

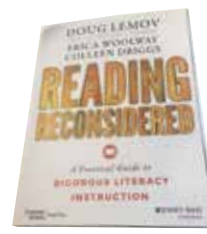
WOMEN IN THEIR 30S LEAVE TEACHING IN DROVES

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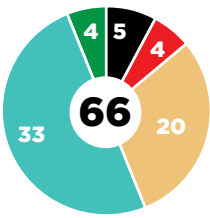
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'Bankrupt Buildings':

Our 4-page special report into the policy that could block fair funding plans

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Three years, £1.9m – and no free school

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

A proposed free school has been cancelled three years after it was given the go-ahead because the planned site was too small – with £1.9 million already spent on it.

The Harperbury Free School was given approval by the Department for Education (DfE) in May 2013 to open the following September in Hertfordshire.

A former hospital site in Radlett, near Watford, was proposed as a potential home for the school, before the Education Funding Agency (EFA) took on the negotiations.

But after years of delays – during which the

school postponed opening twice despite pupils accepting offers – the EFA has now said the site is too small and scrapped the project.

The school's founders, mostly parents and business people, have said they are astonished and questioned the EFA's ability to manage complicated projects.

Clive Glover, founder and vice-chair of governors, said: "It is frankly scandalous. These government officials have clearly been incompetent to say the very least."

A letter from the government to the founders said any application would not meet planning laws because the site is in the green belt, adding there

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Moving on:
Glenys Stacey
examines her
Ofqual record

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EDITION 59

NEWS

£1.9m Herts free school canned three years after approval

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSWCONTINUED
FROM FRONT

was a "risk that no suitable site can ever be found".

But Mr Glover said he could not understand how the government's experts on building schools "could not have known the site they secured for us was too small.

"They have managed completely to destroy the valid aspirations of hundreds of local families who desperately want a local secondary school for their children to attend," he added.

It heaps more pressure on Hertfordshire County Council, which has said it needs more than 500 additional places to meet demand by 2022. Many existing schools are unable to expand because they are also in the green belt.

Last week, a proposed free school 10 miles away from Harperbury, in Harpenden was also postponed due to site problems.

St Albans MP Anne Main was told the cost so far of the Harperbury Free School was £1.9 million after asking a question in parliament. But Mr Glover said this was a conservative estimate.

The school group had already appointed a headteacher and recruited five teachers. The project had also been given a £440,000 Project Development Grant – one of the highest amounts allocated to a single free school project.

In a letter to Ms Main, schools minister Lord Nash said he did not believe "continuing to commit public funding to the project is the right thing to do".

A letter to the Harperbury Free School founders, seen by *Schools Week*, said the school would potentially have to wait until 2018 to open as a planning application was likely to end up in a planning inspectorate inquiry.

The letter – signed by Charlie Lang, deputy director of the DfE's free schools programme, and Gillian Hillier, deputy director of free schools at the EFA – described this as the "longest period of time that a group has been in pre-opening".

The government said it was not confident it could put forward an argument that met the "very special circumstances" needed when applying to build on green belt land. Lord Nash described the risk of not securing planning permission at the hospital site as significant.

This is not the first time the EFA has wasted money on an inappropriate building.

In September 2014, *Schools Week* found the agency had been forced to backtrack after spending £1.2 million to buy a three-bedroom home in Reading – complete with balconies and pond – to house a school. It was later accepted that planning permission would not be granted. *Schools Week* reported last month that four experts have been appointed by the EFA to find free schools sites and "secure best value for the taxpayer".

Harperbury planned to provide places for pupils in villages on the outskirts of St Albans – where Mr Glover said there are about 1,300 pupils currently attending 57



different schools. It had attracted more than 200 applications for its 120 places.

No appeal process is available to the founders, but local MPs are due to meet with ministers.

A DfE spokesperson said it was keen to support the school, but added the local planning authority had been clear that planning permission was "highly unlikely".

"Despite the best efforts of both us and the trust, it has not been possible to progress the project," the spokesperson added.

HEADTEACHER SCRAPS 'MAD' REVISION CLASSES FOR YEAR 11 PUPILS

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

A headteacher has scrapped extra revision classes and interventions for year 11 to protect students' mental health in the run up to this summer's exams.

John Tomsett, of Huntington School in York, has instead urged his teachers to save their energy for planning and executing "great lessons".

Mr Tomsett told *Schools Week* he did not think months-long "untargeted interventions" had a positive impact on results.

He said they overloaded teachers and pupils with extra pressures, causing them to become stressed and ill.

"Why do some students think, when they have seven hours of English lessons in years 10 and 11 a fortnight, that 10 one-hour lessons, once a week leading up to the examinations, held after school when they and their teachers are tired, will suddenly transform them from D grade students to C grade?" Mr Tomsett said. "It is mad and there is no logic to it."

Mr Tomsett (pictured), a member of the Headteachers' Roundtable – a key influencer of government policy – said the reason extra revision classes were widely used in schools was so staff could "cover their backsides" if results were poor.

"When governors question why results

weren't good enough, staff reply: 'But look at all the work we did.' Well, actually, if you hadn't done that work results might have been even better because the teaching would have been better," he added.

In 2010, 55 per cent of pupils at Huntington achieved five A*-C GCSEs, including English and maths.

"From this point we first stopped doing the interventions and we went up around 20 points in 2013. Last year we were at 66 per cent," Mr Tomsett said.

"This year I've seen staff start to get a bit anxious again and start more interventions. There are clearly loads of variables in our results so our view is just to teach.

"I'm not going to get results at the cost of the mental health of my staff and pupils. Just keep the whole thing measured."

Clacton Coastal Academy headteacher Steph Neill agreed with Mr Tomsett that some interventions are a waste of time but said extra classes were essential for some groups of students.

"The main issue for me is that there is a habit of assuming the more hours we put in the better exam outcomes will be," Ms Neill said.

"Bringing the whole class back after school for an hour or two does not have the same impact as identifying the targets for a specific group of students who really need extra support."

She said interventions at her school

focused on pupil premium students who had gaps in their knowledge.

Meanwhile Andrew Day, headteacher at Northumberland Church of England Academy, sympathised with Mr Tomsett but said interventions were a "necessary evil" for most schools.

"Much of our work should be accomplished in the classroom and yes, part of the problem is students think: 'I'll just go to the revision classes at the end,' and they do, and they come in their droves," Mr Day said.

"But unfortunately we don't have a culture where students say: 'No, we'll do the work in lesson time and we'll revise and do all the things we are supposed to do.'"

Northumberland Academy's results increased 18 per cent last year after concentrating efforts on interventions. "So they had a very positive impact on what we do," he added.



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NEWS

Schools losing female teachers after maternity

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools have been urged to offer flexible working opportunities, such as "keep in touch days" and cash retainers after figures show one in four teachers who leave the classroom are women in their 30s.

A set of essays on teacher recruitment and retention has been published today by thinktank Policy Exchange and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL).

Jonathan Simons, head of education at Policy Exchange, explores the problem of teachers leaving the profession – recently identified by the National Audit Office as the main reason for teacher shortages.

Figures from the Department for Education's Database of Teacher Records show about 6,000 (27 per cent) of teachers who left the profession in 2013 were women aged between 30 and 39.

Mr Simons said this "huge bulge" could be put down to maternity leave, adding: "This is an issue both because of the absolute numbers leaving, but because such women are disproportionately likely to leave compared in the teacher force generally."

But he highlighted figures from a recent National Foundation for Education Research report that found half of former state school teachers stayed in education.

DfE figures also show the number of ex-teachers returning to the profession rose by 15 per cent from 14,700 in 2011 to

17,350 in 2014.

Mr Simons said better use of flexible working in schools could stop teachers leaving the classroom – both from "burn out" and women leaving for caring responsibilities – and encourage those who do leave to return.

He said this would fall on headteachers, rather than the government, to implement.

And he called for a broader use of flexible working rather than part-time work or juggling timetables to fit caring responsibilities.

For instance, Mr Simons said, schools could set up nurseries for the children of their own staff children, which lined up with the government's call for more school-based nurseries.

