

**GREENING: WHAT  
A DIFFERENCE  
A GRADE MAKES**

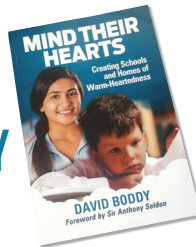
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SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

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# THE FACES OF INNOVATION

Teach First Award Winners 2017: Pages 13-18



## Ofsted turns to Facebook

➤ Social media will help to predict decline in school performance

➤ Who will sort the facts from 'gossip' and 'falsehoods', say critics

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
@BILLYCAMDEN

### Investigates

Ofsted is considering tracking pupils' and parents' social media pages to help decide which schools need an intervention.

But experts say that data from platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is "unreliable" and not a good basis for working towards the evidence-based practice that the inspectorate has committed to.

The education watchdog included the novel idea in its "innovation and regulation plan" published this week. It says Ofsted is engaging with the Department for Education in a "data science project" to "explore the possibility of using near-realtime data and information from social media and other sources to predict and prevent decline in school performance".

Ofsted would not provide any further details as talks are at an early stage, but did confirm it would only use information that was

**Exclusive**

**DAVID CARTER**  
No school is  
'untouchable'  
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NEWS

Ofsted may use social media to monitor school performance

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
**@BILLYCAMDEN**

**CONTINUED  
FROM FRONT**

publicly available.

Mark Orchison, managing director of education technology specialist firm 9ine Consulting, told *Schools Week* the watchdog could make use of "Google data studio", a portal that can track an individual organisation or school's traffic and popularity on social media.

Ofsted could configure the platform to create a timeline for a specific school showing "who is talking about the school on Facebook and Twitter, to see who is mentioning it and see what a community's realtime perception is before they go to the school".

Joshua Perry, director of Assembly, a schools data platform created by Ark, added it would also be possible for Ofsted to "explore issues such as parental engagement by examining the volume and nature of parent-school engagements" online.

But he added the dataset reliability from social media was not clear.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, also



Mark Orchison

queried the proposal.

"Social media is a place where people go to express their frustrations, not provide measured constructive feedback.

"It is not audited or verified and is widely known to contain unsubstantiated gossip or downright falsehood.

"For a government agency to use it as data would call into question its commitment to evidence-based practice."

Ofsted no longer routinely inspects "outstanding" schools unless a performance risk is flagged up. It has, however, been unclear about the metrics it uses to determine if a grade 1 school needs to be revisited.

The inspectorate has also moved to shorter inspections for "good" schools, with no more than two inspectors on site for one day.

Perry said that a number of data organisations, including his, already collected "realtime" data from schools, such as attendance and grades, providing they gave consent.

"I could imagine Ofsted



Joshua Perry

might consider collecting daily data on attendance and exclusions, for example, since these measures are recorded by schools in a timely and standardised way."

Orchison said some multi-academy trusts already used technology such as Power BI, which assessed management data through a common data dashboard.

"Using a platform like this you can go school by school and measure their financial performance, performance per pupil, Progress 8, how much they are spending on catering and HR and so on."

He said that Ofsted could make their own data dashboard for all or some schools that they want to keep an eye on to monitor performance and identify the strongest and weakest schools.

"That sort of data could give Ofsted a huge amount of realtime evidence into what is happening at each school that historically they would have to go into to make interpretations of themselves."

GCSE grade 4 becomes 'standard' pass

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

The government has abandoned its plan to make grade 5 the new "good" GCSE pass grade, despite having once claimed it would be unjustifiable to place the bar any lower.

In 2015, the government announced the new grade – due to be awarded for the first time this summer – would be the new "good pass" level and that it would be pegged to average performance in high-performing countries such as Finland and Canada.

Writing for *Schools Week* at the time, schools minister Nick Gibb warned it would "not be possible to justify placing our bar lower than those of our international competitors".

However, the education secretary Justine Greening (pictured) announced on Tuesday that a grade 4 would now be considered "a standard pass", while grade 5 would be called a "strong pass".

The proportion of pupils passing at both grades or above will be reported in two separate measures in published performance tables.

The grade 5 "strong pass" will be the benchmark in the government's new EBacc accountability measure.

In a letter to education committee chair Neil Carmichael, Greening said she was "determined to continue to raise standards" and would include the new "strong pass" as an accountability measure for schools.

However, she also said she wanted to reassure schools that a grade 4 was



a "credible achievement" and one that "should be valued as a passport to future study and employment".

The move has been welcomed by the Association of School and College Leaders, whose interim general secretary Malcolm Trobe said the use of "good pass" had "devalued the achievement of a grade 4".

Trobe said he was pleased with the new descriptions and said the Department for Education's decision to report on both grades in performance tables was "helpful".

However, Tom Sherrington, a blogger and former headteacher, said that although certainty about the value of a grade 4

was a "step in the right direction", the government had snatched defeat "out of the jaws of victory" with its new strong and standard passes.

"I was partly appalled by the language, but, much much more than that, it's the intent behind it," wrote Sherrington, who added that the government "seems determined that we have to separate everyone into camps; to keep people in their place".

The change comes almost two years after *Schools Week* revealed the designation of a grade 5 as a "good pass" would mean that about one in five pupils who previously passed their GCSEs would no longer do so. Those pupils will now receive a "standard pass".

Greening said she expected that where colleges and employers currently asked for a C grade or above, they would now ask for a grade 4 – that is, the "standard pass".

Grade 5 will only be awarded to the top third of pupils achieving the current C grade. Pupils who achieve a middle or low C will receive a grade 4.

The government is also expected to scrap compulsory resits of English and maths GCSEs for post-16 pupils.

Since August 2015, all 16 to 18-year-old students with a GCSE grade D were forced to study and resit the GCSE as part of the condition of funding their continued education.

Multiple sources have told *Schools Week*'s sister paper *FE Week* the policy will be scrapped – pupils instead will be able to study for a functional skills qualification, as was the case before 2015.

## NEWS

## GREENING CONSULTS ON SCRAPPING KS1 SATS TESTS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government will consult on a proposal to scrap key stage 1 SATs and replace them with a new baseline test at reception in order to create a more "stable and proportionate" primary assessment system.

Justine Greening, the education secretary, first announced she would seek views on changes to primary testing last year.

The new consultation is expected to seek views on the scrapping of tests at the end of key stage 1 in favour of a newly designed baseline test to be taken in the reception year.

The consultation also asks for views on moving to a 'best fit' model for teacher assessments of writing at key stage 2, as opposed to a 'secure fit' model, following criticism from teachers.

The proposals follow a chaotic year for primary assessment in 2016, when the introduction of new, harder tests prompted reports of increased stress among pupils, protests and boycotts by parents and pleas from school leaders for an end to the system.

The chaos – which included the high-profile scrapping of the controversial spelling, punctuation and grammar test after it was leaked online – prompted a special investigation by MPs, and Greening subsequently announced a series of changes to primary assessment in October, including the now-launched consultation.



The changes follow months of talks between education unions and Greening, who is said to have taken on board concerns raised in NAHT's independent review of the tests.

Russell Hobby, the NAHT's general secretary, who was involved in the talks, welcomed the proposals, but says there is "more to be accomplished".

"The possibility of ending key stage 1 SATs is good news," he said. "This creates the time and space in a pupil's primary years for teachers to focus on teaching rather than on high stakes assessment.

"It will properly reward early intervention and it will reduce workload. Overall, minimising the number of high stakes tests is the right way to go."

The consultation will propose replacing the key stage 1 SATs with

a new test, taken by pupils in reception, and establish a baseline for progress measures.

This comes after the government abandoned existing baseline tests as a school performance measure.

It is not yet known how the new baseline tests would be designed, however a source close to the government said an online test would be preferred and could be designed in collaboration with preferred providers of the previous baseline tests.

Hobby also welcomed the idea of moving from teachers being required to look for a 'secure fit' when marking writing.

Under the current system, pupils can only reach a certain standard if meeting ever descriptor linked to the standard, but organisations including the National Association of Head Teachers have argued that teachers need more flexibility when assessing the work of their pupils.

"Best fit is a better way to assess pupil's writing," said Hobby. Under this system, teachers can decide if a pupil has met a standard even if they do not meet 100 per cent of requirements.



Russell Hobby

## ECDL EXAM DROPPED FROM LEAGUE TABLES A YEAR EARLY

The "fast-track" ECDL qualification will be dropped from league tables next year, 12 months earlier than announced.

Last month the BCS level 2 ECDL certificate in IT application skills was dropped from league tables from 2019 over gaming concerns.

However, updated guidance published this week shows the qualification will now not be included in 2018 league tables.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "The government shouldn't be changing the rules part way through the game.

"Schools will have set-up a two-year programme of qualifications – and it's important to know the qualifications that count towards the league tables don't change."

Earlier investigations by Schools Week revealed that some schools were said to be teaching the qualification in just three days. They also showed the number of pupils passing the ECDL soared almost 350 per cent in a year.

Lucy Ireland, deputy chief executive of BCS, said the decision would "predominantly affect year 10 pupils who have already started studying the course", leaving schools with "difficult decisions".

One option would be to shift pupils from ECDL to an alternative qualification included in league tables. The organisation has commissioned work to "look at overlap with these qualifications" which it would make available to schools.

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# CLAMPDOWN ON OVER-POWERFUL ACADEMY BOSSES

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Ministers have been urged to clamp down on over-powerful academy bosses after an investigation found one chief executive sacked the trust chair who suspended him.

Ian Cleland, chief executive and founding member of the Academies Transformation Trust (ATT), was put on temporary leave by chair Stephen Tilsley last year over finance concerns.

Forecasts showed the trust will have £26,000 reserves next year, compared with more than £5 million in 2014.

But Cleland used his powers as a founding member of ATT to sack Tilsley and appoint four new directors, one of whom was appointed chair. Those trustees reinstated Cleland.

The case was flagged to the Education Funding Agency (EFA), which investigated and found the trust had "significant failings and weaknesses" in governance that breached funding rules – highlighting Cleland's position as chief executive, trustee and member.

The investigation, published on Friday, also said the chief executive had not acted "within the spirit of the academies financial handbook", nor in a manner that would "command broad public support".

Cleland said ATT was already reviewing its working practices to meet "significant" changes to the government's guidance on best practice in recent years. He has since

resigned as a trust member.

**Report 'exposes wider problem'**

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association, said the ATT report showed that the Department for Education (DfE) had now accepted that good practice meant "separation between the layers of governance" – the members, trustees and employees.

She said if you were a member and a trustee "you can't hold yourself to account. We are concerned the power is in a small number of hands. It's been such an obvious risk for years."

Schools Week has learned that other early converter academies that went on to form multi-academy trusts, are the most likely to have similar over-powerful chief executives, although many now seem to have ditched their controversial set-ups.

Schools Week did find an example of governance similar to ATT. Annual accounts for the Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust, which runs three free schools in Suffolk, show Graham Watson is listed as accounting officer, trustee and member.

But the trust said its structure was fully compliant as Watson was not employed by the trust, rather its sponsor the Seckford Foundation. A spokesperson added that "significant oversight and challenge is provided by the board of governors of the Seckford Foundation, in addition to that of the trust board".

**Time for DfE action**

Mike Cameron, a school governor and former teacher, said the DfE "cannot evade some responsibility for this mess". He called on the government to take "pre-emptive action" or face similar stories "dropping out into the public domain on a regular basis over the coming years".

The government publishes a governance "model" that it encourages trusts to follow. This is updated regularly, but trusts have their own set-up signed-off when they are founded. It's then down to trusts to ensure that powers are separated, but there is no formal checking process.

Cameron suggested that all trusts must include a statement in their annual accounts, signed by auditors, showing they adhered to latest governance guidance. Trusts found to be non-compliant should be given three months to sort it out or face a funding termination.

However Micon Metcalfe, business director at Dunraven School, south London, said the EFA had struggled to intervene swiftly when it learned trusts were refusing to comply with requirements.

She pointed to the Durand Academy Trust, which has defied government orders to sever ties with its highly paid former executive headteacher, Sir Greg Martin.

The trust has said that it will fight in court a funding

termination notice issued in October.

**Governance conflicts further tightened**

The government told ATT it was not "best practice" to have employees who were members. But earlier this month national schools commissioner Sir David Carter went one step further. He tweeted there could be a "blurring of the edges of accountability" where chief executives were trustees – a structure employed by many trusts.

Knights said chief executives believed they would "lose their influence" if they stood down as a trustee. "If they are doing their job properly, they won't. The point of boards is that they don't just take the point of view of the chief executive."

Michael Pain, director of Forum Education, a company that provides advice to trusts, said one way to avoid such problems would be for the chief executive to retain a trustee position, but with no voting rights.

The DfE did not provide further comment.



Ian Cleland

## There's no such thing as a toxic school, says Carter

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

The national schools commissioner has dismissed claims of "untouchable" schools too toxic for new sponsors to take over – insisting support is being delivered quicker than ever before.

In an exclusive interview with *Schools Week*, Sir David Carter (pictured) said that struggling schools were not left in limbo because of entrenched difficulties – such as crumbling buildings or large debts – putting off new sponsors.

As reported in *Schools Week* over the past months, several trusts have walked away over viability concerns.

But Carter said many of these were because of capacity issues within a trust, rather than a school's problems.

"There is no such thing as an untouchable school. There are some schools where it takes longer to get a good sponsor supporting it, but you [commissioners] get there in the end."

In a report published last month, MPs urged commissioners to give greater support to schools "deemed unattractive to sponsors".

Carter said takeovers were normally held up by the state of buildings, budget deficits or costly private finance



initiative contracts.

