders."

This would mean recognising excellent management policies, but also "pointing out when we see some irresponsible ones as well". Schools are transformed "when teams work together and make good use of everyone's time".



Amanda Spielman



For example, behaviour policies, when set centrally, can "reduce pressure on teachers" and allow for more time in the classroom.

"That's about management, it's not

something about a single leader," she said.

The work of management teams is often overlooked because of an undue focus on schools' overall Ofsted grading, rather than

the four sub-categories used by inspectors, of which leadership and management is one.

She highlighted examples of schools which were rated 'requires improvement' overall, but which had 'good' leadership and management, and said she wants this sort of thing recognised.

Her organisation had "probably been too focused" on overall ratings, she admitted, especially in its public reporting and communications. This tendency to overlook schools' leadership and management judgments could be a barrier to keeping good leaders in the system.

Ofsted recognises that leaders of the toughest schools face the greatest challenges, and nothing should deter "the best leaders" from working in schools in the most deprived areas.

But she pushed back against the idea that those schools should receive special treatment.

"Some people would like us simply to lower the expectations of those schools in overall judgments. That's just not something that I can countenance," she insisted.

"At best, it would mean that our judgments didn't reflect the quality of education that young people are actually receiving, and at its worst, it would legitimise setting lower expectations for disadvantaged children simply by reason of their being disadvantaged, and I can't imagine anybody wants that.

"I really want to do as much as we can and to make it clear that no head or manager or teacher should suffer as a result of working in a challenging school."

All-academy system not on way 'any time soon'



Christine Quinn

Multi-academy trusts are "not going to be the only answer" to collaboration between schools "any time soon, if ever", a regional schools commissioner has admitted.

Christine Quinn, who oversees all the academies and chains operating in the west Midlands, said that although she sees multi-academy trusts as the "best" option for encouraging schools to connect and work together, collaboration across "all structures" must be promoted.

Her comments, made in the same week that the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter announced that standalone academies would get the opportunity to join trusts as "associate members", are a further indication of the government's acceptance that some schools will remain under local authority oversight.

Speaking on a panel discussing "education through collaboration" at the Ark teacher conference, Quinn recalled her own experience as a new teacher in 1978. She discussed how she and colleagues were "left to it" once they entered the classroom, often feeling "lonely" and lacking the support of others.

"My worry is that there are still teachers in schools feeling like that," she said. "They may not be NQTs, they may be quite experienced teachers, who are still not feeling that joy of teaching because they're not able to share it with others and seek the support that they need.

"So I do the job I do because I actually believe that the multi-academy trust system is the way we do begin to connect. I accept that we work in a system where multi-academy trusts are not going to be the only answer any time soon, if ever. I think it's the best answer, but I absolutely am committed to making sure we collaborate across all our structures."

Measures to force all schools to become academies were abandoned by the government last year, but ministers have always said that full academisation remains their endgame.

However, comments like Quinn's suggest there is an acceptance, certainly within the senior civil service, that that goal of all schools becoming academies is unlikely to be reached in the near future, if at all.



SPIELMAN: HEADS MUST STOP SPINNING UP FEAR

The schools community has a "collective responsibility" to tackle the "culture of fear" that surrounds inspections, the chief inspector has said, as she attacked headteachers who "manufacture tension" between Ofsted and schools.

Amanda Spielman told the Ark Teach 2017 conference that the anxiety felt by teachers and school leaders about Ofsted was an "enormous challenge", and called for a joint effort to bust myths about the inspection system.

Ofsted has for many years sought to challenge negative assumptions about its approach to inspecting schools. Many teachers believe the inspectorate is too data-focused, its judgments based only on a snapshot of a school's work, while school leaders have reported rising stress and anxiety caused by inspections.

Spielman admitted the "culture of fear" had "built up over the years", with much of it based on "perception rather than reality".

She said there was a "wide responsibility across the system" to "take down" the anxiety and fear about Ofsted inspections, and blamed headteacher bloggers for contributing to the problem.

"I read a lot of blogs as well as newspapers, and there are actually quite a few heads in the system who write blogs that spin up levels of anxiety, so it's not just the various parts of government, central and local government, there's also a responsibility in the whole education system to not manufacture tension that shouldn't be there," she said.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Three thoughts from an exceptionally busy week

It's been a week with lots of revolving parts: Ofsted consultations, lots of data releases, Early Excellence pulling out of baseline. There's lots to think about!

But three things got me thinking most of all, and I wanted to share them with you.

Exams in a social media age

Visiting AQA this week to interview Toby Salt caused a pause for thought. One of the first times I spoke with the board's press team was over the "drunken rat" biology GCSE question a few years ago. Hysterical students, mad at the difficulty of the paper, had posted on social media in a huff. Our cartoon of the event – showing drunken rats ambling around AQA's office – hangs on their wall as a reminder. During the intensive scrutiny that followed, this particular paper was not found to have caused any problems.

Social media is a serious problem for the exam system. This week, Ofqual said it might cancel coursework grades for the computer science GCSE because pupils (and teachers, probably) keep chatting about the assessment online. If Michael Gove hadn't killed controlled assessments in 2013, it appears the internet would have done it anyway.

An education select committee meeting this week also hauled the headmaster of Eton in for questioning,

after it was alleged one of his teachers, who set the economics pre-U exam (similar to A-levels), tipped his pupils off to its contents. Simon Henderson, the Eton head, said that eight teachers at the school set 10 exam papers of which seven are taken by their pupils, which is quite the concentration of power. But is it right that teachers who set papers also teach them?

One way around both of the above problems is using more online randomised testing, in which children are given slightly different tests using a variety of items written by a variety of teachers. It's the approach used in the multiple-choice American SATs exams and although it sounds as if it could be really unfair, the maths behind it means the results can be more reliable than the system we currently use. This is largely because there's less room for error when marking multiple-choice and because randomising more questions means you can weed out dud ones better.

As Toby points out, however, we don't yet know all the quirks that happen if you move to an online system. An open mind is going to be very useful.

Is Ofsted the new NHS?

A second thing that caught my eye this week was data by Teacher Tapp, an app that I've been involved in running with Dr Becky Allen as an experiment.

It now has over 1,300 teachers using it daily. The concept is simple: each day, at 3.30pm, you are pinged three questions which take about 10 seconds to answer. If you'd like to download it, you'll find it free in the app store and it's very quick.

This week, Teacher Tapp users were asked if they believed Ofsted was "reliable" and "trusted". Just 16 per cent of users agreed. But when asked if they thought their own school's Ofsted grading was reliable, 57 per cent agreed! This reminds of the old NHS data, in which people would constantly say that overall their opinion was that service quality was low, but their personal experiences were always brilliant. For some reason they felt their experience of the NHS was "exceptional".