Leora Cruddas, ASCL's director of policy, welcomed the suggestions. "We've got to do more in this area to allow these women to return to work," she said. "This is an issue that headteachers are best able to address, rather than some of the other supply issues which are endemic."

She said the percentage of women leaving the profession also affected their leadership chances, citing figures that show women make up 62 per cent of the secondary teacher workforce, but only 36 per cent of headteachers.



"We need to support these women who aspire to leadership positions – especially those with families."

Hannah Wilson, (pictured) co-founder of grassroots gender equality movement WomensEd and vice-principal of a London school, said there was a current lack of flexibility in

the sector over contract hours and part-time opportunities for leaders.

Ms Wilson added: "The solutions are for headteachers and governors to be more creative in recruitment and retention strategies.

"Induction and keeping in touch days should be made a formal part of the CPD offer to ensure that maternity absences do not create gaps in confidence and expertise."

But Mr Simons said there was a "sniffiness" among some teachers about flexible working, adding: "This approach needs to cease.

"From school leaders' perspective, they also need to start thinking about a broader definition of flexibility, and one that encompasses a more 'stop-start' pattern of employment across their school or multi-academy trust from the same group of teachers.

"A more enlightened view of flexibility could boost returner numbers and make a significant contribution to teacher supply."

TEACHING LEADERS TO DOUBLE IN SIZE

The government is more than doubling its support for a social enterprise offering professional development to middle leaders in schools with challenging intakes, in a bid to improve teacher retention, .

Started in 2008, Teaching Leaders has supported 1,958 classroom teachers across more than 900 schools with a leadership responsibility – for example, a subject lead or head of department.

Participants receive one-to-one coaching and attend residential and one-day events over two years.

The government has granted funding for three more cohorts and increased the amount to allow a further 1,500 middle leaders to benefit – almost the same number that completed the programme in the past eight years. The charity said it was unable to disclose the full amount given.

James Toop, Teaching Leaders chief executive, said the programme had been successful in terms of pupil achievement and retention but squeezed budgets could mean schools struggle to find the £2,000 needed each year to place teachers on the programme.

"Schools need to invest in keeping good people though and they will see a return on investment in terms of results," Mr Toop added.

Not to be confused with the government's National Teaching Service, which aims to place high-flying teachers in underperforming schools, the charity sets itself apart by focusing on retention over recruitment.

Mr Toop continued: "We help with identifying and developing a school's existing talent."

RSCs and councils ask schools for 'impossible' predictions

SOPHIE SCOTT

@SOPH_E_SCOTT

School leaders are furious that local authorities and regional school commissioners (RSCs) are asking for predicted grades for this year's primary assessments when the government is refusing to provide guidance on how to score them.

Professionals say it is impossible to provide the predictions before May's tests as pupils are sitting new tests under a new curriculum and it is not yet clear what their scores for pupils will be.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), wrote on Monday to the national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter to ask him to speak to the rest of the RSCs about the predicted grade requests.

Mr Hobby (pictured) told *Schools Week* he wanted RSCs and local authorities to stop "adding insult to injury" to primary teachers by requesting the information.

He added: "The last few months have been one unpleasant surprise after another in more ways than one.

"Requesting predictions for 2016 results is, frankly, impossible.

"Nobody knows what will be achieved when you have a new curriculum, new

performance thresholds and new tests.

It just adds insult to injury. We have had a lot of complaints about two sources of these requests – local authorities and RSCs, depending on the nature of the school.

"I wrote to Sir David and pointed out this is probably not the best time to be asking for predictions and asked if he could he chat with the RSCs about the fact that hard data from schools is going to be impossible.

"This is an entirely new curriculum and pupils haven't been taught for the full school year and nobody has actually used the tests before and they don't know pupils will do on them until they do them. The actual thresholds for expected standards are not clear."

Some schools in north Yorkshire are understood to be boycotting requests from their local authority.

The NAHT's north Yorkshire spokesperson said: "In north Yorkshire, the local authority has agreed with the NAHT that predicting the outcomes of key stage 2 tests remains guesswork until there is clarity about revised expectations and schools have had the opportunity to experience at least one year under the new assessment requirements.

"School leaders have been requested to submit data where they feel that they can and in a format that they will be using for reporting to governors.



"A number of heads have told the authority that they cannot do this with any degree of accuracy and therefore won't be submitting data. The local authority has accepted this will be the case."

It comes after a raft of disagreements about the changes to this year's key stage 1 and 2 tests.

Last month, schools minister Nick Gibb acceded to the NAHT's request to put back the date for the submission of teacher assessment data.

Within the next few days, the Department for Education (DfE) is expected to write to all primary schools to clarify changes to primary assessment. Confusion over the exemplification materials for writing assessments has caused anger among the profession and the teacher unions.

A DfE spokesperson said: "To ensure every child gets the world-class education they deserve, where there are concerns about an academy's performance, RSCs collect a range of data on how pupils are doing, so support and challenge can be given where required to drive improvements."

Crowdsourcing primary scores is 'a stab in the dark'

A deputy headteacher has called on his colleagues from across the country to help pull together data from sample primary assessments.

Michael Tidd, from Edgewood Primary School in Nottinghamshire, made the appeal for the information in a bid to gain a general overview of how pupils are performing, in response to calls from local authorities for predicted grades.

He launched the data collation on Sunday and so far has been sent results for 1,000 pupils at 40 primary schools. The results are based on sample tests for reading, maths, and grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS), which pupils in year 2 and 6 will sit this term.

Mr Tidd said: "If we are going to have to take a stab in the dark to predict grades then this seemed like a way for people to at least see where they are in relation to others."

So far his analysis, based on a self-selecting sample, shows an average score of 28 in reading, 35 in GPS and 60 in maths.

He added: "This can give teachers a rough idea and comparison to other schools, but it still can't tell us if we are going to plummet to the bottom of the league tables or what the threshold is going to be."

Interested teachers can contact Mr Tidd at info@primarycurriculum.me.uk or visit michaelt1979.wordpress.com

NEWS

EXCLUSIVE: DfE £65,000 teacher salary advert not misleading, says ASA

The Department for Education (DfE) has been cleared of allegations that its £3 million recruitment advert was misleading for claiming teachers could earn up to £65,000, *Schools Week* can reveal.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) launched an investigation in November into the department's "Get into teaching" advert after nearly 100 complaints.

The complainants said the advert was deliberately misleading because only a small proportion of teachers actually earned that rate.

The DfE later released official figures showing 485 classroom teachers earned more than £65,000. *Schools Week* understands the ASA has ruled in favour of the DfE and is due to publish its investigation findings next week.

Complainants were informed of the outcome last month. The ASA said it would not comment until the official ruling was published. The advert first aired in October and featured during prime time programming.

The first complaint about the ad was submitted to the ASA just a day after its launch.

At the time, complainant Martin Powell-Davies, an executive member of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), said the DfE had spent "millions of pounds on an advert which is clearly deliberately misleading, because the proportion of teachers who actually earn £65,000 a year is absolutely minuscule".

The number of complaints rose to nearly 100 within a month and the ASA launched a formal investigation.

The advertising watchdog said it only launches investigations after complaints have been assessed carefully to establish whether there are grounds for further action. The onus is placed on the advertiser to prove its claims.

In December, the DfE responded to a Freedom of Information request that found 485 classroom teachers earned more than £65k a year, as of November last year – equivalent to just 0.1 per cent of the teaching workforce.

Looking at teachers more broadly – including senior leaders and heads – more than 12,800 school staff earned more than £65,000.

The department was also forced to defend the advert – which used real teachers and pupils – because it did not include any staff members from special schools, despite vacancy rates being almost twice as high as in mainstream education.

Simon Knight, deputy headteacher at Frank Wise School in Oxfordshire, said the continuing absence of special schools in teaching recruitment materials was hugely problematic.

A DfE spokesperson said: "We are pleased the ASA has dismissed the complaint that our efforts to recruit more excellent teachers were misleading. Far from being inaccurate, the ASA has ruled that it is right to say teachers can earn up to £65,000 – as many outstanding individuals do."