But he said commissioners were now moving quicker to facilitate immediate school-to-school support, which then gave time to deal with the underlying concern. That included parachuting in national leaders of education, or allowing a potential sponsor to support the school on a short-term deal.

That appears to be the case at Hanson School in Bradford after the Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) pulled out of sponsoring the school. It's the second trust to walk away since the school sought a sponsor after being put in special measures in 2011.

Hanson will now be given support through an 18-month contract with the Gorse Academies Trust, which could then take it over in August next year.

Carter said priority for this year's regional academy growth fund would go

to trusts committed to taking on tricky schools so support could be inserted "quicker than before".

But new support isn't always delivered. University Academy Keighley (UAK), a second school abandoned by WCAT, will now remain with its original sponsor, the University of Bradford, after waiting for a new sponsor since December 2015.

UAK's proposed rebrokering was driven by an ambition to join a multi-academy trust, rather than government intervention. But the school was put in special measures while it was waiting for WCAT to take it over.

The university has now said it has "reassessed" its relationship with the school, claiming the DfE was "very happy" with the partnership.

When asked if closure could be the solution for more schools with a "perfect storm" of problems, Carter said: "We will look at that case by case. The DfE would be mindful of ensuring that any decision taken meets expectations of value for money – something I'm always conscious of."

Carter said there were now 1,110 multi-academy trusts, many of whom had a "really strong appetite" to grow.

He also said the financial climate meant that some small trusts would have to grow "whether they want to or not".



## NEWS

## PRIMARY RECRUITMENT TUMBLES AS CONTROLS BITE

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

The government's "disastrous" changes to how universities and other teacher training providers offer places led to a 7 per cent drop last year in the number of applicants starting their courses.

Recruitment controls prevented many initial teacher training (ITT) providers offering places – even though fewer graduates applied last year than the year before – critics have said.

Primary school courses were particularly badly hit, according to UCAS data on university, School Direct and SCITT courses.

There was a 12 per cent drop in applicants to primary courses last year compared with 2015. The number accepting places also fell, this time by 16 per cent.

Teacher training experts attributed the drop to universities rushing through the recruitment process last year and being unable to offer more places when people pulled out.

In previous years, each provider had a set number of training places that they could fill. But the government decided that for 2016 only a national target for recruitment in each subject would be given and courses could not recruit further once that overall target was hit.

Pam Tatlow, chief executive at Million Plus, an advocate group for universities, said the result of the limits was providers handing out places as "quickly as possible", with less-committed candidates possibly making it through.



The tighter recruitment controls meant universities had "little option" but to speed through the process in case courses suddenly closed.

Some applicants had even been called to interview, or were part-way through being processed, when university courses were announced as full. When those offered places later pulled out, universities were initially not allowed to make offers to other applicants.

The controls "disastrously" affected recruitment as they relied on an idea of "a quasi-market, which was never going to work", she said.

Before the controls were introduced for the 2016-17 cohort, 8 per cent more applicants for 2015 accepted their places than in 2014 – indicating an upward trend before the government scrapped the allocation system.

Overall last year, 1,880 fewer applicants accepted their places on teacher training courses, a 7 per cent drop on the previous year. There was also an overall 5.5 per cent decrease in people applying to courses.

Applicants to primary training were down more than 2,000, from 12,560 in 2015 to 10,470 last year – below the

government's target.

University courses for primary training were hit worst in all training routes, going from 6,500 placed applicants for 2015 to 4,890 last year – a 24 per cent decrease. Graduates on School Direct courses also dropped, though less steeply.

Meanwhile, applicants accepting places on school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) courses increased by 20.

The figure comes as a shock, since primary courses have recruited fairly well in the past.

Subjects that have traditionally recruited well also took a hit. English, which includes literature and language, dipped 8 per cent and history was down 9.5 per cent.

The government has now returned to an allocation system across all providers for the 2017-18 cohort.

But James Noble-Rogers, executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, said the recruitment controls had "worsened" a critical teacher recruitment situation. Many of the problems remained, including a lack of information about the national picture of allocations.

"The government has only themselves to blame for these worrying figures, but the picture ahead is not much better."

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said secondary postgraduate recruitment was at the highest level since 2011, and more than £1.3 billion was being invested over the parliament in shortage subjects such as physics and maths.

Provisional figures also showed that 500 more postgraduate trainee teachers have been recruited for 2016-17 than last year.

## IN brief

## FUNDING AGENCIES MERGE AS LAUENER STEPS DOWN

The Education Funding and Skills Funding Agencies are merging to become the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Lauener is stepping down as boss of both.

The Education Funding Agency manages funding for all school provision up to the age of 19, while the Skills Funding Agency finances training for older learners.

The merger is aimed at cutting duplication.

But the timing of the move, just before huge administrative changes with the April apprenticeship levy launch, has caused consternation.

In October, the National Audit Office released a report condemning the agency for slow intervention in poorly performing academies. Then last month the Public Accounts Committee accused it of lacking a strategy to support schools to reduce their expenditure.

Peter Lauener has headed the EFA since its creation in 2013, and took on the SFA role in 2014. His role will be advertised in due course.

## DFE CHANGES ITS MIND ON VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A planned change in technical qualifications that would have affected schools will not now go ahead.

Last year, the Sainsbury review advocated qualifications be split into two camps – academic A-levels or technical T-levels, with the latter requiring three months of work placements, making them difficult for schools to offer.

Vocational qualifications offered in schools, such as BTECs and Cambridge Technicals, were widely tipped as heading for the chop.

But sister paper FE Week this week revealed that stakeholders have been privately briefed of a u-turn and the general vocational qualifications will remain on offer and continue counting in the official performance tables.

When asked about the decision, a Department for Education spokesperson told *FE Week* its "current position" is to retain the qualifications in official performance tables, but the review is "ongoing".

## COST PRESSURES PUT PUPILS 'AT RISK', SAYS COMMITTEE

The government has a "collective delusion" about the scope for further cuts in schools, the Public Accounts Committee has said in its report on school funding.

The report, released this week, says that pupils' futures are "at risk" and recommends the Department for Education lays out the precise metrics it will track to ensure school quality is not decreasing in the face of cost pressures.

Officials predict schools will have to find savings of £3 billion by 2020 to deal with pay rises and higher national insurance and pension contributions.

"Grand plans drawn up in Whitehall are dangerous if they are implemented without regard to real-world consequences," said the chair of the committee, Meg Hillier.

A spokesperson for the government said it would study the recommendations and respond "in due course".

## Budget cuts prompt sports charges at Kent secondary

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A Kent headteacher has told parents they will need to pay for their child to be part of the school's sports team due to budget cuts.

Lee Hunter, head at Sir Roger Manwood's School in Sandwich (pictured), wrote to parents to say the school had lost almost £700 funding per pupil over the past five years and could not continue "as we have in the past".

He said that on top of measures already taken to ease the effects of the cuts, parents would "have to pay" if their child was in a sports squad. An enrichment programme would also be removed and A-level class sizes increased.

He urged parents to write to the chancellor, the education secretary, and their local MP to combat rhetoric that "the core education budget is the highest it has ever been".

The letter comes as Meg Hillier, chair of the public accounts committee, said on Wednesday the government was under a "collective delusion" about the further savings schools were expected to make.

A report from the committee, also released this week, found the Department for Education (DfE) had no way of



identifying if the quality of education was suffering because of efficiency savings.

In his letter, written to clarify "circulating rumours" about cuts to PE, Hunter laid out the reality of funding in his school since 2011.

About £440,000 earmarked for it as a specialist language, and maths and computing college had been removed; £273,000 special educational needs support had gone; and £1,000 lost for each sixth-former.

Annual staff pay rises, increases in national insurance and pension contributions, the introduction of the national living wage and apprenticeship levy, and new qualifications that needed new resources, had also increased costs, said the letter.

Parents would now need to pay for children to be in sports squads, as was the case "for after-school clubs in most

primary schools", Hunter said.

Government funding was insufficient for the sport teams to be "comparable to independent schools without parents paying for it".

A spokesperson for Craig Mackinlay, Conservative MP for South Thanet, where the school is based, told *Schools Week* the MP had met with Hunter and was "fully aware of the school's point of view".

No one was asking the government to "u-turn" on its funding policy for schools, but "we need to consider why the school has felt the need to do this".

A spokesperson for the DfE said the core schools budget had been protected since 2010, and school funding was at its "highest level on record" at more than £40 billion in 2016-17.

Under the planned national funding formula, Sir Roger Manwood's would gain by 1 per cent, the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for the Youth Sport Trust, a charity that campaigns for school sport and PE, said it was increasingly clear many schools were cutting back PE, especially at secondary school.

The government's obesity plan says at least half an hour of exercise should take place in schools each day, she said.

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## NEWS

## FREE SCHOOL NEVER HAD MY SUPPORT, SAYS COUNCILLOR

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

Exclusive

The closing Bolton Wanderers Free School (BWFS) is facing more scrutiny after promises in its original application appear not to have been fulfilled and "supporters" distance themselves from the school.

*Schools Week* revealed last week that BWFS, which is due to close in August because of financial concerns, paid almost £600,000 in rent and utility bills in just two years to its football club sponsor, Bolton Wanderers.

The school was established by the Eddie Davies Education Trust, a charity named after the club's former owner, Eddie Davies.

A councillor in Bolton has now threatened legal action after finding the school said he "committed to supporting" its application to open, which was sent to and approved by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2013.

John Walsh was one of several "supporters" included in the school's proposal. The TV presenter Vernon Kay and the boxer Amir Khan were also listed, while seven other names have been redacted on documents seen by *Schools Week*.

When approached to comment on the demise of the school, Walsh said he never supported the school and was "horrified" to find his name was involved in the application process.

"I did not subscribe to the proposal. If they have included my name I will be taking that up with my lawyers," he said.

The application also said that the University of Bolton, one of several sponsors of the school since it opened in September 2014, would deliver continuing professional development for teachers at BWFS and offer "foundation degree modules" to selected pupils.

However, when *Schools Week* asked the university if it had kept the promises, a spokesperson would only say it had "offered assistance to the school since it became apparent that it was in difficulty". Zubair



Hanslot, the university's provost, was brought in as chair of governors following the school's "inadequate" Ofsted report last September.

But the spokesperson added: "Sadly, such was the situation at the school that we [University of Bolton] have been unable to rectify matters, hence its closure."

The university did not respond to repeated attempts to clarify if any support was given to the school before its difficulties, or if the offered training was delivered.

Micon Metcalfe, director of finance at Dunraven school in south London, also questioned the financial viability of BWFS's timetable. She said she was confused as to why the DfE ever approved such a proposal.

The 16-19 free school, which has capacity for 200 pupils but only reached 95 last year, promised a teaching day that ran from 7.30am to 5pm.

This was to be run 40 weeks of the year, alongside an optional extra six weeks of teaching via a "summer school".

Metcalfe said there was a "mismatch" between the projected pupil numbers and proposed timetable "against the actual reality of how the school operated".

"The school's model could only have worked if it recruited the student numbers projected and been able to gain good Ofsted ratings – and even then it would have required excellent financial planning and management."

She added the government's free school programme did "aim to encourage innovative bids" but this carried "risk".

Walsh said the school had been "very poorly run" and its pupil numbers were "never sufficiently high to make it a viable proposition".

In its initial application, BWFS also said that an ongoing £100 million regeneration

project at Bolton Arena and the football club's Macron stadium, where the school is accommodated, would save capital costs and keep annual maintenance costs at a "viable" level.

But as *Schools Week* revealed last week, the club charged the school £595,000 in rent and bills in two years – an "extortionate" sum, said Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers.

When asked about the discrepancies in the application, Toni Carr, BWFS principal, said the steering committee that established the school was directed by its former chair Phil Gartside, who died last year.

"As he is no longer around we are unable to provide you with specific answers to your questions. We can, however, state for the record the current governors and staff at BWFS were not involved in the free school application".

The DfE declined to comment.

## Keep lessons to 12 minutes, study finds

JESS STAUFENBERG  
@STAUFENBERGJ

Pupils who are taught in 12-minute lessons that are repeated 24 hours later remember material much better, new research suggests.

A trial of "spaced learning" showed pupils seemed to benefit from a short physics lesson, followed by a 10-minute break of another activity, then a short chemistry lesson, then another break, then a final, short, biology lesson.

When this session was repeated 24 hours later, pupils remember the material better than during a normal lesson – with teachers reporting especially good results for lower-ability pupils.

The research, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), involved a large randomised control trial of the "SMART Spaces" approach. Although results were

positive, it has not yet been tested for impact on GCSE attainment. The go-ahead has now been given for further research.

The EEF has also released other trial results this week. It found that Evidence for the Frontline, a "dating service" website where teachers ask researchers questions about education, was in high demand in schools.

First revealed two years ago in *Schools Week*, the project enabled teachers to email or phone researchers for information about pedagogy.

About 10 per cent of teachers across 32 schools posted a question over the year of the pilot. A further 60 per cent said they had also used it read responses, though a fifth said they could not see the benefit to pupils.

More classroom teachers used the service than senior leaders, despite more of the latter initially saying they were interested in posting questions.

But evaluators said Evidence for the Frontline had several "challenges". Response speeds from researchers were inconsistent, and there was a "lack of awareness" in schools. It would need further development before a bigger trial could take place.

A trial of IRIS Connect, a video technology platform where teachers watched colleagues, found it made staff more willing to talk about teaching as a result.

But evaluators found no detectable change in the likelihood that participants would "learn from their colleagues" – concluding a bigger trial was needed before that result could be proven.