There are a few possible explanations. As one maths whizz pointed out, if you've only a 57 per cent chance of agreeing with your grade, and you get inspected every few years then your chances of getting a dud grade start building up quite rapidly, and just one can undermine your faith in the institution, even if your current grade seems about right.

The data also revealed that similar numbers of people felt their school was either over- or under-graded, demonstrating that "reliability" isn't just a case of avoiding bad

judgements but also of not overinflating.

It's therefore no surprise that Amanda Spielman has hinted she is looking again at the policy of allowing schools given an 'outstanding' grade in the distant past to go uninspected forever.

And finally...

I was really pleased this week to hear the story of the Five Islands School on the Isles of Scilly finding itself an academy sponsor. Having visited a different island community, the Channel Islands recently, I've become fascinated with the way that island communities operate their schools. After all, you may think it's tough to get teachers when you're in a rural or coastal location. But imagine if the only way to get to your school was by a £100 helicopter. Getting supply for a sick cover must be a nightmare!

We wish the school well as it joins with Mounts Bay Secondary Academy in Cornwall, and kudos to them for taking on the challenge.



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About The David Ross Education Trust

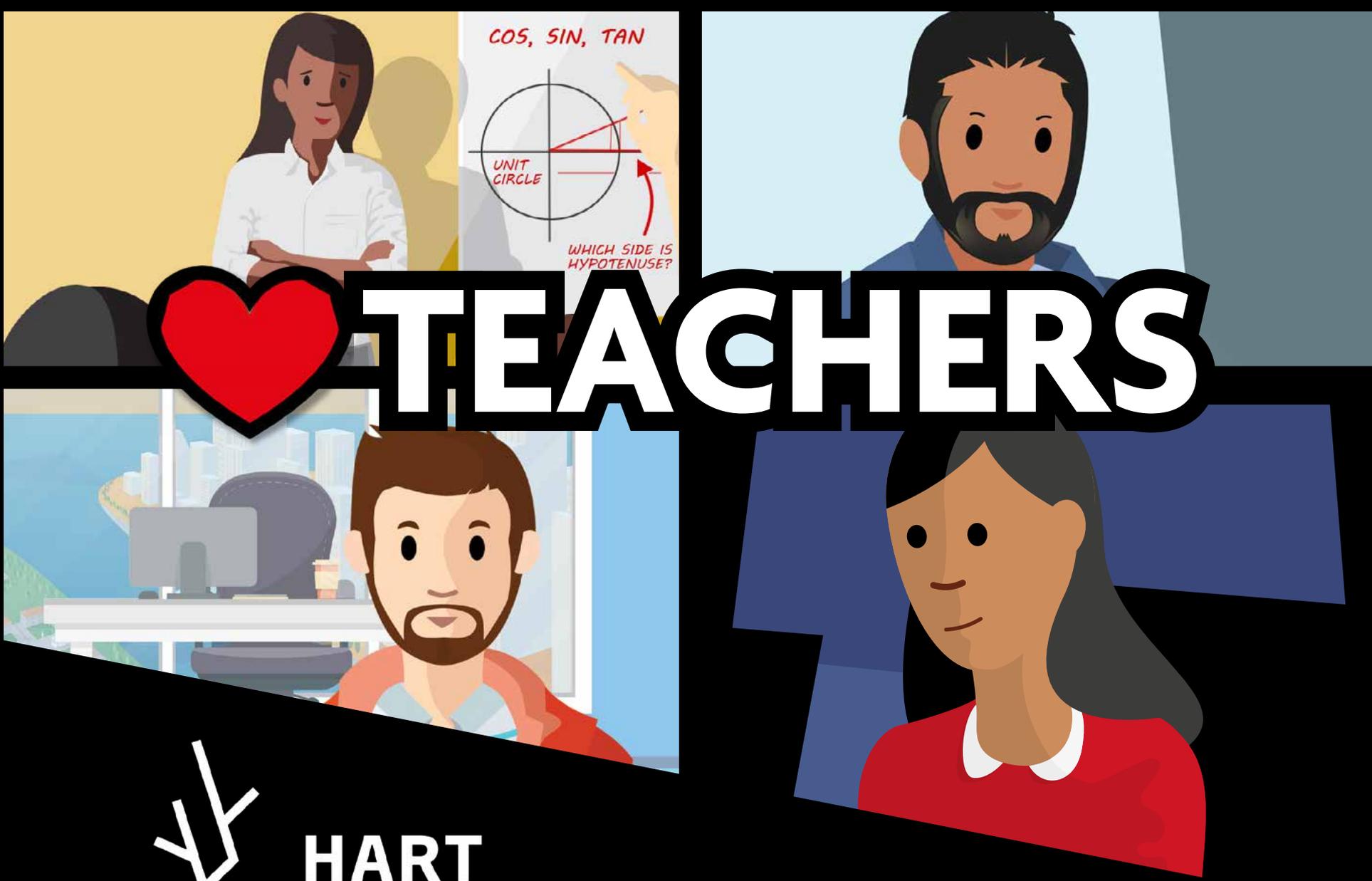
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READERS' REPLY

REPLY OF THE WEEK
RECEIVES A SCHOOLS
WEEK MUG!



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Digi-team to solve workload woes

Tony Parkin, London

Lest we forget. Let's flash back to the end of the last century: an incoming government with "education, education, education" as its mantra, a stream of big-name technology companies in and out of Number 10, a project with "a crack team of digital specialists" drawn from the best companies set up to reduce workload in schools. The type of teams that had revolutionised banking and oil companies, the finest that business process re-engineering had to offer, collaboration with leading headteachers agreed to help ensure success. Schools visited, systems examined... crack teams last seen being led, sobbing from school premises, aghast at the idiosyncrasies, autonomy and overwhelming bureaucracy prevalent in education. Look at the track record for government's digital projects led from the centre, and don't hold your breath.

£600 for every additional pupil in post-16 maths

Max Vlahakis

Yet another short-sighted and poor budget from a government devoid of ideas

Revealed: The free school 'advisors' worth £100 million



Joe Hallgarten // @joehallg

This is vital, fabulous investigative journalism.

To get the full picture, should we factor in civil servant time?



Rachel Garrick // @RC_Garrick

Meanwhile schools are having to make decisions on cutting teaching staff and hours.

How can we better prepare students for university?