"Rather than repeatedly talking down the profession and complaining about initiatives to bring in more top graduates, the NUT should instead be working with us to promote the hugely rewarding career of teaching."

Huge sixth form classes affect results, heads warn

ANN MCGAURAN
@ANNMCGAURAN

A "significant funding dip" is forcing schools to increase sixth form class sizes, with one school reporting 38 pupils in one class, according to the Grammar School Heads Association.

Jim Skinner, the association's chief executive said: "We are facing a situation where high quality A-level provision will become the preserve of the independent sector."

Three quarters (74 per cent) of the 76 grammar schools responding to a survey by the association said maximum class sizes had increased. The largest class size was 38 pupils and the average size of the largest group is 25.

Mr Skinner told *Schools Week*: "There is a significant funding dip for 16-19 education, with much lower funding than key stage 4 which precedes it, and the higher education which it leads onto."

As a result, he said "schools and colleges have no choice other than to significantly increase class sizes and reduce the range of courses offered, with subjects such as modern foreign languages and music being lost at A-level".

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), which represents leaders at all forms of schools, said baseline funding for 16-19 year olds was inadequate and the survey findings reflected the picture across the whole of the post-16 state education sector.

Interim general secretary Malcolm Trobe said teachers' workload was certain to increase as a result of bigger classes and there was a risk to student outcomes. "Teacher workload is bound to go up when working with A-level students, who are extremely keen to get a lot of written feedback."

"The danger quite clearly is that if you increase class size and reduce contact time you are potentially going to put at risk the grades and attainment that students are able to achieve."

Devonport High School for Boys in Plymouth was one of the grammar schools responding to the survey. Deputy headteacher Dave Adams said he saw "an impact on teacher workload in terms of providing support to a larger group".

He added: "The government says it wants to tackle increased teacher workload – but at the same time the funding situation for sixth forms is making class sizes larger."

The school has experienced a 20 per cent

cut in funding to the sixth form during the last five years, Mr Adams said.

He added: "We need 15-20 students in a class to make it economically viable. What we are seeing now is economics and maths groups going up to 26 and 27 students."

James Kewin, the deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association agreed increasing class size was "one of the many strategies sixth form colleges are adopting to deal with falling funding and increased costs".

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "We recognise the importance of investing in education – which is why, thanks to the difficult decisions we have taken elsewhere, we have been able to protect core 16 to 19 funding."

"As part of this, we have provided sufficient funds for every full-time student to do a full timetable of courses regardless of institution and increased support for those who successfully study four or more A-levels and large TechBacc programmes."

"At the same time we have ended the unfair difference between post-16 schools and colleges by funding them per student to ensure that all young people leave education with the skills they need to thrive in modern Britain."

Maths teachers get highest bursaries - but drop out more

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Maths had the largest drop-out rates among trainee teachers despite offering the biggest bursaries, *Schools Week* can exclusively reveal.

A survey of 30 providers by the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) has for the first time collected figures by subject and reason for trainees who leave before completing their courses.

It found more than a quarter of secondary school drop-outs were in maths – despite students being offered up to £25,000 in tax-free bursaries.

Chemistry (15 per cent) and modern foreign languages (12 per cent) had the third and fourth highest drop-out rates respectively, despite again offering some of the largest bursaries.

The total number of drop-outs, however, was relatively low with just 90 trainees from a sample cohort of 1,204.

The Department for Education (DfE) said it does not recognise these figures and there is "nothing to suggest maths is a particular problem".

But the findings follow a report into teacher training by the National Audit Office (NAO) that criticised the DfE for handing out £620 million on bursaries without knowing whether it aids recruitment.

The department has hiked up bursaries in recent years for priority subjects. Graduates with a first-class degree in physics can now earn £30,000 tax-free.

The NASBTT survey was based on trainee figures from 2013/14. Bursaries of up to £20,000 could be claimed at the time in maths, chemistry and modern languages.

Martin Thompson, executive director at NASBTT, said: "We wanted to inform our providers about why people were leaving – and it's interesting to see we are having so much trouble with maths trainees leaving."

"Perhaps they were in it for the bursary payments?"

One survey response said a maths trainee was tagged as a "cause for concern" because of their performance and then quit the day after a bursary payment.

The respondent, who was not named, added: "This brought his bursary total for the year to £10,000 and he admitted this had paid for his Masters course."

But Mr Thompson stopped short of saying

the figures revealed a potential problem with "bursary tourism".

The survey also found nearly 40 per cent of trainee teachers who dropped out of courses said it was because of stress or workload. A further 20 per cent left because of health reasons and 15.6 per cent because they did not enjoy teaching.

The DfE said 88 per cent of maths trainees in 2013/14 were awarded qualified teaching status, compared to 91 per cent of trainees overall.

They also said bursaries are paid in instalments and robust procedures ensure money is not paid out unnecessarily.

A spokesperson said: "The government is investing hundreds of millions in teacher recruitment and this is our best ever generation of teachers."

"We are offering generous bursaries and scholarships in STEM [science, technology, engineering and maths] subjects – and we've given schools unprecedented freedom over staff pay, allowing them to attract the brightest and the best."



The Telegraph

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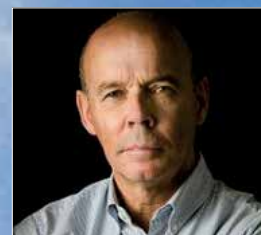
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NEWS: DAVID CARTER AND HIS SYSTEM LEADERS

NEW SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER NOT CLEAR ON TRANSPARENCY

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The new national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, is keeping quiet about plans to make his office more open, despite promising to bring transparency to the role since he took over.

Sir David, who started the job at the beginning of February, was unable to answer questions about his plans to introduce a new tier system for academy chains and repeated requests from *Schools Week* for further information about transparency - and why it was now missing from his plans - were also refused.

It comes after the commissioner made no mention of transparency in his first big interview, published in *TES* last week, despite telling Radio 4's Today programme in January he wanted commissioners to become more accountable and transparent and claiming "there are many routes" for the public to contact him.

Before taking the role, Sir David was a positive advocate for openness, claiming during a presentation at the Independent Academies Association conference in October 2014 that the individual votes of headteacher board members - who advise regional schools commissioners (RSCs) on academy chain takeovers - would be made public. Sixteen months on, they are still hidden.

A report in January by the House of



Sir David Carter

Commons education committee on the role of RSCs, who are now overseen by Sir David, highlighted "significant concerns" over transparency, and said the roles are "clouded in elements of secrecy".

None of these aspects have so far been addressed by the new national commissioner.

In his interview, Sir David revealed plans to create four tiers of academy chains, ranging from starter trusts made up of five or fewer academies to "system leaders": large chains with 30 or more schools under their umbrellas (see last page). Trusts will need to go through an "assessment" before moving through the tiers.

The plans appear to place the national commissioner at odds with Ofsted, which

began inspecting academy chains last year.

This week, Ofsted's chief inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw questioned the lack of information about commissioners, telling a parliamentary committee he was "not clear" what they do "other than re-broker failing academies".

The plans have nevertheless been given a cautious welcome by the heads of several large trusts.

Jon Coles, chief executive of United Learning, one of the eight trusts that meet the "system leader" requirements, said he supported Sir David's efforts to "manage the growth" of chains, but warned it should not be based on how many schools they had.

He said: "Just because you're big, doesn't mean you're going to have something useful to say. If it becomes about status I think that

would be a mistake, but I think Sir David is very alert to that."

Last year, Mr Coles told parliament he favoured a system in which larger trusts reported directly to the national commissioner rather than a particular RSC - something now happening under Sir David's plans.

Sir Steve Lancashire, chief executive of Reach2, which runs 50 schools, said the tiered approach would mean trusts could "genuinely collaborate" on some of the toughest issues facing them, "such as recruitment and retention, and how to draw talent to cold spots in the country".

Sir Steve said he also welcomed plans to have trusts be assessed before moving between tiers.

Ian Comfort, who leads the 67-school Academies Enterprise Trust, told *Schools Week* some schools had learned the hard way about expanding without "stepping stones", adding: "I think there was an imperative in many ways to get the academies programme up and running."