The most successful appears to have been the spaced learning trial as it identified the kind of lesson layout that might benefit pupils best, said Stephen Gorard, professor in the school of education at Durham University.

Three types of "spaced learning" were given to pupils. In the first, pupils were given the same 12-minute lesson three times with a 10-minute break between each, during which they completed a distracting activity, such as drawing or juggling.

In the second, pupils learnt three 12-minute lessons of different subjects, back-to-back. They then had a 20-minute break. The whole lesson was repeated the next day.

But a third sequence worked best: with 12 minutes of one lesson, then a 10-minute break, 12 minutes of a different subject, followed by a break, and then a final 12-minute lesson on another subject. This was repeated 24 hours later.

"This provided some preliminary evidence that the most promising approach to spaced learning combines both 10-minute and 24-hour spaces," said evaluators, adding it was a small study and needed further trialling.



NEWS

THE BENNETT REVIEW: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEHAVIOUR

JOHN DICKENS  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

**Behaviour audits, more money for inclusion and lessons for headteachers – those are some of the conclusions of the two-year Bennett review into pupil behaviour.**

**Published last Friday, the review by Tom Bennett, a teacher and founder of ResearchEd, was commissioned by the government after he surveyed support available to aid trainee teachers with challenging pupils.**

**The report – *Creating A Culture: How School Leaders Can Optimise Behaviour* – says “evidence suggests” a “national problem” with pupils’ conduct.**

**Bennett outlines a series of recommendations, John Dickens rounds up the most important**

**1 Use behaviour audits to create national data map...**

The report calls for a new national standardised method for capturing data on school behaviour that “goes beyond the present formal recording methods”.

Bennett suggests the behaviour audit could take the form of an anonymous survey with quantitative and qualitative yardsticks. He explains this could be used to create an anonymised data map of school behaviour to compare schools over time and against each other.

Information recorded could include the types of misbehaviour, and how much lesson time is lost through dealing with it.

**2... that Ofsted could use during inspections**

Ofsted inspectors could use the audits to ensure they have “appropriate access to the view of the range of staff and pupils” at a school.

The proposals formed part of a wider recommendation for Ofsted to review its processes for getting views of staff and pupils – ensuring they target the “most vulnerable and at-need staff” such as trainees, supply teachers and catering staff.

**3 Encourage trusts to pool resources for special needs and alternative provision funding**

Bennett flagged up the need for “further discussion” on the way special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) is funded, in mainstream schools and specialist sites.

But he said schools in clusters, such as multi-academy trusts, could be incentivised to pool resources and share expertise.

Another incentive would be to make schools responsible for excluded pupils, and have control over AP funding. Bennett said this would ensure exclusions were only used where necessary (this proposal was included in the government’s



Tom Bennett

last white paper).

The report also says a follow-up study could investigate the best practice in APs and pupil referral units so heads have better guidance about how to support the most challenging pupils.

**4 Fund ‘internal inclusion units’ in schools**

The government needed to find the cash for internal inclusion units at schools with higher than average levels of challenging behaviour.

The units would offer “targeted early specialist intervention” with the primary aim of reintegrating pupils back into mainstream schools.

**5 Set up new optional training scheme for heads**

Bennett called for a revised certification process for all heads.

This would include a requirement to demonstrate an “appreciation of behaviour cultural levers and how to use them”.

He also said the government should set up an optional training scheme for school leaders to help them with a range of behavioural strategies and examples of best practice.

A pilot scheme could be trialled in areas of “identified need” (which could be extended include the government’s “opportunity areas”).

**The government’s response**

In a letter to Bennett, the education secretary said revised training standards for heads from this September would include aspects on behaviour.

Justine Greening also said that she was “ambitious” for plans to make schools responsible for commissioning provision for excluded pupils and to make them “accountable” for it.

The letter did not mention more money for inclusion units or give support to a national database of behaviour.

Experts, page 12



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NEWS

UNION LEADERS SPURN NEU'S MERGER MOVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Education unions are not queuing up to join the National Education Union, the new teacher union created by a merger of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).

None has any plans to join the union or wants to discuss the matter, *Schools Week* has learned.

The news is a blow to the new union's leaders who spoke during its launch of the need to expand its estimated 450,000-strong membership.

Kevin Courtney, the NUT's general secretary, said last week that the NEU would seek talks with other education unions about possible future mergers. However, leaders of the other organisations have all ruled out taking part.

The 320,000-member National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers sees itself in direct competition with the NUT – holding its conference at the same time and publicly disputing the NUT's claims of being the largest teacher union.

Leader Chris Keates has previously stated a preference for maintaining a variety of union voices and strongly ruled out entering any merger talks with the NEU.

Voice, which has about 19,500 members and a "no strike" rule, said it would never merge with another union that was not prepared to adopt its "core values".

But general secretary Deborah Lawson has pledged to continue working with other unions on joint campaigns "such as funding, workload and accountability".

England's two main leadership unions – the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) – also look set to stay outside the NEU.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of ASCL, says the 18,000-member union doesn't have any plans to consider a merger. Geoff Barton, who will take over from Trobe on April 18, previously told *Schools Week* the move was "definitely not on my agenda".

Trobe added: "We don't have any plans to consider a merger. Our association is very much geared towards representing senior leaders in schools and colleges and our members really value the distinctive voice and support that we are able to provide."

Russell Hobby, the NAHT's general secretary, will stand down later this year. It will be up to his successor and the union's 41,000-strong membership to decide on its future direction.

For the moment, however, Hobby said his organisation had "no plans to seek to join the NEU".

"NAHT is a strong voice for school leaders, and we will continue to speak up for our members and for the children they work with."

Studio school pupils use app to book lessons

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

An unconventional 14 to 19 school with an eight-hour day, no homework and a system that allows pupils to use their laptops to book extra lessons will open in Cheshire this September.

Christleton International Studio will open on the site of Queen's Park High School in Handbridge, near Chester, and is planning new systems to give pupils more say over their learning.

The school is part of the Christleton Learning Trust and will be sponsored by Christleton High School and supported by Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

All pupils will be given laptops, personal coaching and enrichment activities outside their timetabled curriculum hours, something that the school's principal Kate Ryan claims can be delivered within the confines of the school's standard revenue funding and a technology allowance given to new studio schools.

If successful, the already over-subscribed Christleton will buck a growing trend of failing and undersubscribed free schools.

*Schools Week* analysis shows that of the 32 studio schools for which 2016 data is available, only 10 have filled more than half their places, while 14 are less than a third full, even though many have been open for at

least three years. Fifteen of 36 have shut.

Ryan is aware of the "interesting situation" and is keen not to have her school labelled as "just a studio school".

"I like a lot of what studio schools have to offer, but our offer is as an individual school.

"We're not just a studio school, and they [pupils] are not coming because we're a studio school or because our sponsor is the Bank of America."

She believes her team's approach to pupil recruitment and their local circumstances has made it a success at this early stage.

"We have spent an hour and a half with every pupil. It's not a natural transition point, so often there's another reason why kids are moving and we have to make sure it's the right reason."

Ryan says that pupils in Cheshire start to think about moving schools earlier because many of its secondary schools finish at 16 rather than 18.

In September, 120 pupils will start at the school: 60 in year 10 studying GCSEs and 60 in year 12, taking the international baccalaureate diploma. Next year, the school hopes to have 280 pupils on roll, before reaching its 300 capacity in 2019.

A typical school day for year 10 pupils will begin with a team meeting at 8.30am, where they will plan their day using their laptops and a meeting app to book into optional sessions, a move inspired by a system at



Amsterdam's Montessori High School.

They can use these sessions to boost their academic studies – for example, with additional science lab time or time in the school's "Mac suite".

From 9am, pupils will study for three hours with no break. A typical morning includes a one-hour English lecture, followed by science lab time, and a history group before lunch.

A half-hour tutorial will follow lunch before more curriculum time or a self-scheduled lesson. Once a week, pupils will have half an hour with a coach who will work with them on their individual action plans, followed by 90 minutes of "enrichment electives" such as basketball or robotics.

Pupils will then have their evenings to themselves. "We aspire not to have any homework," Ryan says. "We believe they should be able to complete all their work during the school day."

New head of £2 billion free school land company

JOHN DICKENS @JOHNDICKENSSW

Lara Newman is the new chief executive of the Department for Education's £2 billion free school land company.

*Schools Week* revealed in July that the Department for Education (DfE) had finalised plans to set up LocatEd, an "arm's length" company that will be given a £2 billion war-chest to speed up the purchase and development of free school sites.

The company, classed as a non-departmental public body and wholly owned by the DfE, will become one of the largest purchasers of land in the country.

Newman, who was awarded an MBE last year for her services as a property adviser on the free schools programme, said LocatEd would work directly with landowners, agents and developers to "secure new free school sites whilst ensuring the best value for the taxpayer".

According to the New Schools Network's website, Newman has been interim managing director of the "shadow property company" since July 2015.

She was a director at Cleanslate, a development and property consulting company. Before that she was managing director of Navigant Consulting, working



on "complex capital investment projects for government education capital programmes", the government said.

The LocatEd role was advertised with a basic salary of £157,000, plus performance bonuses.

A fleet of other experts will join Newman in an attempt to manage the government's free school spending, after recent criticisms by the National Audit Office revealed four sites had cost more than £30 million each to acquire.

Land issues, particularly in London, are delaying the opening of scores of schools. Others have been scrapped.

Michael Strong will be the company's chairman. He has 15 years' experience as

chairman of property consultancy firm CBRE and is a non-executive director of NHS Property Services, a similar company set up by the NHS to handle its surplus land.

Peter Lauener, chief executive of the Education Funding Agency, said the company would "improve the experience for free school trusts". The main challenge for many was finding the right site.

Other board members include Phil Ellis, previously client portfolio director at Aviva Investors, Jayne Maclellan, group director of Property FirstGroup, Julian Rudd-Jones, managing director of Kajima Partnerships and Kajima Properties, and Caroline Tolhurst, a chartered surveyor and compliance officer.



## NEWS

## Walsall pupil coins it with £1 design

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A pupil encouraged by a teacher to enter a competition to design the new pound coin says he will be keeping his achievement "as quiet as possible" when he heads to university.

Two years ago David Pearce, now 17, submitted an entry to design the new coin. On Tuesday his entry became a reality when the 12-sided pound was introduced across the country.

The old coin was scrapped because of fears that it had become too easy to counterfeit.

But the A-level pupil at Queen Mary's Grammar School in Walsall will not draw attention to his success when he takes up an offer – conditional, as he is quick to point out – to study architecture at Clare College, Cambridge.

"I'll probably want to keep it as quiet as possible – my friends are more excited than me."

Pearce was encouraged by Paul Hughes, his design and technology teacher at Queen Mary's, to submit an entry to the Royal Mint to design the reverse side of a new coin.

The new pound, which has a darker nickel brass rim and a lighter inside of nickel-plated alloy, needed an image that



David Pearce and his winning design

"unambiguously represented the UK".

After researching the patterns featured on past coins – including "the Queen's beasts" such as the lion, and various flowers – Pearce's design drew on the symbolic plants for each of the UK's four nations: the rose, leek, thistle and shamrock, encircled by a royal coronet crown.

Pearce, who beat 6,000 entries, admits his mum's pretty happy about his success.

He also admits that Hughes – who taught him from year 7 to year 9 and is his teacher once again this year (he is studying design and technology, maths and geography A-level) – is pretty pleased too. "Yeah, I think he's proud."

Head Tim Swain says Queen Mary's is "terrifically proud" that Pearce's design is now in many people's pockets.

"It's been a fantastic journey. He's such a



Pearce's design on the new coin

deserving boy as well, so unassuming.

"There will be this representative thing from the school in everyone's pockets, and lots of people will know." The pound will feature a tiny "DP" – Pearce's initials – on his design.

Hughes, who helped 400 other pupils at the school to enter the competition, says the coin is "a far superior design to what we've had before".

"It's really nice that as a subject that has suffered over the years, DT has been shown to be doing something very, very positive."

Fifteen people, including Swain, and Pearce and his mother, were invited to No 10 after then chancellor George Osborne rang the school to say Pearce had won.

They were joined by Cody Gill, another Queen Mary's pupil, who made the shortlist.

They were all given a "free rein" to look around No 10, including the state room used for official visits. "It was an incredible experience for us all," Swain says.

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinerney | [laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk)

# Why we all need heroes who are just like us

In the United States, two brothers are considered king of the national sport, American football. Peyton and Eli Manning have sweated, toe-to-toe, for 20 years. They are the only brothers to play the key position of quarterback, against each other, in the Superbowl – the grand final watched by more than 100 million people. And they didn't just do it once. But three times.

They are wealthy, beloved, famed, and a constant source of fascination for people interested in sibling rivalry.

What most people don't know, is that there is another brother; one who was destined to become a sports star too.

But Cooper Manning was counted out of sports in his teens when he developed a spinal condition, usually only found in elderly people. He is the lost Manning.

This story will hit home for teachers who have watched as a child struggles with a health condition. Baron Christopher Holmes, the nine-time gold medal Paralympian, who went blind overnight as a teenager, talks often about the way it was his teachers who kept him going. How their belief that he could still achieve his dream of being a swimmer mattered more than anything.

Imagine, then, that Christopher had

the dual disadvantage of being from a low-income family, and of attending a school such as Sir Roger Manwood's school in Kent, which is so strapped for cash it is going to start asking families to pay for their children to take part in sports clubs.

Imagine that it is not blindness, or spinal stenosis, or any other sudden and unavoidable issue that is counting a child out of their future dream – but money.

Inequality wraps itself around children in a million different ways. But there is something fundamentally awful about inequalities that occur because your parents are asked to pay for something other children receive free.