Careers Near Here // @helping16to21s

Very interesting article – definitely worth a read by educators at all levels. Agree that the extended project qualification helps prep for higher education, but not offered by all schools (although can do cyberEPQ independently), and I would just question what percentage of unis/apprenticeships demand IB entry qualifications.

£600 for every additional pupil in post-16 maths

REPLY OF THE WEEK



Colin Richards, Cumbria

If the government really wants to raise the number of post-16 students studying maths it should pay £600 direct to students themselves rather than to schools.

Book review: Born to fail? Social mobility: A working-class view



Louise Doyle // @LouiseMesma

Minor example but I remember being ridiculed at seven years old by a teacher in Kent for being "working class" because I wrote "mam" instead of "mum".



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PROFILE

LAURA MCINERNEY
@MISS_McINERNEY

Toby Salt, chief executive AQA

Stag's Hill in Guildford is an address known to the many secondary teachers who have submitted GCSE coursework to AQA. Its name conjures the image of a royal park full of leaping deer and rolling foliage. In reality, it is located at the University of Surrey, in a building reminiscent of Ikea. The place screams "industrial park" much more than it does "safari" – and it doesn't help that it's raining.

But Toby Salt, the exam board's recently-appointed chief executive, has made his warehouse-sized office comfortable and warm. A latte is waiting, which he went and bought himself after texting to see what I wanted. And his rescue dalmatian Frankie pops out from under his desk.

"We have to ignore him to begin with," says Salt, wincing slightly at the thought.

His career is spectacularly wide-ranging, and he jokes that AQA was perfect for him because "it's the only thing in education I hadn't done!" He moved in the summer after spending five years as chief executive of Ormiston Academy. Before that, in order, he was: a teacher, a headteacher, a head of a federation, then at the DfE innovation unit as a civil servant, a senior leader at the National College of Teaching and finally a MAT CEO.

His career actually started with a short sojourn into fishmongery at 16 (he lasted two months). Largely though, he knew from early on he would become a teacher, inspired in large part by his dad.

Born in the slums of Leeds, Salt's father was immediately orphaned after his mother died in childbirth and his own father abandoned him. Abused terribly by the woman who subsequently cared for him, Salt's dad was eventually reunited with his long-lost father, who had returned to England after working on an Icelandic listening post at which he had met and married a woman, Alla, who insisted he find his son.

"After three or four years of stable education in a local village school [my dad] went to join the army as a boy soldier and they realised quickly that he wasn't stupid and he had leadership skills," he recalls.

"They taught my father to read and write, and the value of education, and he quickly did well. He became a senior officer and then was sent to the Sorbonne to learn French, Romanian and Russian and... became a spy!"

During Salt's own early childhood, his father was away "doing military things" but once he and his three siblings (including twin sister Joanna) appeared, his mother insisted he stop.

"So he went and looked for a second career and became a teacher. He was a very good teacher. He taught French. I remember telling him I want to be a teacher and he said 'oh dear', probably like a lot of teachers do to their children – that's one of the biggest problems we have with recruitment!"

Although Salt was never taught by his father he attended the school where he taught, Woodbridge School in Suffolk, which was then a grant-maintained grammar.

At the end of each day, he and his four siblings would be sat on the stairs like the Von Trapps, and were asked by their father what they had learned at school that day.

"And if you gave a flippant answer, he'd go 'no Toby, what did you learn at school today' which was quite profound and I remember opening my O-level exam papers and he was there with me, opening them, and I could tell it was important to him. He taught me education is the biggest gift because it's a social equaliser."

During his A-levels, Salt volunteered for a charity that

took children with special needs on camping holidays and discovered an affinity for more challenging children. In his first teaching job he was given extra cash to work in "the unit" – again, with the more challenging children.

Where did his skills come from? He stops, surprised at the question.

"I think I learned from people, probably. I just... I liked the challenge. And I wasn't particularly good in those early days. I remember my first lesson in the unit. I was in a Portakabin with 16 children. I looked about 12, and they gave me hell, absolute hell. I suppose I don't like to give in to a challenge at any job," he muses.

"I could have gone an easy route but I didn't want to give in. I mean, why foster? It's so hard! Why do I have a huge rescue dog?" he asks, as Frankie sticks his nose back out. "Why don't I have a little puppy?"

"I think there's something about the more disadvantaged, more special needs children, where if you get it right it makes a huge difference."

At 38, when he took his first headship at St Anthony's in Chichester, his youthful looks still haunted him. Over the summer, before his first term began, he sat in the school's office checking mountains of paperwork left by his predecessor, only to have the police turn up and demand to know what he was doing.

"I said I was the new headteacher and he said, 'yes, very funny', because I looked so young. I said 'I really am the new head' and he wouldn't believe me. I had to take him down the drive to show the newly painted sign and my driving licence!"

He talks at length about the opportunities at the school: it needed new buildings, there was greater recognition of specific learning difficulties, and it had an autism specialist unit, which in 1999 was very forward-thinking. It is only afterwards, however, when looking up Ofsted reports, that I realise it is a special school. Salt only refers to it as a community school.

Away from the day job, he and his wife ran a residential home for "children in difficulty" and fostered children, while also bringing Daisy, Isaac and Mary into the world. Daisy calls during our conversation, as she's walking to work.

"She's a young doctor with a very stressful job so she usually phones on her way into work or on the way home," her dad says, supportively.

With hindsight, both as a headteacher and from his work in government policy, he believes there are two critical lessons for any leader. First, remember that everything you say is taken seriously, even if you mean it flippantly. And two, explain everything as clearly as you can.

"I've often known why something is right or important but I've not taken the time to explain it. And 99 per cent of the time when you do then people can see why," he explains.



One of the biggest challenges he faced in his career was taking over the lead role at Ormiston Academy Trust in 2012. At the time the trust had 17 schools spread across the country, making it one of the larger early adopters, alongside AET and CfBT, many of which struggled and subsequently gave away schools. To Salt's credit, Ormiston never relinquished any schools. Instead, he developed a regional strategy and worked on getting the schools to support one another.

What's the magic ingredient?

"There's no magic formula," he insists. He focused on creating a central charter which everyone could sign up to that made expectations clear. Key non-negotiables included agreeing to support any other struggling school in the trust family, or any neighbouring school. Likewise, the schools had to remain part of their local community as well as the Ormiston brand.

"You have to set a core vision; we did that to start via the charter, and you make the teachers the agents of change. You can do that through conferences, through meetings, through visits, through policies, through incentives or conditions of funding," he says. "You can change behaviour at all those levels, but it's also just about being very clear on leadership."

"And there's an element of headhunting and taking a punt on people because people once took a punt on me. It's the right thing to do."