Conservative MP Neil Carmichael, chair of the education select committee, said he was happy with the idea of Sir David floating ideas, but said he still wanted to see more transparency in the RSC system and national commissioner role.

Mr Carmichael said his committee would like the opportunity to bring Sir David before the committee on occasion, but did not have a rough date for his first appearance.

300 schools to sit national reference tests

More than 14,000 year 11 pupils will sit pilot tests for the national reference tests (NRTs) from Monday.

Ofqual confirmed that more than 300 schools had agreed to take part in the trials, and up to

24 pupils would take the maths tests, with the same amount taking English.

The NRTs will formally start next March. Over time, the tests will monitor how cohorts of students are performing and will act as a guide for increases or decreases in that cohort's GCSE grades.

The tests will be externally administered in each school by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

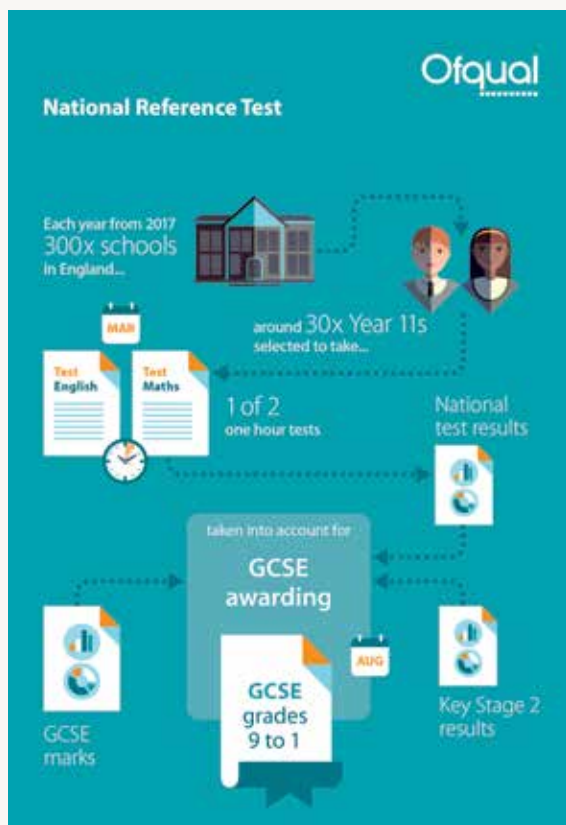
Tim Leslie, director of the NRT project,

said: "We're trialling all aspects of the test to make sure that it can differentiate students' performance and to confirm that our approach to selecting the sample of participating students gives us results that will be

representative of all year 11s taking their GCSEs each summer.

"Our test provider, NFER, is finalising arrangements with each school to confirm which students will take the test and when. There are two tests - maths and English. At each school, up to 24 students will take the maths test and another 24 students will take the English test. Each test

will last an hour. No student will be asked to take both tests."



DFE FAILS TO CLAWBACK ACADEMY CASH

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Only a handful of the academy trusts paid at least £850,000 to take over new schools paid back any of the cash, despite not opening a single school, *Schools Week* has found

The Department for Education (DfE) hands out one-off payments of up to £100,000 under the Sponsor Capacity Funds grants to help organisations establish academy trusts to take over struggling schools.

Schools Week found in November that 17 organisations had received the grant in 2013/14 but were yet to take over any schools.

The DfE said any spending of the grant is approved by officials and it aims to recoup any unspent funds.

But a Freedom of Information (FOI) request shows only seven organisations handed back any of the grant in the last three years. The money recouped totalled £457,536.

The disclosure supports our story last year that found many organisations awarded the cash spent their money and time trying to takeover struggling schools, but were hit by various hurdles.

For instance, the National Youth Agency - which was given £79,225 - had three bids to take over pupil referral units turned

down. It was not listed in the trusts that handed back cash.

Five organisations handed back part or all of their grant in the 2015/16 financial year. One of those, the North East Schools Trust (Nest), featured in our story in November. The organisation was given £84,425 to takeover a school, but government figures show £72,681 was paid back.

One of Nest's founders was Sarah Monk, a director of school improvement provider at Avec Partnership. She did not respond to a request for comment over the new figures.

But she previously told *Schools Week* the organisation withdrew from being a sponsor because it conflicted with the work of Avec, which supports other schools becoming sponsors.

Janet Downs, a campaigner for locally maintained schools, said the process was "careless if the DfE awarded the money before it had decided whether the trusts were suitable sponsors".

The DfE said grant recipients were assessed as having potential to be great sponsors, but the main factor was finding a sponsor right for a specific school.

A spokesperson added: "Sponsored capacity funds support sponsors to build their capacity to take on and turn around failing schools so that they are ready to do so when the need arises. The vast majority of sponsors who have received the fund now sponsor schools."

SYSTEM LEADERS: THE EIGHT CHAINS AT THE TOP

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

Sir David Carter's plan for a tiered hierarchy of academy chains may not be very detailed, but these are the eight academy chains would qualify to be "system leaders".

The new national schools commissioner said he wants to put trusts with 30 or more schools at the top of his new four-tier system, with chains expected to prove they are capable of expanding before moving between tiers.

Sir David said these system leaders would play a "broader role" in the academies programme and be accountable directly to him, rather than being assigned to a regional schools commissioner as they currently are.

Watchsted analysis for *Schools Week* of the Ofsted results of schools inspected since joining the trusts paints a mixed picture, or in some cases, hardly any picture at all.

According to the data – taken from all Ofsted reports available on February 19 –

KEY ■ Outstanding ■ Good ■ Requires improvement ■ Inadequate ■ N/A

more than 40 per cent of schools run by two of the trusts, Oasis Community Learning and The Kemnal Academy Trust, were rated as requires improvement or inadequate.

More than a third of the schools of Academies Enterprise Trust and School Partnership Trust Academies were rated in those categories.

For several trusts, it is difficult to measure their effectiveness because so few of schools have been inspected since being taken on.

In the case of Plymouth CAST, just one of its 35 schools has been inspected since joining the trust, while 34 of Reach2's 50 schools have yet to be inspected. John Mannix, the chief executive of Plymouth CAST, said that as more reports were released, they were likely to show a "mixed picture", anticipating that some schools rated outstanding when they joined may now be rated lower.

Chains often praised by ministers, such as Ark and Harris, are absent from the list as the latest "open academies" data suggests they have fewer than 30 schools. However, the landscape is rapidly changing with more schools joining chains each week.

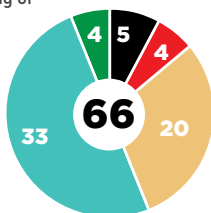
1. ACADEMIES ENTERPRISE TRUST - 66 SCHOOLS



"This doesn't reflect recent inspections [the reports of four schools have been released since the analysis] which have significantly increased the proportion of schools that are good or outstanding to 64 per cent."

OFSTED GRADES

56% Outstanding or good 36% RI or inadequate



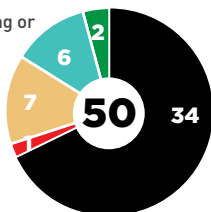
2. REACH 2 - 50 SCHOOLS



"Eighty per cent of sponsored academies have improved significantly since joining the trust, including going from inadequate to good and even special measures to outstanding. During that time, none have been downgraded, and the only school that is in special measures joined the trust six months ago in that category. All Ofsted visits to this school have recognised that good progress is being made since having joined Reach2."

OFSTED GRADES

16% Outstanding or good 16% RI or inadequate



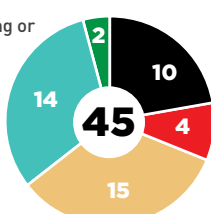
3. OASIS - 45 SCHOOLS



"Oasis Community Learning is extremely privileged to lead 47 academies, and we recognise, and will never take lightly, the large responsibility that we have been entrusted with. Multi-academy trusts (MATs) of different size and scale have the same aim – to deliver outstanding education, but can face very different challenges. Therefore we think categorising them into separate tiers based on size and experience is a sensible proposal that will help with engagement both between MATs, and between MATs and the Department for Education."