There is something extraordinary about the situation where, if a parent has three children – like the Mannings – that they might only be able to afford two of the three to play a sport. How do you choose? Do you pick the one with potential? The one who likes it most? Or do you try to figure out which one is most likely to develop a condition that will take them out altogether? It is a grim reality.

It is easy at this point to wave away the concern. Come on Laura, it's just a game. This kid's life won't be changed if they

can't kick a ball around a field. Except the Manning example shows that it can. And we must caution against the long-term consequences of such inequality. We are only just getting to a point where children from state schools are starting to hold their own at sport, or in acting, or in the upper echelon jobs wheeled out as examples of social mobility. Judges in their 50s may well be almost all privately educated, but look at lawyers in their 30s and you'll see a different story. Journalists may once have been mostly privately educated, but look at our offices and they're not. And who were the stand-outs at last year's Olympics? Laura Trott. State educated. Mo Farah. State educated. Max Whitlock. State educated. Even the men's rowing eight were majority state educated.

This was not an accident. The dial has been moving slowly on Olympic medallists, and a huge amount of effort – and cash – has been pumped into making it happen.

The difference

it makes to have sporting heroes "like us" is difficult to explain to those outside the classroom. But having taught in a school with a large Somali community, I cannot fully express how much it meant in 2008 and again in 2012 to see Mo Farah take those golds. The pride of our pupils, the fact that they felt both Somali, and British, and accepted for being those things, was unreal. And it mattered that Mo wasn't a wealthy guy who bought his way there. He was once a kid, just like my pupils, who worked, and fought, and made it to the top. That was motivation, by the bucket.

If we now fall back to a position where the "extras" – sport, music, debating – are only for the wealthy, we will lose these role models and our kids will lose heart with them.

Schools cannot be blamed for making these decisions. But politicians need to speak up. Loudly. They must convince the government to find the cash. Or they will find they are being held to blame, loudly, by the country at large.





# READERS' REPLY



## Bolton free school gets the boot

**David Marriott, Wiltshire**

"One governor paid £3,287 in expenses in one year". If the Department for Education and Education Funding Agency take no action, I propose that all school governors should bankrupt the education budget by claiming a similar level of expenses. These clowns are deaf to anything other than total cataclysm.

## Schools plan to hire former pupils as apprentices

**@Geography\_Emma**

Here starts the expansion of teaching apprenticeships with the aim of further cutting staffing costs and deprofessionalisation

**@andrew\_1910**

Clued-up schools have had business admin apprentices before the levy. If the teaching apprenticeship is a degree-level apprenticeship, then why not?

**@mikercameron**

This is a good move for multi-academy trusts that have the appropriate capacity to provide quality support.

## Council asks RSC to rebroker failing academy

**Sarah Thurlby, address supplied**

Schools go in and out of Ofsted categories. That doesn't mean that either the council or the academy trust are failures across the board, which is why the whole academy policy is such nonsense. It's not the status of the school that makes it successful, it's good leadership and governance, great teachers and properly funded support for schools that struggle. If Wolverhampton council has good and outstanding schools, there is no reason it shouldn't be allowed to support a struggling academy.

## Burgers and wedding bells: how schools boost their budgets

**Sunshine Frankie**

Why shouldn't they? Especially when the building is empty. A lot of schools hire their spaces out to churches on Sundays and holiday clubs in the holidays.

**Hilary Louise**

Queen Elizabeth High School has this last week written to parents asking for voluntary donations too. OK if you have revenue

streams, great buildings and affluent parents, but not possible for all.

**Matthew McGee**

The church I attend meets in the performing arts block of the local secondary school. It's actually a better facility than the building we were forced to move out of.

## SEND pupils sidelined on work experience

**@KarenOD\_MGC**

Much is to do with a failure to recognise that young people with special needs are NOT one big group, unable to earn or learn.

## Have we got NEUs for you

**Simon Clarkson**

As fragmented unions we have failed to stop the excesses of Michael Gove onwards. The more united we are, the more likely we are to do better.

## Stop talking about a mental health crisis in schools

**@pearson\_cathy**

My son has anxiety. It is not the same as exam stress! Mental wellbeing is different to mental health.

**@Mind\_Moose**

This an important, balanced read. As with many things, education and awareness are helpful, panic is not.

**@Lisa\_McNally1**

Often young people need outcome focused support – not medicalisation, diagnoses and long treatment waiting lists.

## Actress backs alumni network

**@Mando\_Nottm**

Alumni have a great deal to offer and are often very excited to be involved. Untapped resource.

## Council asks RSC to rebroker failing academy

### REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Mark Watson, Gloucestershire**

If ECMAT are not doing a good enough job of operating Wednesfield High, then it should be rebrokered to an academy trust that can and will improve the situation.

However, I think it slightly disingenuous for the article to imply Wolverhampton council is some sort of white knight.

This is the council that was responsible for the school before it became an academy. Under its watch it was rated as inadequate in 2007. Things improved and in 2008 and 2010 it was rated as good. Then things tanked and in 2013 it was rated inadequate and put into special measures. Two special measures monitoring inspections followed in 2014 with the last one finding that "the school is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures".

From the above information if I were a local parent, I certainly wouldn't want to be going back to "the old system".

REPLY OF THE WEEK  
RECEIVES A  
SCHOOLS WEEK  
MUG!



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OPINION · BEHAVIOUR REPORT REACTIONS



JOHN  
ROBERTS

Chief executive, Edapt

# Technology can help to track behaviour

**Tom Bennett's report on behaviour misses the opportunity to talk about how edtech can help schools to manage behaviour, says John Roberts**

Tom Bennett's behaviour review is spot-on in many ways. Not least his insistence on a strongly defined school "culture and ethos".

Leaders must define a clear behaviour policy that is communicated to the whole staff, and staff must know that leaders will back them up.

However, it is essential that the school team understand the reasoning behind a policy and follow it consistently. They need to know that going "off-piste" can have a damaging effect – and that if they do, pupils will take advantage. Lone wolf behaviour can undermine the rest of the staff.

Overall Bennett has made a valuable contribution to the behaviour management debate. However, he missed the opportunity to talk in his report about how edtech can help schools to manage behaviour. This seems to stem from a conflation of two entirely different parts of edtech: learning technologies, and workflow or management information technologies.

It comes on page 50, where he deals with the entire topic of technology in schools in a page and a half.

He mentions that schools have found technology that provides "opportunities for more efficient home communication" and "better systems of tracking, collating and analysing behaviour incidents", but then segues into a discussion of in-class technology and pupil mobile phone use, never to return to the above. Yet such technologies can be used to great effect: to set out the defined behaviour policy for both staff and pupils, to communicate issues across the school and to parents, and to standardise and analyse behaviour issues in real time and historically.

Bennett lays out an entirely reasonable discussion of the perils and benefits of the use of personal devices, which roughly boil down to the recommendation that "smartphones should only be used in circumstances where the teacher has clearly defined a specific learning need they can satisfy". Fine.

But his silence on behaviour tracking and management technologies, a key component

of his report, is strange. These technologies are often mentioned in the case studies that accompany the report, and are known to be used in the schools in question, but little mention is made of their benefit.

I understand Bennett may wish to remain neutral on the many providers of the software available to track behaviours. However, to fail to reference their use and instead provide an old-fashioned survey as an appendix, administered via traditional methods, seems to miss a trick.

It makes me wonder if Bennett believes all technology in schools is a problem. Which, if true, makes about as much sense as saying: "running in corridors is disruptive" therefore "all running is bad".

I am not an unreflective advocate of technology – I am in favour of schools setting behaviour policies around uses of mobile devices and, while I believe there are some great learning tools, others are gimmicky or have no impact either on learning or workload.

To conflate personal devices with technology that aids back-office functions is to miss a trick. The quickest wins for the edtech sector are in relieving teacher workload, increasing the time they have to teach students. Having concrete, individualised data to hand at any point in the term, to facilitate hard conversations with parents around pastoral issues is invaluable.

While I agree that standardised audit data from both teachers and pupils would be an effective monitoring tool, the use of a traditional survey to record teacher feedback on behaviour is inefficient, adds to workload and could be subject to both bias and poor memory. This is especially true when much of this data can be easily reported by technology tools.

Well-designed, workload-friendly behaviour management systems can issue automatic alerts, as well as analyse and track trends. If disrespect is a big focus for the year, for example, schools can assign meta-tags to classify certain specific behaviours as "disrespect" and track whole-school or whole-year improvements across those categories, following targeted interventions.

Behaviour is absolutely down to school leaders, but they don't have to go it alone – technology can be a school leader's friend, not just a distraction.



JACKIE  
WARD

Behaviour and SEND consultant

# Internal inclusion units are 'sin-bins'

**The answer to schools' behaviour problems is not to create more unregulated provision - accountability is key, says Jackie Ward**

Behaviour tsar Tom Bennett has – after much consultation with a variety of "successful schools" – published his independent review *Creating a Culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour*.

After raising an eyebrow at the term "independent" (he has, after all, been commissioned by the government who may or may not have their own agendas), I found much in his report that I agree with, but also plenty of food for thought.

I am not going to take issue with the many sources Bennett has referenced, coming as they do from a founder of ResearchEd. Rather, I want to focus on the thrust of the research, which places responsibility for behaviour on the shoulders of school leaders.

As a former deputy head, special needs co-ordinator of a primary pupil referral unit (PRU) and now an independent behaviour and SEND consultant working with mainstream schools, I agree that a whole-school approach with a consistent behaviour policy is a cornerstone for successfully managing behaviour in schools.

School leaders are only part of the story, however. While they can inform practice, staff are individuals, not robots, who have strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to behaviour. Behaviour has to be a collective responsibility, as even one dissenting voice can derail positive processes.

Bennett talks about "vulnerable" staff such as newly qualified teachers (NQTs) needing extra training and support, but experienced staff struggle too. I have seen NQTs working wonders with challenging classes using restorative approaches, while long-standing teachers send a stream of children to stand outside the head's office – in contravention of school procedures.

In one case study, he credits academisation for turning a particular school around yet, in this instance, only two of the original staff were left. Are we seriously expected to think that taking a hard line and culling the "wrong" staff is the answer?

In another example he suggests that routines become school rules: for example, walking on one side of the corridor! I find a

common thread running through the report is one of power-based control, where the adults are enforcers examining hemlines and hair colour. Effective schools are ones that apparently stamp out individuality in pursuit of the "good behaviour" grail.

More worryingly, he glosses over SEND by saying that trusts, for example, should pool SEND funding and create their own alternative provision (AP). He also advises that challenging schools should have their own "inclusion" units funded centrally. How will this be monitored? Who will populate the AP and inclusion units?

PRUs are often full of children with

“ Behaviour has to be a collective responsibility

unrecognised SEND who may need support to get a diagnosis, education, health and care plans and/or places in special schools. Can we really expect school leaders to make the right judgment calls?

Local authorities are sometimes rightly criticised for their approach to pupils with SEND, but can be more easily held to account. The answer is not to have more unregulated provision, where the child on the autistic spectrum who has sensory meltdowns ends up in a sort of "sin bin"!

There is also the question of whether these pupils are accessing a curriculum that meets their needs and getting the right funding; this priority preoccupies all the heads I meet. They are desperate to do the right thing for all their pupils and are crying out for help. More individual accountability and training for them will not solve these wide-ranging problems, but will just pile on the pressure; the lonely job just got lonelier.

I applaud Bennett for tackling such a contentious issue and agree that children have the right to a good education, undisturbed by the poor choices of others, but putting all this on to school leaders is not, in my view, the right way forward. They are at the mercy of societal change, government whims and Ofsted and need as much support as anyone else. Or they will leave. And then we really will be in trouble.





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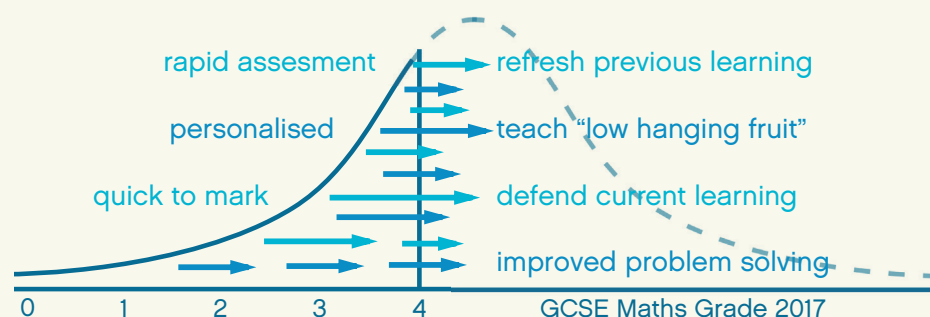
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# THE

Partnership

# Executive Director

*Tower Hamlets Education Partnership*

Our recently formed schools-led partnership is looking for a dynamic and entrepreneurial person, with a strong commitment to school improvement and to improved outcomes for the children and young people of Tower Hamlets, to lead the continued development and delivery of this exciting new venture.

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# Springboard for Children Trustee

**Location:** London

Springboard for Children are the experts in providing one-to-one literacy teaching for children and young people who struggle with learning to read, write, speak and listen.

**We are unique because:**

- Springboard is the only charity who provides specialised one-to-one tuition that improve all aspects of a child's literacy learning, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Springboard works in schools and communities experiencing the greatest challenges.
- Springboard staff are flexible to children's needs.
- Springboard works in partnership with schools and parents and makes sure our work reinforces classroom learning.