At AQA the challenges are different and, he admits, further away from the direct work with young people which fuels him. But it's also exciting. His office is located

opposite AQA's research department, where world specialists in assessment statistics are figuring out complex issues on exam reliability and validity.

Given all the resource and expertise, why are people so wary of exam results?

"I don't think people know about the level of integrity involved. It's complicated and I'm not sure how we can explain it better. The science and maths behind it is really complicated. And at one stage I think I thought the same and it's only changed as I've learned more. So there's something about us explaining things better," he says.

"But we have 25,000 really good markers. They do their very best. And we have 11 million scripts. And we do our very best. Is it perfect? No. One mistake is one too many. But the reality is that we have a very fine system at a time of significant reform and I think most professionals understand that actually."

He also wonders how exams can keep pace with

technological change, and research is underway to see if online exams might be worth using in future – although he's wary of changing too quickly.

"One of the problems of using digital technology is that we don't really know how it works," he says. "On paper exams we have 100 years of experience. With digital, we don't know if, for instance, children think differently on computers. Will it disadvantage them if they can't plan out as we expect or will it advantage them because they can cut and paste and move things around?"

As we near the end of the interview, there's one last obvious question. For the past three years Schools Week has run a pay league for academy chief executives, and Salt topped the pay-rise table for two years. Unlike other bosses, who have been bullish about pay, he has always appeared uncomfortable about it. Is there anything he'd like to say now he's out of that role?

He shifts uneasily in his chair. "My mum always

taught me that it's vulgar and rude to talk about money. I don't like to talk about it. I don't think anyone does. It's always more complicated than it looks," he says.

"I have never set my pay. I've never asked for a pay rise. I've never been involved in discussing my performance. I have had big, scary, highly accountable jobs," he reveals his bitten nails, "and I think we have got to get a sense of perspective. I understand the scrutiny, and focus, and the need for transparency but I don't like talking about money. Plus it goes to the people I love, in a very large extended family, that now also includes a very large rescue dog!"

Frankie, no longer ignored, decides to chew his bed as a congratulatory fanfare.

As we chat later about Charles Dickens, Salt's favourite author, he points out that his father – whose life started as it did – would be so proud if he could see that his son is now the head of an exam board "doing a job that really matters... that's social mobility in action".

TOBY SALT

"YOU HAVE TO SET A CORE VISION; WE DID THAT TO START VIA THE CHARTER, AND YOU MAKE THE TEACHERS THE AGENTS OF CHANGE"

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

What animal would you be?

A lion, because I'm never happier than when I've got my pride around me and I do like sitting in the sun.

What is your favourite book?

Little Dorrit. I did it for O-level and it was the first Charles Dickens I read in detail. The timeless element of his social commentary is just fantastic. That one is particularly good.

If you could do another A-level in a subject you haven't done before, what would you pick?

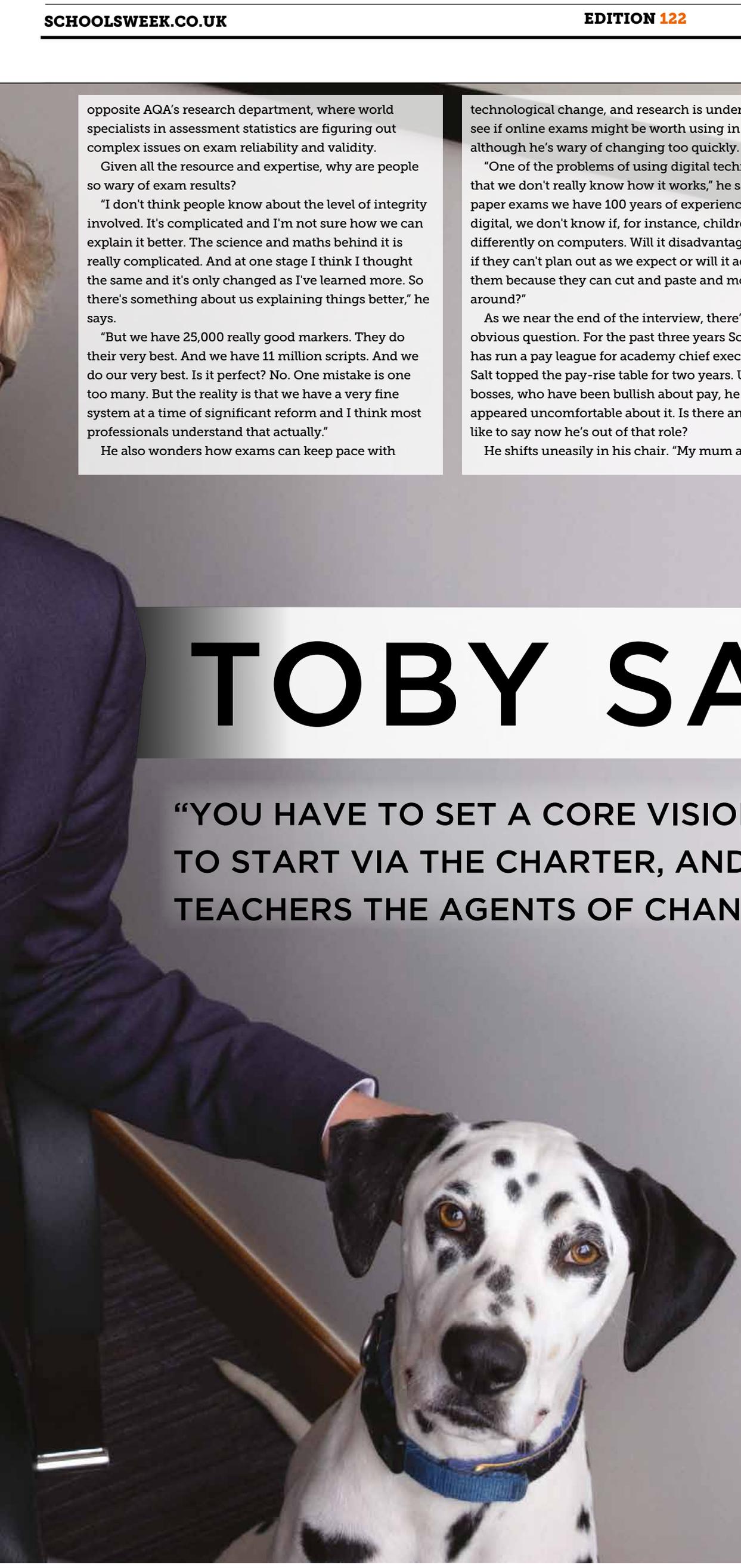
Law; it's one area I don't know a lot about and I've always been wholly dependent on legal counsel and I'd quite like to be able to quote some acts and case law back at them.