OFSTED GRADES

36% Outstanding or good 42% RI or inadequate



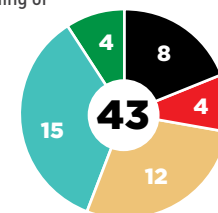
4. SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP TRUST ACADEMIES - 43 SCHOOLS



The trust did not respond to requests for comment. It has the third highest proportion of schools rated as requires improvement or inadequate. Just eight schools have not yet been inspected

OFSTED GRADES

44% Outstanding or good 37% RI or inadequate



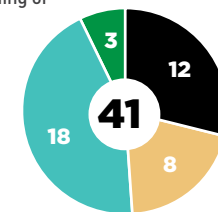
5. UNITED LEARNING - 41 SCHOOLS



The trust did not respond to requests for comment. It has the second highest proportion of schools rated as outstanding or good and one of the lowest proportions rated as requires improvement or inadequate.

OFSTED GRADES

51% Outstanding or good 21% RI or inadequate



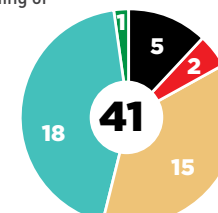
6. THE KEMNAL ACADEMY TRUST - 41 SCHOOLS



"As one of the most improved and higher-performing large academy chains, we would encourage the idea of 'system leader trusts' as a way to support MATs and academies. Working together and supporting others is part of our core belief structure and is the only effective way to ensure all learners have access to an outstanding education. However, the proposal is still at an early stage and we would welcome further disclosure before discussing any of the finer details."

OFSTED GRADES

46% Outstanding or good 41% RI or inadequate



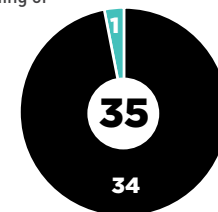
7. PLYMOUTH CAST - 35 SCHOOLS



"The first of the four failing schools we took on has been inspected. Our view is that the rest of the inspections are going to be a mixed picture, depending on when Ofsted actually descends on us over the course of the calendar year. One of the issues we have inherited is that we picked up on conversion some schools which had received a previous outstanding Ofsted and then no-one [inspectors] had been there for years, so they had an Ofsted judgment well in excess of their actual position."

OFSTED GRADES

3% Outstanding or good 0% RI or inadequate



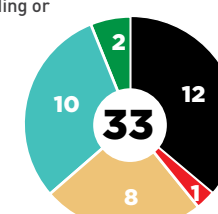
8. DAVID ROSS EDUCATION TRUST - 33 SCHOOLS



"Around two thirds of our academies were deemed as being as less than good at the point of conversion. We have seen some real successes in addressing this. Wold Academy, for example, went from special measures to outstanding in five terms, two of our Northamptonshire primaries improved by two grades to good over the same time frame and Humberston Academy was on a very quick trajectory to outstanding. Of those who have been inspected as requiring improvement, many joined as inadequate and subsequent monitoring visits show they should achieve positive outcomes at their next inspection."

OFSTED GRADES

36% Outstanding or good 27% RI or inadequate



EXIT INTERVIEW

GLENYS STACEY

LAURA MCINERNEY

@MISS_McINERNEY

It is five years since Glenys Stacey, lawyer-turned-serial-regulator, took the helm as England's first 'chief exams regulator' and she is about to step down. Invited for her last interview before disappearing to become Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation, editor Laura McInerney grilled her on life as a regulator.

Off an anonymous roundabout in Coventry, the Ofqual offices – a large, bright, functional box – are packed full of statisticians and project managers busily “regulating” exams. In the chief regulator’s office things are more fun, with two large “good luck” banners stuck to the plain walls and a plethora of flowers and cards. Tomorrow, Glenys Stacey will pack her things and leave after five years in the role.

Since Ofqual’s inception in 2010, prominent school leaders and commentators have questioned its competence, independence and purpose. Over the past year in these pages, headteachers such as Vic Goddard, Dame Joan McVittie and Ros McMullen have called out what they claim to be a creeping change in exams, purposefully designed to make it harder for poorer children to achieve.

This week, the former teacher and much-loved education writer Debra Kidd slammed the regulators’ work on comparable outcomes as “making it look like” grades are the same year-on-year, rather than ensuring children get the grades they deserve.

The anger stands at odds with the way Ofqual has tried to operate. Unlike central government, it has a good record on transparency: releasing hundreds of documents during the 2012 GCSE “fiasco” in which the organisation was accused of fiddling exam grade boundaries in an unlawful way (a high court judge disagreed, and the allegations were dropped). It has invested heavily in communications, creating postcards, videos, endless reams of reports, to explain what it does. Stacey even took a masters in assessment at nearby Warwick University when she started, and spent a great deal of time talking to experts.

She puts the attacks on Ofqual down to the counter-intuitive nature of statistics, and a dislike of the Conservative party.

“Exam awarding is, and has been for quite a long time, quite statistically driven. That’s the way it’s done. It was done like that before Ofqual, it will be done like that in the future. It is known to be the best way of awarding, but when you explain it, it is counter-intuitive, and it’s seen to be some sort of stitch up, something not to trust.

“The second thing is that we have been implementing government policy, a Conservative government’s policy. Lots of people in the education sector won’t vote Conservative and will find themselves ideologically opposed to the reform of qualifications, and we may look like the government’s handmaiden in doing it. But the fact is, it is Ofqual’s job to implement government policy on qualifications, and that’s what we’ve done.”

A problem for Ofqual is that it finds itself wedged between the frontline and parliament. It is “independent” in the sense that it is accountable to cross-party MPs and is free to implement policy as it wishes, but – ultimately – the direction of travel for qualifications is set by government.

This conflict came to a head in 2012 when the scores

“NO REGULATOR CAN EXPECT TO BE LOVED OR LIKED”

required to achieve a C grade in GCSE English controlled assessments were drastically changed. Teachers were not told the change was coming, and had been working in the belief that pupils whose assessments had been given a certain score were likely to pass that part of their GCSE. The changes hit all schools hard, but those with many pupils whose scores were at the C-grade/D-grade borderline were hit hardest of all.

It was this shift that led to the high court challenge, numerous parliamentary inquiries and constant accusations that Stacey, appointed by Michael Gove, had intervened to make schools look bad so that over the next few years exam grades could start rising again. Thus, the theory went, the government would look like it had achieved better results for schools by 2015.

Stacey is adamant there was no such plot: “When I reflect back on 2012, I think one of the biggest challenges we had was the level of mistrust, and the assumption there must have been some manipulation, either by us or with exam boards or whatever. And there wasn’t. It’s quite incredible.

“I remember the three or four days of the hearing with the claim morphing and changing all of the time, but an underlying theme was: ‘There’s something afoot – they must have fiddled and diddled it somehow.’ I remember an accusation at some point that there was some sort of secret policy, and I remember thinking, ‘That isn’t how the public sector works.’ It is transparent – all of the disclosures that we made there, there was nothing not to disclose. There is no secret. No secret policy. It is how we said it was. But the level of mistrust was very high.”

It often happens in Stacey’s career that she walks into chaotic situations and makes apparent order out of them. As chief executive at the Standards Board for England, she set up regulation for local government, calling out misdemeanours among councillors and officers. As chief of Animal Health (formerly the Veterinary Service) she created an executive agency that could deal with exotic diseases and helped marshal troops more effectively in 2007 when the country faced a foot-and-mouth outbreak than in 2001, when the countryside came to a standstill for several weeks.

In 2011, however, Ofqual was its own beast: designed to oversee the marking of 25 million exam scripts, for 15,000 qualifications, delivered by 180 awarding bodies. At the time Mick Waters, chief of the predecessor organisation QCA, described the exams system as “almost corrupt”. It was not an easy position.

“We weren’t in the best of states five years ago. We’d lost a chief exec and a chairman, and we weren’t quite sure how to regulate,” she admits.

Using the same spirit that helped her move from working in an explosives factory in Somerset aged 16 (“that’s what my mother expected”) to getting herself onto an ILEX (legal qualification) night course and eventually to university, Stacey sought to create a team of similarly smart, dedicated professionals.