Springboard for Children is seeking a new trustee with educational experience to join its growing board. Springboard delivers life-changing, one to one literacy intervention to primary school aged children and this trustee role is vital in supporting the charity in its service delivery.

**Do you have a passion for education and experience of the current educational climate?**

**Could you support us in policy direction for the organisation and help shape our future?**

**Do you have time to commit to working with a dynamic group of people who share a common vision to see children reach their full potential?**

If so, we would love to hear from you! Get in touch or visit our website to find out more, [www.springboard.org.uk](http://www.springboard.org.uk). Email [info@springboard.org.uk](mailto:info@springboard.org.uk) or call us on 0207 740 1008.



# Assistant Headteacher -

Pupil Development, Behavior and Welfare



**Salary:** L7 - L11 £45,290 - £49,976 **Location:** Birmingham

Progress your career and join an academy where inspiration, fun and teamwork are second nature!

Lea Forest Primary Academy is a popular and growing 2 form entry school and proud to serve the communities around Kitts Green in Birmingham. We are part of Academies Enterprise Trust network of schools, and we were delighted that Ofsted graded us as 'good' in 2016 across the board.

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## Career development recruitment incentives:

- £500 invested into your own CPD in the first 2 years.
- Access and support to follow middle leadership programmes from the outset e.g. NPQML, Future Leaders.
- Candidates should be looking at this post as a career pathway to Deputy Headship and beyond.
- We advise you to come in and speak with the Headteacher to discuss the above and shape the next 3 years of your career, thus this post is suitable for both experienced Assistant Headteachers as well as phase leaders/TLR holders.

## The ideal candidate will:

- Be an outstanding practitioner with evidence of a whole school responsibility and experience of turning policy into effective and successful practice.
- Be able to inspire and motivate staff through your own best practice
- Have a track record of behavior management skills.
- Have high personal expectations of their own achievement and professional development.
- Ideally have experience in KS1 and one other Key Stage.

The recruitment and retention of our staff is of the upmost importance and we want you to thrive and develop your career here.

This position is required for **September 2017** and interviews are scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 2 May 2017**.

For further information and for an application please email **James** at: [jannetts@academiesenterprisetrust.org](mailto:jannetts@academiesenterprisetrust.org)

# Director of Maths

**Salary:** £49,429 - £54,223 per annum

**Location:** East Sheen, London



Richmond Park Academy is seeking to appoint a dynamic, highly motivated and ambitious practitioner who has the drive, energy and capacity to become an outstanding leader.

The successful candidate will benefit from a reduced teaching load in order to focus on raising standards through the development of teaching and learning within the Mathematics Faculty. You will be an outstanding teacher with the drive and capacity to make a significant difference, with the ambition for senior leadership.

The candidate will be eligible to be part of the AET Subject Leaders Programme, and will benefit from a range of wonderful opportunities to enrich their teaching and leadership role, including:

- Membership of the AET national mathematics teacher network including national conferences and three regional meetings each year.
- Personal support and coaching from the AET mathematics regional leader.
- Visits to other Mathematics Departments within our community to observe and share best practice as well as to coach and develop colleagues.
- Invitation to be a member of the national AET Mathematics Innovation Team to work on international and national mathematics projects.
- Opportunities to collaborate with academies within our cluster on joint projects such as Numeracy across the Curriculum, Academy-to-Academy Competitions using video technology and Curriculum Development.
- Free access to a range of national training opportunities from the central AET Mathematics team delivered by colleagues such as the author of Method Maths and Mr Barton Maths.

**This position is required to commence Friday 1 September 2017**

**Closing date: Thursday 20 April 2017, 3:00pm**

**Interviews are scheduled to take place Thursday 27 April 2017**

**For further information and for an application please email Maddie Porter at: [mporter@academiesenterprisetrust.org](mailto:mporter@academiesenterprisetrust.org)**

*We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts. This post will be subject to enhanced checks as part of our Prevent Duty.*

# Barclay Primary School

# Deputy Head Teacher



**BARCLAY PRIMARY**  
SCHOOL



Barclay Primary School is looking to recruit an outstanding, enthusiastic, innovative and committed Deputy Head Teacher to support the school's continual improvement. This will be alongside the Assistant Heads, two Deputy Head Teachers, the Head and the wider trust executive team. If you are excited by innovation and challenge, and if you are energised by opportunities to lead, develop and share your practise, whilst learning with your colleagues and from the children you work with, then we look forward to hearing from you.

Barclay Primary School serves a multi-cultural community in Waltham Forest our school was graded Outstanding by Ofsted in 2016.

## We can offer you:

- A vibrant school situated in a culturally diverse area of north London with all the rewards and opportunities this brings
- Lively, friendly and aspirational children who are determined to make the most of their schooling

- A dynamic and dedicated team of teachers and support staff who want the best for their children.
- Innovative CPD which is of the highest quality.
- Career progression and leadership opportunities
- A supportive and forward thinking Trust Board, Parental Advisory Body and parent community.
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Details about the role are available from our trust website:

**[www.lionacademytrust.net](http://www.lionacademytrust.net)**

Here you will find the application pack, Trust application form etc.

We are looking for our Deputy Head Teacher to commence the post from the **1st September 2017**.

Visits to the school are welcome – we would be happy for you to tour with a Senior Leader, at your convenience.





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## 6-PAGE SPECIAL: TEACH FIRST INNOVATION AWARDS



## NEW IDEAS TO TACKLE OLD PROBLEMS

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

**Now in their fourth year, Teach First's Innovation Awards help start-up programmes that address educational inequality. Jess Staufenberg looks at the impetus behind the awards – and why schools remain the platform for change.**

**T**he Teach First innovation unit offers a year of support, including a salary, to out-of-the-box thinkers who get through to its final round for the annual Innovation Awards.

Set up in 2012, a decade after founder Brett Wigdortz set up the Teach First teacher training programme, the innovation unit gives business support to members of the public or Teach First alumni to begin a start-up business that could address educational inequality.

It aims to help make the company's 2022 goals achievable. Hugely ambitious in scope – covering everything from narrowing gaps in literacy, numeracy, GCSE attainment, and entry to good universities – they need help

from bright sparks with clever ideas.

Gina Cicerone, head of the innovation unit and partnerships, and a former social entrepreneur herself, said some of the most "entrenched" problems in education could be best tackled by innovative start-ups, with technology showing particular promise in this year's winners.

"If we want to achieve our fair education impact goals by 2022, we need to be partnering with other organisations. There are so many unsolved and entrenched issues that need us to support new ideas to solve them."

Three finalists this year use technology – MeeTwo, Maths for Parents and CPDBee – and have shown promise they could achieve scale at the same time as maintaining impact, said Cicerone.

But schools remain the "central and critical" platform for change, with all new start-ups working with and through schools to address problems.

Since 2012, there have been 20 winners of support from Teach First. Most are former teachers, of which 55 per cent did Teach First, and the rest are members of the public. All have come through either the company's "incubate" or "accelerate" programme, after

being picked from hundreds of entries. The incubate programme involves one year of mentoring, bringing ideas to fruition, including a six-month basic salary to support time out from work, and office space. The accelerate programme is for established organisations to grow their impact.

Supporting the innovation unit is Bloomberg, once a start-up itself and now a global business media company, which has partnered Teach First since 2011.

Jemma Read, head of philanthropy for Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East at Bloomberg, said the company strongly believed education was improved by "the country's most promising educational leaders".

The wide range of start-ups allowed the company to support multiple causes, she said, citing some of the former winners of the award including the Access Project, which helps vulnerable pupils go to top universities, and Frontline, a graduate programme for children's social workers.

"Through the partnership we are able to support families with healthy eating through The Grub Club, help young people who are struggling at school through

Jamie's Farm, and support literacy through Thinking Reading."

For 2017-18, applications were put in by 73 hopefuls, of which just five have been awarded places on the incubation programme.

The selection process begins with 14 judges, two-thirds of whom have roles with Teach First. The rest are external, including a primary and a secondary head, plus staff from the Esmée Fairbairn and the Education Endowment Foundations, which are grant-making charities that seek to address social inequality.

Judges whittle down the 70 applications to 20, before entrepreneurs pitch their idea again to the final judging panel, which includes Wigdortz; Catriona Maclay, a previous Teach First graduate who set up Hackney Pirates in north London; and Rebecca Smith, principal of the Manchester Creative and Media academy.

Some of the most impressive ideas from former years included the National College for Digital Skills, which opened last year as a fully functioning FE college, and The Girls Network, which matches girls from low-income backgrounds with professional role models.



# TEACH FIRST INNOVATION AWARDS: PAST WINNERS



## THE GRUB CLUB

AI SLING KIRWAN

### Parents join the club to cook for their kids

Aisling Kirwan is from a family, she says, that had “a beige buffet” every night.

Born in Ireland to parents on low incomes, she says dinner was often chips, breaded food and other yellow items. “My parents worked very hard, so when there was money they wanted to fill us up as much as possible. It had a huge impact.”

Kirwan’s younger sister developed bulimia, and her older sister was morbidly obese. The issue reached a critical point when Kirwan hit puberty and her weight “ballooned”.

Weight has been linked to low confidence in class, something Kirwan later noticed when she trained as a teacher in Medway.

“There were so many families at that school who were eating the way I had as a child,” she says. A “silent minority”, who looked fine, but also admitted breakfast was Lucozade and crisps. “And then you’re trying to teach them? No.”

Kirwan bumped into several barriers when she tried to do something about it. First, senior management didn’t seem to care enough. Despite having the “perfect opportunity” to alter pupils’ eating habits at lunchtime, meals such as white pasta with baked beans were standard. Second, few schools follow the government’s school food plan, which lays out healthy eating requirements. Ofsted are meant to check the plan is followed, but often don’t. Kirwan, for instance, has never seen an inspector sit with pupils at lunch. “They were served nice sandwiches in the headteacher’s office.”

Finally, Kirwan was tied up trying to become an “outstanding” teacher. As a trained chef, who had cooked in France during university summer breaks, the irony of becoming “outstanding” while ignoring the terrible diet of her pupils was not lost on her.

And so came The Grub Club. A pilot for three weeks in summer 2015 went “extremely well” and Kirwan left her teaching job to employ three chefs and run the company. For between £1,800 and £2,000, her chefs run a six-week after-school programme in a school’s kitchen that families attend and learn to cook. Food is included, and families can prepare large portions that they take home to eat. Most of the session is practical, with some theory thrown in.

“Some parents at first think it is a diet club

“We’re supporting some very vulnerable families,” Kirwan says, “Parents come along and say, ‘this is a diet camp, isn’t it?’” Others feel their parenting is being criticised.

The Grub Club gets around the issue by inviting pupils, and then telling parents they can spend quality time with their child. More than 90 families have done the programme, mostly in London, but it is set to open in Birmingham, a “black spot” for childhood obesity and diabetes. She’s eyeing up Blackpool next.

“Schools are incredible places to work in. You never have a problem with them not wanting to do it – only that they can’t sign up this year because of money, but they will next year.” So while she waits for school budgets to pick up, Kirwan is joining the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and British Nutrition Foundation in looking at school lunches.

“People think the healthy food thing is mainstream, but most of that has been a middle-class thing,” she says. “This needs to be for everyone.”



## THE BRILLIANT CLUB

CHRIS WILSON AND SIMON COYLE

### PhD students add ‘texture’ to learning

Could computer-designed drugs target depression? What is fairness? Does animation trivialise the Holocaust?

Imagine pupils writing an essay or science article in answer to one of the above, after having tutorials led by a PhD graduate whose expertise is exactly that topic. This is what The Brilliant Club does for pupils on their “scholars programme” – with a minimum of one third of participants coming from poorer backgrounds.

Putting PhD students and pupils together adds “texture” to learning in schools, says Dr Chris Wilson, co-chief executive of the club and a former tutor on the programme.

The team finds PhD students who are completing their theses and puts them into a school where they give a tutorial every week to a small group of pupils for seven weeks, leading them through an area of research.

At the end, treated as thinkers in their own right, each pupil presents a researched paper. To name just a few: Animal social networks and their application to a seabird island, how our memory will fade over a year, different ways of analysing difficult poetry, and whether the civil rights revolution was more the result of state intervention than the protests.

Tutors then critique the piece, revealing a relationship developed over two months in their comments.

“Academic magic,” is what Wilson calls it. “At universities, top students are doing high-level research, and this is what makes for such esoteric topics. The tutors are adding texture, rather than just duplicating teachers.”

Pupils also go on tours of some of best research universities such as King’s College London, Oxford and Cambridge, before meeting their tutors.

Pupils are picked by their teachers, and The Brilliant Club trusts them to pick those who would benefit most; last year 44 per cent were on free school meals. The team is

currently thrashing out a more sophisticated measure that may include deprivation areas by postcode and parental history.

The PhD tutors also receive training: for them it is in pedagogy targeted at the age they teach. For those teaching the youngest pupils, in year 5, tutorials are more closely designed in partnership with, say, the Courtauld Institute of Art for history of art tutorials, or with the UCL engineering faculty for engineering tutorials.

The cost is £160 a pupil; the club suggests that schools use pupil premium funding. And a spokesperson says that a third of pupils enrolled on the programmes should have been eligible for free school meals within the past six years.

Founders Simon Coyle and Jonny Sobczyk, who each taught for two years before leaving the classroom in 2010, both had academics in their lives who helped to inspire the programme.

“My mum is a professor of education, and Jonny’s sister was doing a PhD,” says Coyle.

“We’d just finished Teach First, which aims to mobilise the graduate community – and we thought, can we mobilise the postgraduate community?”