If you were stood on a building with a huge crowd below and you could shout out one sentence to them all, what would it be?

Be kind to each other.

What do you eat for breakfast?

Normally, toast with marmite. After my run. My twin sister and I like marmite, my brothers don't. It's our defining feature!



OPINION



ZUBEDA LIMBADA

Director, ConnectFutures

Ofsted is dead wrong on its headscarf policy

Schools should be safe spaces – allowing outside authority figures to probe young girls' choice of religious expression is precisely the wrong approach to take, argues Zubeda Limbada

Last week, Amanda Spielman recommended that Ofsted inspectors in England should question Muslim primary school girls who wear a headscarf. She wants to tackle situations in which the hijab could be “interpreted as the sexualisation” of very young girls, particularly since the Islamic religious obligation does not tend to begin until the age of puberty.

While some campaigners, including a small number of Muslim women, are supportive of the measure, the news has been received with concern from those wary of Ofsted's intentions amidst a wider climate of Islamophobia and discrimination. This weekend over 1,000 signatories (and growing) from a range of backgrounds and institutions have shared an open letter to Ofsted, asking for a retraction.

“**The intention may be laudable but the approach is misplaced**”

I would argue that while the intention may be laudable, and in the age of #MeToo it no doubt is, the approach is misplaced.

First, there's the question of what evidence exists for the claim that wearing the hijab might be “sexualising” young girls. The rationale presumably stems from the Islamic requirement for modesty, which would be inappropriate at a young age unless the male gaze is indeed focused on very young girls.

I am not aware of any research into why young Muslim girls may wear the headscarf (or why boys may wear religious garments such as a turban or kippah) at primary school. A common reason, no doubt, is imitating the older members of one's community. Most people would agree, however, that if young girls were being

forced to wear the hijab then that is wrong. If it is an indication of sexualisation then that too is wrong.

But in those (rarer) cases, would Ofsted inspectors really be the right people to deal with it? Putting aside the question of how exactly to approach a five-year-old girl to quiz her about why she is wearing the headscarf and what criteria would be set for a satisfactory answer, this is very different from being questioned by peers and teachers in a familiar school environment.

Requiring young girls to open up to complete strangers is counter-productive and entirely inappropriate. In the best-case scenario, it may undermine children's confidence in their choices and cultural heritage. In the worst, where the pupil truly is a cause for concern, it could undermine the attempts of trusted adults, such as teachers or school safeguarding officers, to find out what is going on.

Schools should be safe spaces where all young people go to learn, broaden their minds and learn the tools of argument through reason and discussion. If one objective of education is to ensure young girls are in a position to learn the value of critical questioning – thus allowing them to make informed choices as young women – then asking outside figures to probe what they are wearing is the wrong approach.

Finally, is it really for Ofsted to take a position on this when the DfE hasn't banned religious garments? In theory, schools are equal and integrated spaces, but this creates distinctions between acceptable and non-acceptable religious garments, and singles out young girls. Not only is this very un-British, it is not the right way to go about building trust with those still concerned about the effects on Muslim communities from the Birmingham Trojan Horse case and the government's extremism agenda.

It is important to be consistent when applying uniform policies, and no one ethnic, religious or gender segment should feel more targeted than any other.

The Ofsted mandate politicises a piece of cloth worn predominantly by females from minority groups and discourages Muslim parental participation by creating a cloud of suspicion. Trust and positive relationships ought to be built collaboratively in way that makes educational standards and safeguarding part of a shared goal between school, parents and Ofsted.



ALEXIS CAMBLE

Schools outreach officer, Changing Faces

Ways you can support young people with a disfigurement

Schools have trained teachers to combat bullying based on race, gender and creed. We must do the same with disfigurement, says Alexis Camble

Most teachers have at some point spent an evening worrying about whether they handled a situation in the classroom quite as well as they could. As a former teacher myself, I know that anxiety around how to deal with a difficult situation can be overwhelming.

When it comes to supporting pupils with a disfigurement, one of the most common questions I get when I go into schools and talk to teachers is “what if I say the wrong thing?” This fear can stop teachers from starting those conversations, or make them nervous about responding to a question about a pupil's appearance. Many teachers also want to know how to tackle bullying incidents in which a pupil has been targeted because of how they look.

While we have made progress in supporting teachers to recognise and address bullying based on personal characteristics such as race, religion or sexual orientation, there is still much more work to be done to raise awareness of disfigurement. We need to build teachers' and heads' confidence so that they can support pupils who look “different”.

Around one in every 124 pupils in the UK's under-16 school population have a mark, scar or condition that affects the appearance of their face or body, which includes skin conditions such as eczema and acne. A recent survey by Changing Faces found that half of all school children with a disfigurement have experienced discrimination because of it, and the vast majority report that their school was unsuccessful in stopping the bullying.

One of the young people we supported recently was Marcus, who was born with an unusual facial cleft, and was bullied because of his appearance; he was called names such as “scar-face”, “two-face” and “Joker”. Marcus recalls overhearing his teacher referring to him as “Marcus with the face” to a teaching assistant, as there were two boys called Marcus in the class. This illustrates one of the concerns that many of the young people we support express, that their visible difference is often seen by others as their sole defining characteristic.

So what can teachers and heads do?

- Use matter-of-fact, non-judgemental

language when discussing disfigurement. For example, use “severely burned” and “burns survivor” instead of “horribly burned” or “burns victim”.

- Respond appropriately to questions from other pupils using “explain-reassure-distract”. For example: “Michaela's got scars from a fire but she's fine now. Maybe you'd like to go and introduce yourself as you're both new here.”
- Deal with any appearance-related bullying incidents in the same way as any other bullying incident.
- Be aware of, and challenge, negative stereotypes of disfigurement, especially in media portrayals of people with a visible difference.

“**Use matter-of-fact, non-judgemental language when discussing disfigurement**”

Having a good understanding of the pupil's individual needs, both in terms of their learning and social interactions is also really important. Pupils may need support to develop their social skills and to respond confidently to questions or comments about their appearance from other pupils. Age-appropriate advice guides can be found on the Changing Faces website, including advice on supporting successful transitions to secondary school, which is another common concern.

There are also some great resources out there to help get those classroom discussions started. The novel *Wonder* by RJ Palacio, which has a young boy with a craniofacial condition as its main character, has been used successfully by primary and secondary schools across the country to raise awareness of visible difference and appearance-related bullying.