It feels as if it has worked, the office has a warm-yet-ruthless efficiency: even the receptionist manages to be warm and helpful, but there’s also a sense she’s about to tell you to wipe your feet and tuck your shirt in.

Stacey is proud of where the organisation is now. She believes actions that some have considered counter-intuitive – limiting controlled assessments and the decoupling of the AS and A-level – will actually come to be valued by the sector but won’t necessarily make life any easier for her successor, who is still yet to be appointed.

“The changes are not seen as sufficient evidence ... to make people love the regulator. Well, why should they? Regulators aren’t the arbiters – they’re not.

“What you want as a regulator is to be seen as authentic, that you are evidence-based, that you are neutral ... also you want to be trusted to make fair decisions, you know, fairness is at the root of it all really.

“The best you could hope for is some begrudging respect. Honestly, it’s true! No regulator can expect to be loved or liked – it’s about respect and belief that you are doing the job that you’re charged to do, without fear or favour, and that’s what I believe we do.”

EY



Glenys' first day at Ofqual



Glenys Stacey gives evidence to the Commons Education Committee regarding GCSE results

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

What's the best wig you've ever worn to a party?

On the millennium, I didn't wear a wig, but I did wear a gold lamé top hat, which was great because it was very celebratory, it had a bow tie that went with it and it made me look a lot taller than I am (I am 5'4" and a half)!

Who would win in a fight between a polar bear and a lion?

A lion. Why? ... Why not! Because it has a lionheart.

What do you binge watch on television?

I do when my husband's not around! There's quite a mix but I'll go for period dramas because I like looking at the dresses. I like looking at anything that looks good, really, rather than things that are stimulating in other ways. I like good-looking things.

Did you watch the recent *Pride and Prejudice*?

Yes. I've seen enough of them really. It wasn't exceptional, I didn't think.

What's your favourite book?

I like poetry a lot, so I'm reading Sylvia Plath at the moment, but I've always got the Oxford Book of English Verse by my bed. I love poetry. I always read some before I go to sleep.

Do you have poems that you wrote when you were younger?

Yes! Don't you? They're mostly mediocre though, I'm afraid! I was trying to write about things that were beautiful, mostly, capturing beauty, but I wasn't good at it.

Have you got an outfit ready that befits a dame?

No, but my last day of employment is Monday, but I've got the day off because I've got some holiday, so I'm going to London to try to find something. It seems a suitable errand after five years to have the day off and get myself a posh frock.

LIFE AS A REGULATOR

1997

Stacey becomes the first chief executive of the Criminal Cases Review Commission

2001

Takes post as the first chief executive of the Greater Manchester Magistrates' Committee

2004

Becomes England's first chief executive of Animal Health

2008

Keeping in theme, Stacey becomes the first ever chief executive of the Standards Board of England

2011

Stacey arrives at Ofqual as the inaugural chief executive (also known as 'chief regulator')

COMMENT

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Primary assessments a mess? Unions should propose a radical alternative

Heather Rowe, headteacher of Badger Hill Primary School, York

Brilliant editor's comment. Are the unions aware of your idea and up for it?

So frustrated by the lack of clarity and constant changes from DfE [Department for Education].

Currently relying on the petition on the Gov website!

Baseline assessments could be scrapped over comparability concerns

Colin Richards, Cumbria

If baseline assessment schemes are scrapped because of comparability problems the same needs to apply to KS1 and KS2 tests. It simply isn't possible to assess progress from KS1 to KS2 on the basis of tests that are not comparable. It would only be possible if, God forbid, the same test was used at both seven and 11.

Jane Holcroft, Cambridgeshire

The irony is that no matter how much you test some children are never going to be school ready because of their age, background or previous life experiences. I have been teaching for 20 years and this is not new. Children are all individuals and are ready when they are ready! We as practitioners can give them the input, experiences and encouragement but only as individuals. All children can succeed in their own way but they will do it in their own sweet time no matter how many boxes we tick. The government just needs to butt out of education and let us teach, politics wouldn't last five minutes in my reception class, and they have no idea what they are talking about. Please just let teachers teach – we are certainly not doing it for the money!

'No excuses' is not a solution for angry teens

Anna Doyle, address supplied

My schools were generally poor, but I was raised by "no excuses" parents (especially my father) and did very well academically. However, the pressure of "no excuses" came at a huge price, with anxiety in childhood, depression by age 11, suicidal ideation by age 14 and a complete breakdown at 17. My university life was rendered almost unbearable by depression and though I emerged with a decent degree, I was utterly broken by the experience.

The author is right to highlight the emotional and psychological side of learning, especially for children with anxiety disorders, and also to underline the need for compassion. Given my academic record, my schools were not particularly interested in other problems, and my father treated all explanation of emotional

difficulties as excuses.

Academic success means nothing without self-esteem or social skills, and I would be deeply concerned that these would be neglected in a return to "traditional" schooling and discipline.

Alex Thirkill, address supplied

I found this a very interesting article – what KSA are doing in addition to their inflexible behaviour management systems and standards. But, it doesn't have to be either, or with their supportive and punitive systems – perhaps the success is having both.

Headteachers and local authorities warn of squeeze on secondary school places

John Connor, Devon

In response to government statements that concerns about school places are "scaremongering"....

If the only new schools that can be opened have to be free schools, then it's no longer up to councils to provide the places. Surely now it's up to parents, butchers, bakers and candlestick makers! Or are councils legally obliged to provide something they are equally legally prevented from providing?

The DfE is on the defensive again about this issue. This is the result of lack of forward planning, pig-headed denial and a total fragmentation of the system which has made admissions a complete nightmare. Any objection is flagged as "scaremongering". But there's an awful lot of it about, which can't be coincidental.

Teacher and head teacher recruitment, primary assessment, school places. They are all in chaos, and the DfE sticks its fingers in its ears and goes "la, la, la, la". A perfect storm will hit our schools in the very near future, and the life chances of generations will be blighted by ideological zealotry.

Recruitment agency slammed for 'Teach First only' job advert

roger c @enablerbro1

I would certainly hope that no non-Teach First teachers choose to work for that agency or any schools who hire similarly.

DisappointedIdealist @DisIdealist

That is awful - it effectively excludes everyone over a certain age, no matter how qualified or experienced. Almost cult-like.

Does anyone know how many teachers we need?

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ben Ball, Birmingham

From a supply teacher point of view we do not seem to see the recruitment crisis, one of the reasons being that schools do not want to pay the going rate for replacements. I meet young teachers doing supply for 2 or 3 days a week looking for a post. I know of a school that is "delivering" construction to year 13 level, but refused to appoint an experienced teacher in the field, instead appointing an NQT and as a result cannot satisfactorily deliver the subject at this level. Also where there is a need for a specialist teacher the timetable is split amongst non-specialists. I was asked to teach year 9 design and technology cooking, and whereas I was quite happy to teach the theory I refused to handle the practical on grounds of health and safety.

From a supply teacher point of view in the secondary sector, schools are missing out by not employing general teachers. The pressure of Ofsted means, quite rightly, they desire to employ specialists. However when they can't they then have to rely on non-specialist/supply, whereas if they had a general teacher on the staff they could fill the gaps and allow specialists to concentrate on their subjects. I would be quite happy to be in a school to fill in gaps in music, drama, English, maths, humanities and if CPD was available, science and DT, but no one seems to be willing to do this.

The opinion on whether there is a crisis depends on whether you are a bean counter or an educator.

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



DO YOU HAVE A STORY?