The scholars programme is half of The Brilliant Club’s mission – the second programme works to place PhD graduates in schools as full-time teachers. They go through a normal SCITT-based training route, but the company provides them with an additional “suite of training”, and helps them to maintain relationships with their alma mater.

As for the tutors on the scholars programme, their time with pupils improves their own teaching on campus, bringing a circular neatness to the project.

With 450 schools on board, 10,000 pupils becoming scholars this year, and 60 members of staff now at the company, “academic magic” appears to be in demand.





# TALES TOOLKIT

KATE SHELLEY

## Letting the story out of the bag

Kate Shelley likes problems and solutions. So much so she has printed the words "PROBLEM" and "SOLUTION" on big pillowcases, put random objects inside, and developed a whole language-development idea out of them.

Welcome to her toolkit for telling stories. Four pillowcases, labelled Character, Setting, Problem and Solution. An object in each: let's say a sock, a green shawl, a crocodile and a shampoo bottle. Pulling an unexpected stage of the story from each bag, and questioned by a curious teacher, the children devise a tale – Mr Sock, taking a walk along a riverbank, meets a dangerous reptile – cue faces clutched in anguish. But is there a Solution? This bottle! Of? Sleeping potion. Problem solved.

This is a meagre depiction of the range of stories Shelley has watched pupils up to year 3 create through her package.

Developed over five years working as a Reception teacher, and launched for all schools last year, teachers have seen all kinds of toolkits – Egyptian gods have been in and out and Samuel Pepys has made appearances with the baker who started the Great Fire of London.

"We did a really cool story about vegetables," says Shelley, a 37-year-old who started in fashion retail before becoming a teacher.

"A butternut squash who was a person. That's the first stage in literacy, you know – symbolic play."

Shelley's mother, also a teacher, used to tell her daughter stories. But low-income parents often have low-paid jobs with long hours – and are simply too tired for storytelling.

Shelley says that children need "forward-facing bodies" – people listening to them – but they don't always have them. Families sit in separate rooms instead of chatting together; TVs have taken children from playing and, crucially, talking. She saw this when she worked in the East End of London, where some of the children were affluent and others from poorer housing.

"There was such a massive gap between them – their language skills and social skills," she says. To make matters worse, teachers are also too pressed to deliver high-quality interactions with their pupils. This is where Tales Toolkit's USP is obvious: "As much as you can put something in a bag, that's as



much planning as you can do."

But when the product first went out, Shelley noticed the bags were getting "dumped at the back of classroom cupboards". So her team spent three months on a training package on how best to use them. ("On the last day the hard drive crashed – we nearly lost it all," she groans).

**"We did a really cool story about vegetables"**

The end result is a £800-a-year package that has five 50-minute training videos – the "length of a staff meeting" – a big kit, a small kit, an apron for telling stories from, a hanging story board, and a book of ideas.

Children who were selective mutes have taken their first words in Tales Toolkit classes. One filming session had to be stopped after a pupil began opening up about problems at home.

"Recently I heard the children talking to each other in the playground, and one said 'oh, this is a problem,' and the other said, 'what's the SOLUTION then?' That was good."

Goldsmiths University is now doing a year-long study of 15 schools trialling the toolkit. In total 23 schools, from London to Manchester, are using it. And a global company has packed them off to 30 schools in Sri Lanka, 30 schools in Kenya and 30 in Botswana.

Jamie Feilden and Jake Curtis



## JAMIE'S FARM

JAMIE FEILDEN

## Life on the farm can be just what pupils need

Staff meetings at Jamie's Farm in Wiltshire sound fun: recently everyone tasted Greek yoghurt made by visiting pupils. For a group of inner-city children who milked the farm's Jersey cow at the start of the week, and made cheese by the end, the outcome was pretty good.

It all began with lambs in Brixton, south London. In 2003, Jamie Feilden, now chief executive officer of the company, was in the first cohort of Teach First. He was saddened by a "culture of not wanting to learn" and by a lack of outlet for pupils' pent-up energy. Brought up on a small farm, he found himself "driving through Brixton with lambs in the back bleating out of the window" on the way to school, wondering if he was mad. But after some of the most troublesome pupils kept turning up early for bottle-feeding, he thought he might be on to something.

"For kids, it's such a physical achievement. Doing real tasks with real purpose and seeing the outcome boosts their self-esteem – they often walk away two inches taller."

Now, 13 years later, Jamie operates two farms in Wiltshire and Herefordshire where groups of between 10 and 12 vulnerable pupils stay for five days at a time. With three of their teachers, they get up early, feed the animals, prepare food with the chefs, eat together, tend the vegetable gardens, do carpentry and art, and even have sessions with the farms' therapists led by Trish Feilden, Jamie's mother and a trained psychotherapist.

The farm's horses help out with therapy too. A pupil will lead one around an arena, giving commands, talking to them, asserting their authority. If the pupil is nervous, the horse will be nervous too. It is about building self-belief – even a sense of power, says Feilden.

"There's such a focus in schools now on attainment. We've stopped valuing play and experiencing risk. Here, we give them the opportunity of physical action and taking

risks." For Feilden, animals can ground a child in a way that a desk cannot.

Since the first pilot in 2006, more than 3,500 pupils have gone through the

**"We've stopped valuing play and experiencing risk"**

programme with many returning as mentors five years on. At £6,060 for the week for about 10 pupils, three teachers and a follow-up session in the school six weeks later, it may sound like a miracle cure. But the point is to give pupils an out-of-the-ordinary memory of a good version of themselves.

"That doesn't ever go away. Of course there can be a bumpy ride back at school, but the memory is there in their make-up after that – how it feels when you are more positive."

One 15-year-old girl arrived after living in a car for six months and working in the sex industry. She had a "really tough week accepting our love and care", but gradually took on responsibilities. The girl got 10 good GCSEs a year later.

Do they sometimes not want to go home? "It's tough when there are tears on Friday," admits Feilden. "Our message is not to look at this in isolation. These positive relations can be built on."

Feilden's major worry has been school budgets, but there's a positive sign – not one of their 40 schools has dropped out. One has been with them for seven years, and sends a group of pupils three times a year.

"It's an amazing job. Of course it's full-on. But it's brilliant."



# TEACH FIRST INNOVATION AWARDS: PAST WINNERS



## THINKING READING

DIANNE AND JAMES MURPHY

### Last-chance saloon for pupils behind in reading

There's always that fear there will be the one child you can't teach to read – that no matter what you do, you will fail them."

So says Dianne Murphy, speaking to me with her business partner and husband of almost 40 years, James. The pair, both New Zealanders and both former teachers, form Thinking Reading, literacy experts who train teachers in their methods to bring any, and every pupil, in secondary school to the required reading standard within a year.

The pair say that, using their lesson plans, a pupil three years behind in reading should take six months to catch their peers; a pupil who is seven years behind should take a year. Those two promises are the company's "social lock", with assets ploughed back into achieving that goal. Given that this happens in three half-hour lessons a week by a teacher trained by the Murphys, the goal sounds daunting.

And yet, they say, no pupil has failed. This is perhaps because Dianne and James know what is at stake. "We are the last-chance saloon," says James.

With secondary rather than primary schools as their platform, if pupils fail Thinking Reading, there is nowhere to go. It's a nerve-racking incentive.

Even though Dianne now trains teachers and learning assistants, rather than complete interventions herself, she knows the feeling well.

"There was this one little girl. She was a twin. Her sister did all the talking for her, and she had so much difficulty. She couldn't even hear rhyme, or move a block to the rhythm of a word. And I was thinking, are you going to be the one I can't teach?"

"But one day, she just got something," Dianne says. The 13-year-old began to move her blocks at the right beat to the words. Later, Dianne heard that the pupil had volunteered herself in class – to read the prologue to Romeo and Juliet.

James tells a different story. A year 10 pupil

at an Essex school was very disinterested in reading. One of the first indicators the pair looks for is whether pupils are struggling to

## "We can't imagine what it's like for non-readers

decode words and comprehend. This girl struggled with both, plus motivation.

"But after some time, she found these two words she really liked. 'Forage' and 'squabble'. She just really liked them. She said, 'I am going to use these words'."

Dianne moved into teaching in her 30s from nursing. She joined James in studying special learning needs, on a course the pair say was "the best year of our lives." Dianne then set up a literacy centre in Christchurch, New Zealand, and James worked with young people out of education and employment.

After coming to England, James became an assistant principal and Dianne set up a literacy programme at Greig City academy in north London.

They created Thinking Reading from this. The £7,000 annual package trains six members of staff in a school, including support from Thinking Reading, to deliver a reading programme that covers 200 lessons' worth of material, including flash cards and more.

After a three-year slog, the Murphys' programmes are in 15 schools across the country, and they're now planning to set up regional hubs.

"Do not underestimate the difficulty of teaching reading," says James.

"We can't imagine what it's like for non-readers. We must never just pass the problem on downstream."



## UNIFROG

ALEX AND CORALIE KELLY

### Platform lists all the post-school choices

Everyone remembers the careers quiz at school. The one that, when you said you quite liked animals, recommended that you become a zookeeper.

Unifrog, a software programme, flips the idea on its head. It allows pupils to choose topics of interest before presenting all possible courses. More importantly, these post-school pathways are not just at a university.

Unifrog's founder, Alex Kelly, has built a comprehensive database of further education, apprenticeship and university courses – with little pictures of frogs to keep you jolly as you search.

Kelly taught for five years before setting up Unifrog with his now-wife Coralie in 2013. The pair were motivated by "the nightmare we have in this country" in which 50 per cent of pupils, usually the least affluent, do not go to university. "Yet the government does not care about further education" and has no central database on what courses are available, says Kelly. So he has done it for them, at a cost of £1,000 to £2,000 a year for each school.

"I've had meetings with secretaries of state, and they're just not interested – they've put so much civil servant time and money into university, although so many kids aren't going there," he says.

Unifrog includes about 110,000 opportunities, including 50,000 FE courses, 22,000 apprenticeships and various university courses. Each is drawn from about 40 datasets scattered across the internet. There are even degrees overseas, including the Netherlands, where 60 per cent of courses are taught in English at a fraction of the cost to study in England.

Giving a pupil their own login, profile, CV help and personal statement guidance is Kelly's way of addressing the other inequality that bugs him. In his second year of teaching English he became interested in the students who were bright but were making bad choices on their UCAS forms – "they'd just sign up for really competitive courses, such as medicine

or law, without knowing much about them, or to top universities or where their friends were." These were pupils who were getting none of the support "that I knew kids at other schools were".

Having already set up the Access charity in 2008, which helps pupils get into Russell

## "The government does not care about further education

group courses, Kelly passed that project to new hands and set to work with the new software, guiding pupils through applications and handling all the information they could possibly need about their future.

Teachers get a "ping" email when pupils make choices, they can see where every student is in their application and track personal references in a way that no longer means "emailing half the staff" to find out who's seeing to what. Unifrog trains teachers how to use the platform.

Kelly is clear that starting up a new venture is a tough business. "Sometimes you think it's amazing, sometimes, 'oh man, this is never going to work'." Resilience is key.

But with 15 employees, 800 schools onboard, and about 300,000 pupils who have used it, the idea looks to have paid off. In the most recent launch, schools will be told who is heading to which courses year-on-year, building up a "destinations' picture".

Daniel Keller, the company's head of business development and delivery, said a school could now judge how good it was at, say, getting girls into university for STEM subjects.

"We're not replacing careers teachers, it's in addition to that. We want to be a one-stop shop for this kind of information."





## ENABLING ENTERPRISE

TOM RAVENSCROFT

# Blending academic and practical learning

Tom Ravenscroft is not alone in thinking an academically stuffed curriculum does little to develop pupils' independent innovation and does not bode well for the future workforce. So he's developed a curriculum that tries to turn the situation around – and he's done it almost single-handedly (all right, with a team of 30).

"Most of the time I feel frustrated," admits the former teacher, an Oxford graduate in economics and management. After more than eight years, his curriculum is in 1 per cent of schools. It sounds small, but it is a significant achievement. "When I know the majority are getting nothing like this, and when you see the impact, that's just frustrating."

Enterprise is a word thrown around frequently, but under Ravenscroft's leadership it appears to mean doing things for yourself that do not involve solely a pen, paper and textbook. Schools sign up to trips to workplaces, 30 hours of lessons, and a "challenge" day where pupils work on a project, all for about £25 per pupil for the year. Usually it's a whole-cohort package – and it begins with three-year-olds.

But what do you teach a three-year-old about enterprise? Ravenscroft says that they begin teaching how to understand other people's point of view through spotting emotions in pictures. They have a go at responsibility by putting on a bakery show. In fact, primary schools have been big enthusiasts for Enabling Enterprise, with some heads basing whole-school approaches around its eight goals, such as "aiming high", "creativity" and "problem-solving", and saying they'd rather lose other projects than their one-hour of enterprise a week.

Secondary schools are also keen, especially for trips and challenge days over the year, before becoming more reluctant when exam season kicks off in year 10.

What they're missing out on becomes clear. "One of my favourite bits is where they make their own radio show – news bulletins, comedy panel shows, sports journalism,"

Ravenscroft says. "And another where they go to law firms and are divided into teams to develop a compelling case and deliver the argument." Pupils have had a go at designing buildings with engineers, and even setting up political parties, writing manifestos that have given their teachers "a really interesting

## “Pupils say it's the only lesson where they're not told exactly what to do

insight" into what they care about.

"A kid said to me the other day, it's the only lesson where they're not told exactly what to do."

Ravenscroft developed the programme after feeling that pupils needed a blend of academic and practical learning, which he delivered when he taught BTEC business in the late 2000s.