We hope the release of a film of the book this month may also help prompt discussions in class and raise awareness. Young people are under such pressure to look a certain way; we want to move towards a society that values difference so that everyone can live confident and happy lives.

In this internet age, former headteacher Mark Lehain shares his advice on how to maintain good communication with parents and avoid incidents that might shame your school

Interaction with students and their families is one of the best parts of working in schools.

A highlight for me was a parents evening in 2006 where, as I reorganised my classroom at the end, I discovered some offensive graffiti that had been conspicuously tippexed onto the other side of the desk, facing parents all night while I earnestly discussed their kids' progress and grades forecast.

Fortunately, only a classroom full of people saw this insightful piece of feedback, which read "Lehain is a c**t". Today, the stakes are much higher, with a panoply of social media available for pupils or families to spread stories about their schools and teachers, with huge potential audiences.

Schools face these situations with one hand tied behind their backs. Due to the need to maintain professional confidences, it isn't always possible to publicly rebut what is alleged. Also, as these things happen relatively rarely, we've often not much experience of dealing with them, and have to feel our way through the maelstrom.

Disgruntled parents and pupils face risks too: gossip can spread further than they intended, leaving them with a damaged relationship with the school, a tattered reputation, and, in extreme cases, the risk of legal action. Unlike a playground natter, it's



MARK LEHAIN

Director, Parents and Teachers for Excellence

How to avoid school social media scandals

much harder to deny what has been done: a quick screenshot of a link lets a school record exactly who said what and when.

Let's be realistic, though: we're all flawed people who make mistakes, and we can't stop these sorts of things from happening completely. Engaging communities through social media can be such a tremendous boon for a school. The question is how to minimise online grumbling where possible, and to deal with it calmly and quickly when it does happen.

First, make your expectations about how concerns should be dealt with clear to everyone – pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community.

Explain that behaviour online is treated in the same way as it is in the real world. We

banged on about this in our home-school agreement, behaviour policy, open evenings, assemblies, you name it. As a result, no-one could claim they didn't know what would happen when we called them out. It also meant that it was normally our parents or pupils who would flag up derogatory stuff to us, as they knew it wasn't on.

Second, provide as many ways as possible for people to share concerns directly with the school, and make sure the team are aware of what to do when they receive one. It means niggles are less likely to grow into shouty rants on Facebook. Even if they're misplaced they're an incredible source of feedback, as they give an insight to people's perceptions of things. At my old school, every parent had my mobile number, on the understanding

that it was only ever to be used in the event of an emergency or if they were genuinely getting nowhere with a situation and needed to come to me. In five years this was never abused and avoided a lot of heartache.

“**Let's be realistic, though: we're all flawed people who make mistakes**”

Finally, when something ignites online, deal with it the way you'd like them to have done so – quickly, calmly and with respect. Record evidence of what's occurred, and then pick up the phone to the person concerned to talk it through or invite them in. As one parent said to me when I left the school this summer, dealing with these things well was "a wonderful way of showing that the school cared about me, even if it didn't always agree with me".

Of course, it won't always be possible to solve things amicably or constructively, but remember this: school shaming doesn't go down well with most people. The silent majority will respect you for handling your end with dignity and the school's reputation will probably end up enhanced. Especially if you remember to check desks for graffiti before you start your parents evening.

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

Simply teaching

@Heathfield_CC

"On a blustery autumnal morning, I reached my desk in my classroom, switched on my computer, opened my first PowerPoint presentation for the first lesson of the day and pressed the 'on' button on my projector. Nothing happened."

When this happened to her, Emma Smith decided to "turn this unexpected turn of events into an opportunity to hone my teaching" and explains what happens next and what she learned as a result. She found her students had to listen more closely, she was more selective in the way she used the whiteboard and was more inclined to go "off-piste".

She says she "perversely enjoyed the challenge that day of having to adapt lessons quickly, to simplify activities while making instructions explicit. But out of those stripped back lessons came important realisations about the current state of my classroom practices which has helped me to refocus. I'm not advocating a mass anti-projector movement (mine is back in working order and I'm very glad that it is), but I would challenge any teacher who feels that their teaching has become stale to do a day without one."

Everything now: resisting the urge to implement too much too soon

@joeybagstock

"There are so many good ideas in education at the moment", Phil Stock notes, that "it is hard to keep up". He wonders whether as a "profession we still tend to rush towards

implementing each and every new idea that comes along without engaging in any real process of critical evaluation. We've eschewed some of the guff from the past, but I am not sure we have learnt how to handle research evidence in a disciplined way, and as a consequence we risk creating future brain gyms."

He argues for the merits of "stepping back and thinking things through", but also, importantly, develops "the discipline to resist acting immediately". He concludes on a cautious note, offering a series of questions we should be asking before we adopt new approaches.

The 3D curriculum that promotes remembering

@ClareSealy

Clare Sealy reaches back to her first years in teaching, halcyon days when schools and teachers were free to teach what they wanted and her mother's colleague, a primary teacher, didn't teach maths because she didn't like it. Primary schools, she explains, taught everything for a term linked to a topic: a term on weather meant rain gauges, stories about storms and Noah's Ark, but no history.

She wants to maintain the inventiveness and the links between subjects and year groups this allowed, but within a curriculum that builds students' knowledge in a structured, systematic way. She demonstrates how the curriculum has "vertical", "horizontal" and "diagonal" links: students come to understand tyrants through study of the pharaoh, King John and Mrs Trunchbull; key ideas and concepts recur and echo across years and subjects, promoting understanding and retention.

She is "not saying building such a curriculum is easy", but her model and explanation demonstrate how it can be done, and its value.

Teacher time nad energy are finite resources

Roxanna Elden

In a short, powerful post, Roxanna Elden notes that "two of the most finite resources in education are teacher time and energy" and offers two ways to examine a problem: the amount of time we want to spend, or the quality we want to achieve.

"Both options are fine," she writes. "Just be honest with yourself about which one you're choosing."

BOOK REVIEW

The learning rainforest

By Tom Sherrington

Published by: John Catt Educational

Reviewed by: Becky Donaldson,
director of maths



The Learning Rainforest is an extended metaphor used to illustrate Sherrington's ideas about what great learning experiences should look like.

His love of teaching, stated from the outset, comes over clearly in the way that he describes the examples collected from various classrooms over his career.