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

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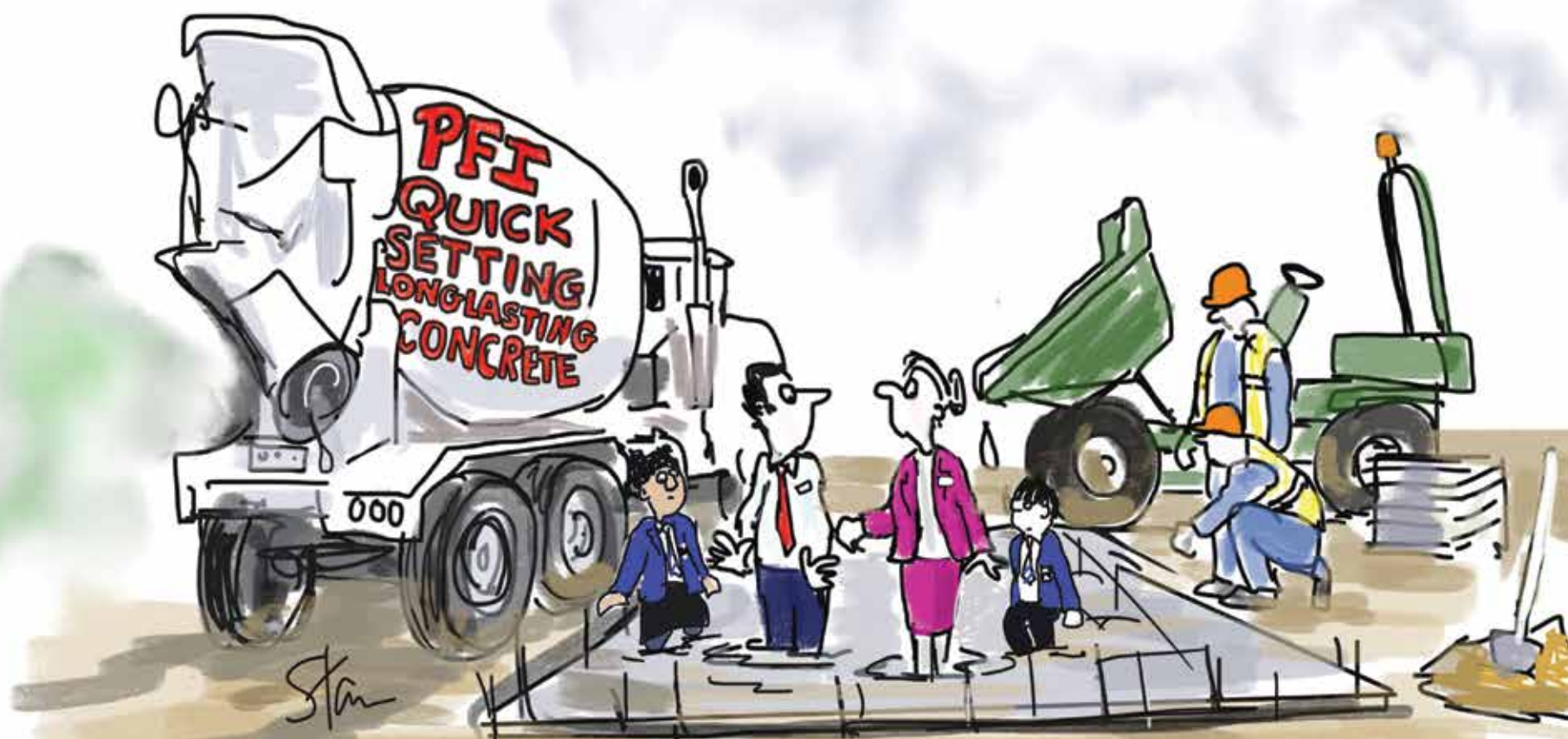
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Special PFI report on page 13-16



EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Six months ago I sat in a room in Oxfordshire full of top school leaders – mostly chiefs of multi-academy trusts – and chaired a discussion where they could ask education policy experts questions.

To my surprise, the most popular questions were about regional schools commissioners (RSCs). What were they for? How much of a right do they have to intervene? How can anyone be sure they are making impartial decisions when the very headteachers who advise them could be threatened by an academy takeover of a local school?

These were, and still are, crucial questions.

Here at *Schools Week* we've always believed the commissioner role was vital. That's why, from the very first day the roles began, we gave space to the commissioner's views.

We promoted actions such as the Blackpool Challenge, started by former regional commissioner Paul Smith. However, we also agitated when the RSCs overstepped the mark. Was it right for east Midlands commissioner Jenny Bexon-Smith to tell a school their teachers should not have professional judgment in the format of their lesson plans? Why did West Midlands commissioner Pank Patel leave parents standing after promising to meet them?

We ask those questions because they reflect the concerns raised by those school leaders raised on that rainy day in Banbury.

It was with those questions in mind that last week, when the new national schools commissioner Sir David Carter wrote on social media that his vision for the future of the role was about to be revealed, I was thrilled. He ended his tweet with the words "#transparency".

This was as it should be for a man who, when he started as a commissioner, said he wanted all votes on academy takeovers to be public (they're still not) and told Radio 4 listeners that openness was one of his main objectives for the role.

Much of the plan is exciting and Sir David is a charismatic, dynamic man likely to pull much of it off.

But it was disappointing, yet again, to see nothing about conflict of interests, no plans for how anyone can appeal decisions, or contact the commissioners. All the worries that people have been raising for the past year, ignored.

The idea of having "system leaders" also seemed ill-thought out if based on their size (see our analysis on page 7 for reasons why) and any ad-hoc assessment for granting the status is only likely to increase charges of favouritism.

Sir David was, however, blocked from answering our questions. As a civil servant he must, under the Civil Service Code, pass all communications with us via the Department for Education press office. We approached them and were met with resistance regarding the idea we should be able to ask questions.

We were – quite literally – unable to hold to account for a lack of action on transparency the very man who on Radio 4 said he wanted to improve "accountability and transparency". It is more than you could make up.

Sadly it is also emblematic of the way school leaders feel: alienated, unsure of the rules around approaching these new commissioner overlords, and unable to get many answers to their questions.

The worry is that this secrecy is how the government wants it. RSCs are, in the end, unelected senior civil servants sent to do the bidding of the secretary of state for education.

Unlike Ofqual and Ofsted's leaders, the national commissioner is not independent and so will inevitably be constrained from speaking out publicly and standing up to ministers.

Even if transparency was

something Sir David believed down to his very bones, he simply doesn't have the power to make it so without the say so of ministers. He may be the public face of the academy movement, but for as long as the role is a civil service one there will always be people behind the scenes pulling the strings of his limbs and able to tape over his mouth.

As my interview this week with chief of Ofqual for the past five years, Glenys Stacey, revealed - there is a mis-trust in the sector that can only be overcome by being seriously open and showing there are no dodgy deals going.

Visions are helpful for this. Well done to Sir David for setting one out. In the end, however, true transparency is about giving people the information they want, need and ask for. Everything else is just marketing.

If education secretary Nicky Morgan really wants the commissioner to become a true and trusted champion, she needs to clip his puppet strings.



WHO WILL PICK UP THE TAB FOR PFI?

Schools Week can today reveal how the toxic legacy of costly PFI contracts threatens to derail the government's promised "academies revolution".

Our three-month investigation has uncovered how cash-strapped, failing schools are seeing potentially transformative takeovers hit the buffers as academy chains balk at taking on lengthy contracts to repay the private firms who built the schools.

Senior reporter John Dickens investigates

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Investigates

In 2007, then prime minister Gordon Brown stood on the spotless corridors of the £24 million Bristol Brunel Academy and proudly declared that under his government "no child will be left behind".

In a YouTube video – still viewable on the official 10 Downing Street channel – Mr Brown was opening the first school to be built by the £50 billion Building Schools for the Future project.

It was part of Tony Blair's pledge to rebuild or refurbish every secondary in England over 15 years after New Labour swept into power in 1997.

But the unprecedented investment relied on schools being paid via private finance initiatives (PFI) in which private companies paid to build the schools. The investment is then recouped – with interest – by leasing buildings back to the government on 25-year or longer contracts.

It was buy now, pay later. Debts were kept off the government's balance sheet and to be picked up by future taxpayers. The scheme took off and the Department for Education (DfE) took on 168 PFI projects of varying size – the most of any government department.

But less than 10 years on from the opening of Bristol Brunel, the promise to transform

schools has instead soured into a toxic legacy.

It now threatens to stop the Conservative government's vision of an "academies revolution" – in which failing schools get new super-bosses – as experienced academy trusts turn their back on struggling schools because of the hefty PFI costs that come with them.

The findings of a three-month investigation by *Schools Week* lay bare the consequences.

What's going wrong?