"I couldn't believe how long it was taking us to get through the content – the students had just never developed the ability to self-manage or organise," he says.

"They clearly had not much idea of what a business actually was." To get everyone on the same page, Ravenscroft took his pupils to visit trading businesses – and then made pupils set up their own, with lessons on running their own meetings and sorting accounts.

Ravenscroft then left teaching to become a management consultant and made himself "quite ill" by working on Enabling Enterprise by night.

About 260,000 pupils have taken part since its launch and the company now has offices in London, Birmingham and Manchester. His team trains staff in schools to deliver the programme so that the project continues year-on-year.



## FIRST STORY

MONICA PARLE

# Pupils write for joy, not for results

It's not often that a school has a writer-in-residence. Yet this is the vision of Katie Waldegrave, a teacher, and author William Fiennes. Both had become dispirited to see children writing "mostly for exams".

Nearly a decade on, the First Story baton has been handed to Mónica Parle, also a writer.

"Many pupils have never written a story before they come to us, except for exams," says Parle.

The exams focus in schools means that "for the first four or five sessions, students keep asking if they are allowed to write this or that, if something's OK".

While there are rules to the writing games in First Story, its entire premise rests on it being an after-school workshop, where writing is pursued simply for joy, not for results. (Though its website still lets schools know there is a "positive correlation between exam results and participation in the First Story programme").

"My daughter is at primary school and she is still doing creative things. We felt secondary level is the stage where creativity is really sucked out," says Parle. Worst of all, teachers can "lose the joy and the reason they went into teaching in the first place".

Through the programme a teacher can sit alongside a novelist, performance poet or spoken word artist in a weekly after-school session with up to 21 pupils – and Parle says her team is "pretty heavy-handed" in making sure pupils from lower-income families join in.

In autumn, the pupils play word games. In spring they write two pieces of their own, which in summer are published in an anthology. A favourite game involves pupils writing a list of concrete and abstract nouns, and then making sentences by matching them in random ways. "You're showing them that some of the best writing is through making an illogical leap."

Another involves someone shouting out an object, and everyone writing a sentence that features that object. Then another person



shouting an object, and everyone writes a second sentence, and so on, to create a story.

"We find that constraint and limits make pupils use words they wouldn't usually use," says Parle. Another rule-breaker for pupils is seeing a professional writer hit writer's block themselves. "That's great for pupils to see."

About 4,650 pupils have taken part since a pilot in 2007. There are 73 "residencies" this year, each costing £4,200, on top of 320 run so far. About 150 authors have been involved, and authors such as Malorie Blackman and Mark Haddon have visited schools when anthologies are first published. "You could hear this silence as the children realised who it was."

## In The Dream

by First Story pupil Samawado Farah

In the dream my mother said:

'Do not end up like me.'

I wake and touch my face, that is so much like her own.

I think of my grandmother

and her mother and her mother

until they blend into one long-haired woman,

who gives up her dreams

for money, for country, for men, for me.

When I have a daughter I hope she overthrows me.

I hope she is better than anything I could imagine,

I hope she has a heart embroidered with this poem.



# NEWS: TEACH FIRST INNOVATION AWARDS

# THIS YEAR'S WINNERS



## BOROMI



EVE DICKSON



**Boromi boxes are a subscription service delivered direct to schools and nurseries.** Inside are the games and activities a parent and child need to learn together.

Eve Dickson began developing Boromi boxes when she was a primary teacher and saw how a difficult home learning environment could negatively affect a child's "school readiness".

She identified three barriers that parents in low-income families face when they try to support early development: knowledge of how to help their children learn, a lack of resources such as toys and books, and not enough time.

Children can borrow them, take them home and return them the next day, letting parents make the best use of their time.

## CPDBEE



NIALL ALCOCK



**Teachers will be able to browse nearby professional development courses through Niall Alcock's website, CPDBee.**

Essentially a "price comparison website", teaching schools will list all their courses and their prices, allowing teachers to compare for cost and distance, and read reviews.

"We will essentially be a listing and sales service for teaching schools and their CPD, bringing it altogether under one website," said Alcock, a former teacher trainer and school leader.

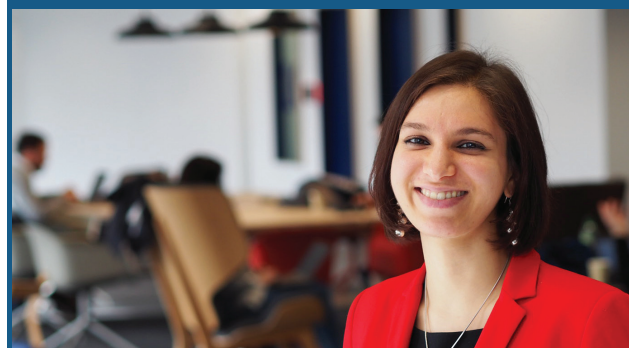
Teaching schools will then have more time to deliver their courses – and will be able to spend less on marketing.

Eventually, teaching schools will have their own log-ins to see how their courses are reviewed. Teachers will have their own accounts for quick access too.

## THE DIFFERENCE



KIRAN GILL



**The Difference will train teachers to work with excluded pupils.**

Kiran Gill, a former teacher and education policy adviser, has set up the programme to offer teachers with three years' experience a leadership position in alternative provision or a pupil referral unit.

She is trying to raise the status of teaching excluded pupils, just as Teach First sought to raise the status of teaching in deprived mainstream schools.

Participants will gain a masters, including modules in mental health and child development, and focus on the multi-disciplinary nature of children's services.

The Difference, which will run from from September 2019, will also grow an alumni movement "championing multi-disciplinary inclusion" of vulnerable children.

## MATHS WITH PARENTS



TOM HARBOUR



**Harbour's already established company encourages parents to log into a website that tells them what their children are learning in their primary school maths lessons.**

Teachers post a written explanation of what the child is learning and explain the method.

Parents access this and watch a video with their child that goes over the maths, says Harbour, a former physics teacher. They can also access two games that reinforce the video.

Meanwhile, teachers will be able to track how well parents are engaging.

Launched in September last year and already in 30 schools, Harbour will expand from years 3 and 4 to all primary years.

## MEETWO



DR KERSTYN COMLEY AND SUZI GODSON



**MeeTwo is a free mobile phone app for 13 to 18-year-olds worried about mental health issues.**

Young people may post about their feelings, but also send support to others on an app its creators describe as a "mixture of Instagram and Twitter".

Dr Kerstyn Comley, an education technologist, and Suzi Godson, a psychologist, have also brought expert therapists on board to offer advice in online discussions.

The team designs their own resources based on research for different discussions, including issues around step-parents, exam stress and sexuality, which can then be shared on the app.

Artists are also involved, creating images to provoke ideas or encouraging pupils to submit their artwork.



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# REVIEWS

## TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

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



Our reviewer of the week is  
**Andrew Old**, teacher and blogger  
[@oldandrewuk](#)

**The “quite tidy garden” . . . or why level descriptors aren’t very helpful**  
By [@HeatherBellaF](#)

Do level descriptors provide useful feedback? Probably not, according to this post by Heather Fearn, the curriculum director at Thetford Academy, Norfolk. She imagines giving her gardener instructions in the same style as the way we give students advice, telling him that he needs to move the garden along from “a little overgrown” to “well-tended”, rather than saying what needs to be done.

**PowerPoint**  
By [@ajo\\_facer](#)

Judging by the response on Twitter, this call for teachers to refrain from using PowerPoint is probably the most controversial blogpost of the week. Does its use distract from teaching, while confining students to a darkened room? English teacher Jo Facer thinks so.

**Please, no more rubbish about times-tables!**  
By [@jemmaths](#)

Jemma Sherwood argues that knowing your times-tables is a vertebra in the spine of mathematical knowledge. As well as arguing that fluency with times-tables supports the learning of other knowledge, she also addresses the arguments people have given against times-table tests at the end of primary school.

**Teach First career change**  
By [@joannecrossley](#)

We often think of Teach First as training recent graduates, so I was interested to hear about this teacher who worked as a barrister for 20 years before deciding to start training

to become a teacher. She describes how tough it was to cope with a new career later in life, but is positive about her choice. “Now that I’m starting to find my feet, I think that this is the best decision I’ve ever made. It’s too early to say whether my pupils feel the same.”

**There is the curriculum, and then there is the “other” curriculum**  
By [@iQuirky\\_Teacher](#)

It’s often assumed that traditional teaching is only concerned with academic outcomes, and not with making students better people or developing character. This post argues that the two goals are not in competition, and that studying helps to make one a better person, by teaching self-control and the value of hard work. “At the end of the day, this is all about the development of scholarly disposition in children and the celebration of all things scholarship.”

**Papers Society**  
By [@mathsjem](#)

Maths teacher Jo Morgan describes her efforts to change her attitude to doing practice papers before maths exams. She set up her own “Papers Society” where students come to practise exam papers after school: “. . . it seems to be a very successful initiative for increasing the amount of exam preparation my students are doing from earlier in the year, so I thought I’d share it here in case other teachers want to try the same thing.”

**Structured revision lessons using retrieval, spacing and interleaving**  
By [@MissDCox](#)

Another post on supporting students with revision activities, this time by RE teacher Dawn Cox. She is sceptical about the ability of students to organise their own revision effectively and uses principles from cognitive science to design revision sessions that ensure students revisit the same topics at suitable intervals and practise retrieving the relevant knowledge.

**Studying with distractions**  
By [@PsyDocCindy](#)

Another post about applying cognitive science to studying appeared on the Learning Scientists blog. It answers the question of whether we can study effectively if people are talking around us. The (unsurprising) answer is that we don’t learn as well when we are distracted. But what is more unexpected, is that research suggests that this effect is more severe when we are studying something easy, than for something difficult.

# BOOK REVIEW

**Mind Their Hearts: Creating Schools and Homes of Warm-Heartedness**

By David Boddy

Publisher John Catt

Reviewed by Harry Fletcher-Wood



Reviewing *Mind Their Hearts* is a challenge, because it incorporates two different books, demanding two different reviews, or reviewers.

Promising to articulate how our education system can “be made fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world”, the book fails to convince. I’d hoped it would offer ways to combine academic rigour and chances for young people to mature wisely. Instead, academic education was overlooked: it was only mentioned to say we should “not just” prioritise it.

Many of the activities David Boddy suggests rely on a good knowledge of the world, yet the idea that students might benefit from academic education – or that this is part of the school’s role – was omitted. His book left me none the wiser on how we can make our education system fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world, if that system is to continue to teach young people to read, write and have knowledge of that world.

One reason it fails to offer useful suggestions for our current system is that it relies on an idiosyncratic evidence base. I should not have been surprised to read the unreferenced assertion that “futurologists” in the Department for Education know that seven out of ten jobs young people will go on to do have not yet been invented, but other claims were more surprising.

Boddy follows Socrates in arguing that humans know everything before they are born, and eastern philosophy in arguing that our spirits continue, carrying that knowledge, long after our deaths. I wouldn’t presume to question his faith, but these are doubtful foundations on which to build a curriculum. Yet it is on this basis – and similar points – that much of the book proceeds: children are born happy and wise, the role of education is simply to elicit this, overcoming any “clouds” that limit our “natural state of inner happiness”.

This is the second book within the covers: far more than a work on school leadership, this is a work of spirituality. To those expecting the promised “secular

ethical curriculum”, sentences such as: “My inner guide, the Knower, directed me to acquire more heart-opening swan energy and bring the tiger and sloth energies under observation” can come as a surprise. The reason why the book delivers so unconvincingly as a work of educational thought is that it reads more as a set of mantras.

Even had I shared the author’s beliefs, I might still have found it frustrating. Wandering sentences dogged every page: “Trying to change things can involve pushing uphill or seeking the impossible, whereas the agent of change is within the thing itself.”

The book was repetitious: the value of silence in school was not just mentioned, it was introduced repeatedly, justified and explained each time. And the false assertion that youth unemployment is as high as it’s ever been (it has fallen from 22 per cent in 2011 to about 12 per cent) was compounded

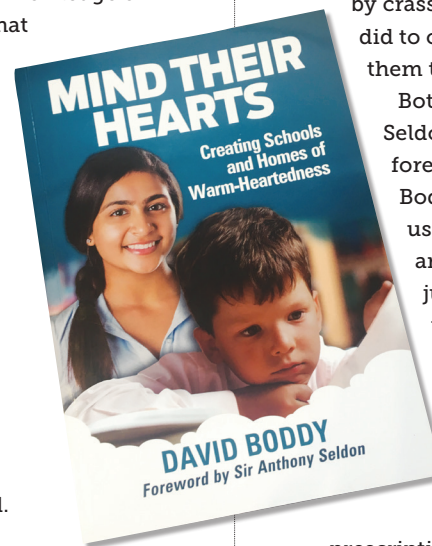
by crassly equating it to “what we did to our youths when we sent them to the trenches”.

Both Boddy and Anthony Seldon, who wrote the foreword, emphasise that Boddy would never expect us to agree with him. Boddy argues that we should not judge his prescriptions until we have tried them and that these truths can only be seen once they have been experienced. Sadly, not one word persuaded me to pursue any of these

prescriptions.

Paradoxically, I appreciated Boddy’s account of learning-focused efficiency through repeatedly polishing a floor; some of his work as a head intrigued me, including communal music, the teaching of philosophy and headmaster’s question time.

I would not recommend that anyone read this book, but the skeleton of a third book lies within *Mind Their Hearts*: Boddy’s memoirs, of a career that has included business, education and being Margaret Thatcher’s press secretary, would make a fascinating read. Joining the author on his spiritual journey might prove far more educative than reading its conclusions.