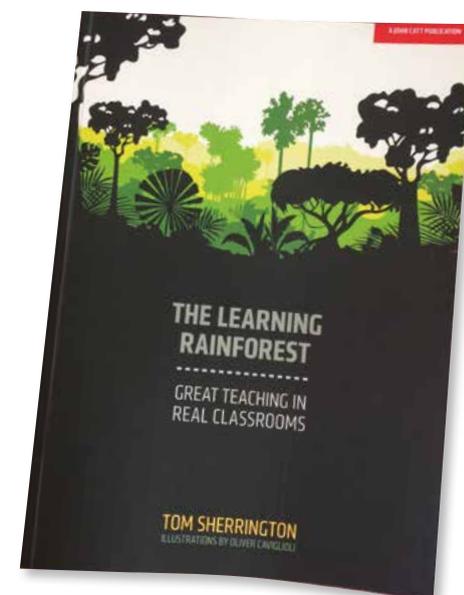
Conscious of the progressive/traditional debate, he places himself firmly between the two camps. His is "third-way territory": his "learning tree" places routines and conditions at the roots, with knowledge as the trunk, but there is space in his vision for a wide variety of learning experiences within the leaf canopy.

The book is divided into two parts: in the first, Sherrington details his own teaching background and some of the research and thinking that has contributed to the concept he has developed. In the second, he describes strategies that teachers might wish to explore when working to establish their own "rainforest" classrooms or schools.

Part one covers a vast range of areas, topics such as curriculum, assessment and research. I welcomed how honest he was about his own teaching experience – it allowed me to consider my own teaching context alongside his, and so have a better sense of how well his experiences might replicate in my own setting. It was also helpful to have such an extensive list of references in the chapter on research, as this section felt somewhat like a whistle-stop tour through various big debates and research topics.

Part two is separated into three sections: "establishing the conditions" at the root of the learning tree, "building the knowledge structure" represented by its trunk, and "exploring the possibilities" within the canopy of the rainforest. It is designed for teachers to be able to dip in and out, with examples from various contexts and subjects. Sherrington's examples are strongest when he is drawing upon his own subject knowledge in science, but all subjects are well represented.

There are many sensible ideas in the 20 strategies he identifies in each section –

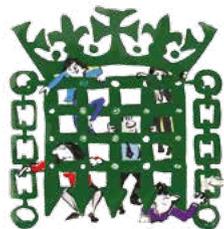


but it does at times feel as though 20 was a rather arbitrary target, and some strategies are less sound than others. Some of Sherrington's strategies could also do with a little more fleshing out to be truly useful to less experienced teachers; he advocates "teaching to the top" without detailing what this might look like in practice for a newer teacher faced with a less confident class.

Teachers who have already read books such as Lemov's *Teach like a champion* may also find that there is a significant overlap in the suggested strategies. Having said that, there were many ideas I had not come across before and am eager to try – I particularly liked the idea of "build a timeline", where subjects contribute to an agreed cross-curricular chronology.

While there were some ideas in the book that I was really excited by, *The learning rainforest* didn't hugely challenge my existing views. I suspect that part of the reason I enjoyed it was because much of it resonated with how I already feel about education – I certainly recognised some of my own ideals in the philosophy Sherrington espouses.

The different chapters would have more or less relevance to readers depending on their job role or stage in their career – much like his learners, teachers need to establish their roots and branches before they can explore the possibilities. Some of the philosophical debate about curriculum design, for example, would be of more relevance to those who have influence over their own school's curriculum than those who are just starting out in the classroom. This is therefore a book to keep on the shelf and return to as your school and career experience develops.



Week in Westminster

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

MONDAY:

Preparations for the Department for Education's planned move to swanky new offices are now most definitely underway..

Construction company Willmott Dixon is now working on the project and is on track to be finished by next autumn.

The department's move from Sanctuary Buildings to the Old Admiralty Building in Whitehall, overlooking Buckingham Palace, was first announced in 2014.

The work was supposed to be finished this summer, and the DfE expected to save £19 million a year by moving over 1,000 staff out of the current rented building.

£66 million was set aside to reconfigure the new workplace and the tender process asked bidders to include a "full refurbishment of the gym" and "creation of space for the government art collection".

But in February, Schools Week reported that the process was postponed, after the department could not give a specific timeframe for the move.

BAM Construct UK was the original

contractor appointed in June 2015 to undertake the £50 million renovation of the Old Admiralty Building.

BAM's work was planned to start in November 2015, but 15 months later, the company said it no longer had anything to do with the project anymore.

The building has been empty since the departure of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office left the building last year. Like the DfE's current offices, it too is probably full of spiders.

TUESDAY:

The issue of whether regional schools commissioners should be in charge of teacher supply in their areas seems to have divided the politicians and policy wonks this week.

The Social Mobility Commission, chaired by former Labour minister Alan Milburn, says commissioners should be given responsibility for "monitoring and managing" the supply of teachers in their areas.

Neil Carmichael, the former chair of the

education select committee, thinks it's an "excellent idea", but policy experts aren't so sure.

The news was greeted by two ex-government education advisers, Jonathan Simons and Tom Richmond, and John Blake, the head of education at Policy Exchange, with a resounding "you what?!"

Good to know that politics and policy are as joined up as ever!

THURSDAY:

As a gift to education journalists everywhere, the government and parliament between them pumped out about 150,000 different announcements and statistical datasets at the same time.

Included in the release was the government's response to the parliamentary education committee's probe into multi-academy trusts last year, which found that the DfE had pushed some of the early trusts to grow too quickly.

But according to the government, this is all the trusts' fault.

In its response, the DfE claimed that where

early trusts had difficulties, size on its own was "not the determining factor".

Instead, those trusts "failed to put in place the robust structures, systems, and process that were necessary to be successful given their scale and stage of growth".

This echoes comments from the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter, who said last year that the idea that they grew too quickly was a "myth".

The response also reveals the government has plans to add MAT performance data in its new school and college performance tables.

The committee has also published Nick Gibb's response to its grammar schools "evidence check" last year.

In his 986-word response, the schools minister only briefly mentions selective schools and does not commit the government to any position on their future.

Still, at least this response has actually been published, unlike the government's response to the grammar schools consultation, which is now almost a year late.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Michael Antram

Age 48

Occupation Headteacher

Location Poole

Subscriber since June 2017

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



FLY ON THE WALL

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

On my laptop, every weekend.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most?

News: succinct and informed analysis that keeps me in touch.

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

Anything that enables schools to fully prepare children for adult life, but that isn't compromised by the need to satisfy performance tables.

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

I'm pleased that school funding remains under close scrutiny.

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

I talk to my senior leadership team about various issues that were raised!

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

I think I would panic about who was running the school... and then remember about distributed leadership.

Favourite memory of your school years?

My beloved English teacher. Children know when a teacher cares,

and learning works best when it is set within caring and trusting relationships. She had a firmness, but a twinkle in her eye, and you knew that she was there, willing you to become what she knew you could be. I'd love to go back in time and spend more time in her company.

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

Counselling or mentoring young people. I can't think of a better way to spend my time.

Favourite book on education?

Trivium by Martin Robinson. Such an informed presentation of the evolution of thinking about the purposes of education, and how we have drifted as a nation. He made me think about the kind of education I'd want for my own children.

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

Summaries of DfE announcements, and a "heads-up" of what's coming.

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

Any senior education minister who has never worked in a school or worked with young people. I'd love to discern the priorities driving their policy making.

School Bulletin *with Sam King*

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



When horsing around at school is a good thing **FEATURED**

A school in London is using equine therapy to help students with ADHD, autism, behavioural issues and those lacking in confidence to build up their social skills.

Whitefield School in north London began taking year 7, 8 and 9 students to spend time with horses at a specialist stable around two years ago, and found it had a calming effect on pupils who struggled socially.

During the sessions, run by a nearby charity, students work with horses of a nervous disposition, and adjust their own behaviour to make them feel at ease.

"There's no riding or any of that involved, it's all about the relationship between the child and the horse," Martin Goodwin, the school's pastoral support officer, explained. "The idea is to get children to understand, through the horses' behaviour, a reflection of their own behaviour."

The sessions, run by Strength and Learning Through Horses, take place for one hour a week over a six-week period, and over 30 pupils at the school have now had the chance to take part.

"A lot of work has been done on this in the States. We thought it would be something that would be worth an initial punt on with our students, just to see how it worked," said Goodwin. "We don't have enough money to have groups running all year long, but we can fund about three



You can lead a horse to water...



Getting to know the horses



The students acquaint themselves

groups across the year."

The school has observed noticeable differences in participating students, particularly those with ADHD, who became calmer when dealing with horses, as well as quieter students, who were more vocal when asked to put forward their opinions and ideas.

"There's a little bit of cost to their curriculum time, but with intervention at this stage we will hopefully reap benefits later on. It's therapy work, so it's a slow incremental thing. It's just another little bit of the puzzle piece in the jigsaw which will help move that child forward," Goodwin added.



Still from the film 'Wonder'

DEALING SENSITIVELY WITH DISFIGUREMENT

A charity supporting people with facial disfigurements has released a set of resources to help teachers broach the topic in the classroom.

These free, downloadable resources have been released by Changing Faces to coincide with the new film *Wonder*, which tells the story of a boy born with a craniofacial condition as he starts school.

The 'Wonder Toolkit' will include activities for children and young people about appearance, how to engage with people who look different and what to do if they see someone being bullied, and follows the themes touched on in the film.

"Young people are under such pressure to look a certain way – so looking and feeling different in a society where beauty is valued very highly can be extremely difficult," said Becky Hewitt, CEO of Changing Faces. "If every school in the country used the Wonder resources, then we'd be an important step closer to a society that doesn't judge people based on their appearance."

Teachers can download the resources at: www.changingfaces.org.uk



Paul Sturgess with reception pupils

Photo: Swindon Advertiser

Anti-bullying message reaches new heights

Britain's tallest man, has visited a Wiltshire primary school to teach pupils how to embrace their differences as part of anti-bullying week.

Paul Sturgess, the 7'7" former Harlem Globetrotters star, originally from Loughborough, talked to students at Ashton Keynes Primary School about how he carved an international basketball career by embracing his unique height.

This year's anti-bullying week theme was 'All Different, All Equal', and the school's headteacher Samantha Saville thought Sturgess would be the perfect guest.

"Paul said it's about turning a difference into a positive for him," she explained.

"I was really keen for the children to see that if people celebrated individuality or uniqueness, and if people could make the best of their talents and gifts that they're given, it would help remove bullying."

As part of his day-long visit, 29-year-old Sturgess, who is also the tallest basketball player in the world, hosted basketball workshops with each class, and even posed for a photo with the smallest pupil in the school, Harry.

"Our children will never forget that day – there were so many core key messages for them about celebrating differences, making the most of their lives and just sheer inspiration for sport and PE," Saville added.

The appliance of science



Experiments are already underway



Opening the new lab

A Nottingham primary school has received a brand new science lab worth £2,500 from the Ogden Trust.

The new Phiz Lab was funded entirely by the charity, and will allow students at Springbank Primary School to perform science experiments in what was an unused room.

Fitted out with lab coats, goggles, test tubes and resources to carry out practical science experiments, the lab will also be used by eight other local schools who are members of the Ogden Trust's Nottingham City Primary Partnership.

The Ogden Trust exists to promote physics

teaching and learning, and has helped around 20 schools across England set up their own science labs through the grants, which pay for a redesign of an existing room, as well as equipment.

"The Phiz Lab has transformed science at the school," said Emma Leonard, a teacher at the school. "It has given children the chance to experiment in a scientific way, which has led to children using their inquiry-based skills to improve their own learning."

The labs are currently offered to schools in Ogden Trust Primary Partnerships. To find out more, visit: www.ogdentrust.com

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



JOSEPHINE VALENTINE

Executive headteacher,
Danes Educational Trust

START DATE: January 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Headteacher, St Clement Danes School

INTERESTING FACT: Josephine has a PhD in oral histopathology.



TOBY SUTHERLAND

Headteacher,
St Clement Danes School

START DATE: January 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Deputy headteacher, St Clement Danes School

INTERESTING FACT: Toby was the first person to ride a snake-board in the UK, having spent his Christmas demonstrating them on the top floor of Hamleys.



MARK KILMURRAY

Headteacher, Armfield Academy (opens September 2018)

START DATE: September 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Associate principal, Montgomery High School

INTERESTING FACT: Mark's proudest moment was being part of the team at Millfield Science and Performing Arts College that received the Pupil Premium award for Lancashire and then a national award from Nick Clegg the following year.



SARAH EDWARDS

Headteacher, Gordon Children's Academy

START DATE: January 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Deputy headteacher, The Malling School

INTERESTING FACT: Sarah has run five marathons and eight half marathons, raising a total of £4,000 and running over 5,620 miles since 2009.



STEPHEN THOMPSON

Headteacher, Croxley Danes School

START DATE: September 2017

PREVIOUS JOB: Deputy Headteacher, St Clement Danes School

INTERESTING FACT: Stephen is colour-blind, which has created some challenges when determining the internal colour schemes for his new school's permanent buildings.

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

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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

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



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

Difficulty:
EASY

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM



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