**Next week:**

**Learning Without Labels:  
Improving outcomes for  
vulnerable learners**

Edited by Marc Rowland  
Reviewed by Vijita Patel



Which is the best style of schooling: "traditional" or "progressive"? Schools Minister Nick Gibb fights on the side of the former. He can hardly make a speech without blasting progressive methods. He hopes the controversy will be settled once and for all and only government-approved methods will be allowed in English state schools.

But controversy over pedagogy isn't new. It precedes Plowden, Dewey, Rousseau. It goes right back to the 5th century BC when Aristophanes mocked teaching methods in his satirical play, *The Clouds*.

The play's main character, Strepsiades, tries to avoid paying debts accumulated by his horse-loving son. He's heard of a school where pupils are taught to argue in such a way they will always win. He hopes to be able to prove he owes his creditors nothing. To master the art of "logic-chopping and hair-splitting", he enrolls himself into The Thinkery, the academy run by Socrates.

The Thinkery is inhabited by the ancient Greek equivalent of wishy-washy progressives: philosophers. These "stuck-up white-faced characters" indulge in activities that today would be described as "enquiry-based learning". They devise experiments to measure the length of a flea's jump. It involves putting flea's feet into melted wax. They spend time crouching with their heads touching the earth to investigate "phenomena underground". A student tells Strepsiades that when Socrates was gazing upwards

## THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



### A DEBATE THAT'S GONE ON FOR CENTURIES

JANET DOWNS

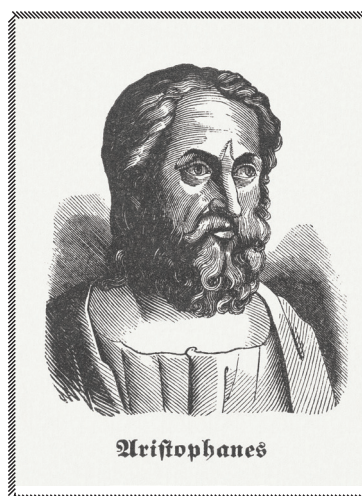
to study the moon's orbit, a "lizard on the roof shitted right in his face!"

In case anyone is in doubt about what Aristophanes thinks of Socrates, the Chorus (the clouds of the title) greet him thus:

"Hail, grey-headed hunter of phrases artistic!

"Hail, Socrates, master of twaddle!"

Using a blizzard of double-entendres and scatological humour,



Aristophanes ridicules Socrates, his methods and the art of rhetoric ("good debating points which don't actually mean anything").

But it would be wrong to think Aristophanes is firmly against the progressives. He introduces an argument between two characters, Right and Wrong, who debate education theory. The Chorus introduce the discussion:

"As you battle in words

and in thoughts of the mind,

"Let us see which is better and which lags behind;

"We're concerned in this contest for Socrates' sake;

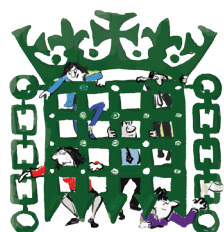
"For the future of Learning, no less, is at stake."

First up is Right, the upholder of tradition. He extols zero-tolerance. He describes a Golden Age when boys were sober and good-mannered, tough and hardy. They learnt old songs by heart. They were chaste. At the mention of chastity, however, Right is revealed as a pervert. He gets carried away with descriptions of thighs being pressed together and penises "like peaches, all velvety and dewy".

Wrong dismisses Right's opinions as archaic and quaint, "fit for history's dustbin". But Right reminds him that it was such methods that bred "the men who fought at Marathon".

So, "traditional" v "progressive"? Which won in the end? It would appear to have been "traditional". Socrates was eventually convicted of corrupting Athenian youth and sentenced to death.

Neither won in the long term. The argument continues today. As Dr Mary Beard said at the Education Committee Conference in September last year: "These debates are never going to end. There is no right answer. We're never going to be able to sit back, and say, 'OK – education's sorted now' . . . the priority is to try to ensure that the debates we have are as productive as possible."



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

It's no secret many Conservatives are not huge fans of Theresa May's grammar plans. Even some of the schools ministers seem to be promoting it through gritted teeth. (What's that? There's only one schools minister? Oh yes . . .)

But now the former deputy PM has suggested that even the prime minister may not be as gung ho as she appears.

Nick Clegg told the House of Commons today that ministers were being "led by the nose" on grammar schools by chief adviser Nick Timothy – he who once ran the New Schools Network.

The former Lib Dem leader said he had been told there was "one un-elected political apparatchik in No 10" who had attended a grammar school – and it was one who had "persuaded the prime minister that therefore it's a good idea".

Timothy is a grammar school alumnus. We know because we wrote it in the only in-depth interview he gave last year. He

is also the head of the selective education team, according to private school heads who said they went to one of the team meetings.

Clegg said the design of the education system should "always be led by the evidence", and not by "dogma, ideology or personal hobby horses". But then he also once said he'd make university free.

## FRIDAY:

Letters winged their way to the 682 primary schools deemed excellent enough in progress and attainment to merit a letter of congratulations from Nick Gibb, the schools minister.

To win a penned missive you needed either 100 per cent of everyone reaching the required standard of reading, writing and maths, or be in the top 10 per cent for progress. But if you achieved both then you only got a letter for the latter. How rude!

## MONDAY:

Waiting for the white paper. It never turned

up.

Neither did our congratulations letter from Nick Gibb. Oh well.

## TUESDAY:

Though Margaret Thatcher was known as the "milk-snatcher", fellow Conservative and current children's minister Edward Timpson this week admitted to the same crime.

Timpson told a parliamentary debate on the availability of milk in schools that, in the 1970s, he was a beneficiary of the scheme during his time at Mrs Batsen's nursery in Wilmslow.

Furthermore, he was appointed milk monitor. It was in this early position of responsibility that Timpson learned "the reality of needing to learn to share with others and not just think about myself" when he and a classmate thought they'd found a way to get more than their fair share of the white stuff.

"We knew that there were two children absent that day, so we concocted a plan

to drink two of the bottles downstairs and then bring the remaining bottles upstairs, where we would then be able to consume another bottle, knowing that there should be two bottles spare.

"Unfortunately, the plan did not turn out as we had hoped it would, as a number of bottles had already been taken out of the crate by the staff, who recognised that they needed to reduce the number of bottles to reflect the level of attendance. So we were caught red-handed and I was never made milk monitor again."

This would be the perfect opportunity to make a gag about the DfE robbing money from schools, but we quite like sticky-fingered Timpson so we'll pass.

## WEDNESDAY

Something something something Brexit.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS





## Pupils' art raises more than £25,000

FEATURED

Pupils from across the Ark multi-academy trust auctioned off their artwork last week, raising more than £25,000 for their respective schools.

Forty-five pieces of art from primary and secondary pupils – and teachers – went up for auction at the Art for Ark event at London's Saatchi Gallery.

One piece by art teacher Sarah Sandeman, from Ark academy in Wembley, raised £10,000, which will go back to the art department at her school.

The silent auction was attended by the trust's supporters, including principals, sponsors past and present, foundations, businesses and partners of the event, Bank of America Merrill Lynch – who also helped to secure the prestigious venue.

Pupils put forward their work as part of a competition, with successful entries coming from academies including Ark King Solomon, Ark John Keats, Ark Globe and Ark Charter.

Aysha Ali, a year 9 pupil at Ark Charter, said of her piece, *S is for Sea*: "The sea is something I really enjoy. I wanted to incorporate something that is part of my identity into my final piece."

"It feels really strange to have had my piece up for auction, but I feel honoured. I think my teacher has helped me by giving me advice on the techniques I should use, and how I can put some of myself into my work."

Vesela Valeva, a year 9 pupil from Ark



Art-rageous: Tutor Sarah Sandeman's piece, which sold for £10,000  
Inset left: Aysha Ali with her piece

Samples of work submitted by Ark pupils

John Keats, said it was "amazing" to have her work hanging at the Saatchi Gallery.

Explaining the message behind her work, she said: "My piece is about the world and how different people view it. Some people might think they have a lot of problems, and really feel down about that, when there are

others that live in worse situations."

Sir Paul Marshall, chair of Ark schools, said: "We were delighted to receive so many entries to this year's competition, and this evening serves to highlight the creativity, talent and passion of our students and their art teachers."

## GET OUT OF YOUR CARS AND WALK (OR SCOOT)

A cycling charity is calling for schools to use their sugar tax funding to get pupils walking, scooting or cycling to school.

Sustrans is encouraging schools in England to use the increased school sport premium and healthy pupils' capital programme, both boosted by the tax on sugary drinks, to make pupils more active.

The charity wants the funding used for bike and scooter training, road awareness sessions and storage facilities.

The £320 million sport premium will be available for the 2017-18 academic year; the £415 million of capital funding in 2018-19 to pay for facilities to support physical education, after-school activities and healthy eating.

The charity's call comes after figures from YouGov revealed that more than one in three pupils travelled to school by car and that only one in five 5 to 16-year-olds have 60 minutes of exercise, twice a week.

As part of the campaign to get kids more active, the charity hosted the Big Pedal 2017 challenge this week, in which pupils from more than 1,600 schools ditched cars and cycled to school.

Xavier Brice, Sustrans' chief executive, said: "The average primary school journey is 1.6 miles, a distance that can be walked, scooted or cycled as an easy way of building more physical activity into our busy lives."



Darren Jenkins from Avon Owls, Thor and Minerva pupils

## School's special guest is a hoot

A school fundraising group has adopted a rescued owl on behalf of pupils.

Friends of Minerva Primary Academy have used proceeds from fundraising activities to sponsor Thor, an owl from Avon Owls sanctuary, whom pupils got the chance to meet during a special hour-long assembly.

The Bristol school, which also has an owl as its logo, will receive a certificate to mark the adoption and will be named on a plaque that will travel with Thor to educational events.

Thor, who arrived at the sanctuary as a hatchling, has become used to human company, enjoying attention and perching on people's shoulders.

Cath Archer, lead learning mentor at Minerva, said: "The pupils really enjoyed meeting Thor at the assembly. I would like to thank the friends for raising the money to be able to adopt him. This has been a great educational experience for our pupils which I feel sure will carry on back in the classroom."



Ally Kennen cuts the ribbon at the library's official opening

## Children's author opens library

A Somerset school's new library was officially opened last week by children's and teen fiction author, Ally Kennen.

The author, who was shortlisted for a Carnegie medal for *Beast*, cut the ribbon at Minerva Primary School's library, which has been rebuilt and restocked with an £11,400 investment from Taunton Deane borough council.

Kennen, whose latest story *The Everything Machine* is W H Smith's children's book of the month, said of the new library: "A well-stocked, well-run library is the

engine room of a good school.

"The benefits of children reading are legion and I am delighted to support this wonderful and vital new resource."

Also at the launch were volunteers from the Read Write Inc. programme, which helps four to seven-year-olds learning to read and write with hour-long, weekly reading sessions.

Minerva's head Carly Wilkins said: "The new library will provide the very best for the children. Our pupils are going to be enthused and inspired to develop their love of reading, which will in turn support their learning."



# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**R**obin Gainher has been appointed as the new headteacher of Knighton House school in Dorset.

Knighton House is a preparatory school for girls from 7 to 13, with a separate pre-prep, The Orchard, for boys and girls between 3 and 7.

Gainher was head of Beeston Hall, an independent school in Norfolk, for seven years. He was also deputy head and director of studies at the co-educational independent Cranleigh school in Surrey.

He will be joined at Knighton by his wife Ali, who will bring her experience in the administrative and pastoral side of preparatory schooling to the team. Her role will be formally announced in summer.

Commenting on his appointment, Gainher said: "I am thrilled to be appointed Knighton's tenth head and first headmaster since 1999.

"Ali and I instantly loved the school when we first visited, and instinctively knew it was a wonderfully happy place where we felt very much at home."

Gainher will take over from the current head Sarah Wicks in summer, ahead of the 2017 autumn term.

**Samantha Williamson** has been appointed principal of Merchants' academy in Bristol.



Robin Gainher

The school caters for students aged 4 to 18, and is part of the Merchants' academy trust alongside Venturers academy, the first state-funded all-through school in Bristol for students with autism.

Williamson, at present principal of Dover Christ Church academy in Kent, will take up her new post from September 1.

In her new role, she plans to work on retaining and attracting staff by encouraging ambition and offering more opportunities for career development. "Rewarding and inspiring our teachers has an extremely positive and tangible impact on the education of young people."



Samantha Williamson



Kate Bowen-Viner

She also plans to bring the wider community into the school, and hopes the academy can become a "community hub".

"The tenacity and resilience of the community, teamed with their strong support of Merchants' academy, is a winning formula.

"I am passionate about ensuring all young people have high-quality educational experiences, enabling them to develop interests and aspirations that lead to brilliant futures."

**Kate Bowen-Viner** is joining the researchers and educationists at the think-and-action tank LKMco.

Bowen-Viner joins from the Department for Education (DfE) where she worked on special free schools in the office of the regional schools commissioner for the south west.

Her key responsibilities at the DfE included regular contact with school providers and local communities, as well as using data to guide decisions.

She began her career in education as a teaching assistant in Liverpool, before moving on to teach key stages 3 to 5 in London and Bristol.

In the new role, she says she is most looking forward to working with a team that is "enthusiastic and genuinely passionate about equality in education and the youth sector".

"I am looking forward to using evidence and research to make a positive difference for children and young people, and hope to use my experience from inside and outside the classroom to support LKMco's policy research, analysis and project delivery."

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

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

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## SCHOOLS WEEK 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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

**Solutions:**  
Next week

## Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

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



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