When local authorities originally signed off the PFI deals, they knew how much had to be paid back. They knew their contract repayments would rise slightly each year, linked to the rate of inflation or the Retail Prices Index.

But with the change of government in 2010 came a new era of austerity.

Now, schools' budgets are squeezed. Together with increased pension and national insurance costs, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has predicted per-pupil funding could fall by 8 per cent in real terms by 2020.

Schools are slashing costs however they can, with some making redundancies. But they cannot easily cut the costs of PFI.

The pressure is pushing some schools deep into the red. *Schools Week* has previously

revealed that repayments at Birches Head Academy, in Stoke-on-Trent, have soared by more than £125,000 in four years, up to £380,000 a year.

The school was – until last month – in special measures. But talks for a takeover by Ofsted-rated outstanding St Joseph's College have been delayed because governors are reluctant to take on a financial liability.

St Joseph's College headteacher Roisin Maguire said: "Without PFI, the school would have been converted by now. But it is being held back."

Yet Nicky Morgan said when launching her landmark education bill to speed up intervention in failing schools: "We think a day spent in a failing school is a day too long when education is at stake."

The PFI legacy is thwarting that commitment.

Delays hinder transformation

Ofsted has attacked "repeated delays" over the potential transformation of one PFI school: Sandon Business and Enterprise College, also in Stoke-on-Trent, which is in special measures.

Ormiston Academies Trust, which has a track record of turning around struggling schools, has been named as the preferred sponsor but the takeover has hit the buffers.

In an Ofsted report earlier this month,

inspector Alun Williams said the "ongoing saga" was an unhelpful distraction to school leaders.

"It is to their credit that it does not appear to have slowed down the school's progress, but it has meant them expending valuable time and energy on issues that are not central to seeing Sandon improve."

Ormiston has written to schools minister Lord Nash about the issue and said this week it is doing all it can to complete the conversion without further delay.

But other academy chains are reluctant to take on PFI schools. The country's largest chain, Academies Enterprise Trust, has already spoken about its issues with PFI, while *Schools Week* has been told by leaders of several other chains they are concerned.

A spokesperson for the DfE told *Schools Week* that where necessary it was happy to work with partners "to overcome any issues facing schools with PFI contracts wishing to become academies, to enable them to enjoy the benefits this status brings".

But Jonathan Simons, the head of education at thinktank Policy Exchange, said: "As a multi-academy trust there is no way in good fiduciary duty or conscience that you could take on a school with a big PFI debt that you didn't get sufficient funding for."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THE SCHOOLS FACING BANKRUPTCY

Academy chains say the money they get for PFI does not cover the costs."

Unable to become a multi-academy trust

And it's not just struggling schools experiencing problems. Three schools in Newham – Lister Community School, Rokeby School, Sarah Bonnell School – want to form a multi-academy trust.

However, two of the schools have PFI contracts, both said to be costing more than £1 million a year. The council has asked the schools to raise their contributions by a combined £400,000 a year, but the schools have said they simply cannot afford to do that.

Talks are reportedly in deadlock more than a year after the schools announced they would convert. A spokesperson for the schools said they need to convert to go from "good to great" and called the delay "frustrating".

Whole regions unable to resolve financial issues

Schools Week has uncovered PFI problems in regions across the country.

Schools in Barnsley have raised concerns over the financial challenges facing those with PFI contracts. *Schools Week* understands academy chains have walked away from takeovers because of the large repayments associated with some schools.

Barnsley council said schools pay £3 million towards their PFI funding gap – where budget cuts and rising PFI costs have created a gap between the money coming in to pay the contract and the amount actually going out. It acknowledged this was

significant, but said the contributions had secured state-of-the-art facilities that had enhanced standards for pupils.

A spokesperson said some sponsors may have reservations taking over the schools, but said it has not prevented nearly half of the PFI schools from already converting. The council said it recognised the strain of the schools' PFI contributions and is reviewing the contract to make savings.

A spokesperson for the Barnsley Governors Association added: "In time, the decision to build them will be seen as a turning point for Barnsley's students."

Cutting costs to plug PFI blackholes

Some local councils – who manage contracts on behalf of schools – are trying to plug the funding gap by taking cash from their dedicated school grants, meaning less cash is available to hand out to schools.

Others councils are exploring other means of cutting costs. Wirral Council axed swimming lessons for pupils and special educational needs budgets to meet its £2.3 million PFI shortfall last year.

Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead, said: "The council should make it clear to the PFI contractors that it isn't paying them another penny ... The alternative is that some of Wirral's most disadvantaged children will suffer a worse education."

Conversion costs mounting up

Legal costs of converting are also rising. Sir John Colfox, an Ofsted-good rated secondary in Dorset, had to wait more than two years – from January 2013 to April last year – to convert into an academy. It was one of the

first schools in the country to open under PFI funding in 1999 and now pays more than £1 million every year in repayments.

Dorset County Council said it spent more than £35,000 on legal fees on the conversion, with the school stumping up even more. A legal expert told *Schools Week* the average cost of conversion is between £6,000 to £10,000.

Who is responsible?

That very much depends upon who you ask. Media reports often paint private firms as the baddies. While some firms are making million-pound profits, the repayments were agreed with local authorities. The yearly inflation rises were also signed by both parties.

Private firms say they delivered projects on time and at cost – an improvement on the government's record.

Some schools are happy with their PFI. Steve Taylor, chief executive of the Cabot Learning Federation, which now runs Bristol Brunel, told *Schools Week* it has a new, state-of-the-art school which provides a "fantastic learning environment" for pupils – although he says the longer term benefit is more difficult to anticipate.

Speaking to *Schools Week* earlier this month, Lord Storey said he was proud of his education achievements while leading Liverpool City Council, which included PFI deals. "PFI is very controversial and very



Lord Storey

expensive, but looking back on it, it was the only option in town."

Local authorities ultimately hold the key to ensuring a contract runs smoothly and have faced criticism for poor management. But councils relied on experienced staff to run the contracts. Now, in many cases, those well-paid experts have been let go to meet funding cuts.

PFI was concocted by the government and many would argue the buck stops with it. The deals have come under heavy scrutiny by various government inquiries in 2011, leading to spending watchdog, the National Audit Office, concluding PFI is not best value for money.

The government has since scaled down its PFI plans. With cutting the deficit still top of the political agenda, a revamped version of PFI – called PF2 – has now risen from its ashes. While the government claims the scheme will address many of the problems caused by PFI, experts warn there is likely to be trouble ahead.

In the 2007 video, Mr Brown breaks into a smile while speaking to pupils on his tour around the Bristol Brunel Academy.

Pupils are later told by then chancellor Ed Balls that they were witnessing a "watershed" moment that "sets the standard for future generations".

But now something needs to be done to ensure those future generations – today's pupils – are not left paying the cost of picking up the PFI tab.

THE TRUE SCALE OF SCHOOL PFI DEBTS

Every state school in England would have to pay more than £1 million each to clear the debt owed to the private firms that built new schools under PFI contracts, an analysis of Treasury figures by *Schools Week* has found.

While schools are already struggling under the burden of hefty financial commitments, *Schools Week* can reveal the overall repayments will continue rising until they peak in 2024/25.

The figures suggest emerging PFI problems will only get worse in the coming years as schools struggle while budgets tighten.

An analysis of the latest official Treasury figures shows taxpayers have already paid £7.5 billion in contract repayments – known as the unitary charge – for school PFIs up to the end of 2014/15.

The unitary charge is the fee the public sector pays for the services it receives from PFI projects.

The charge includes the repayment for the building, as well as costs for services, such as cleaning and maintenance.

The amount currently paid back is close to the actual overall capital value – total worth of the buildings – which is listed as £7.8 billion.

Schools Week can reveal the total amount of cash the government estimates is still left to pay totals more than £22 billion over the remaining years of the contracts.

The remaining debt works out at more than £1 million for each of England's 21,728 state-funded schools.

The total charges are expected to be nearly £30 billion over the lifetime of the 168 PFI projects. This is nearly four times as much as the total capital value of the projects.

School repayments will peak at £1.2 billion in 2024/25. This is for two reasons: yearly inflation rises written into the contracts and the type of repayment schemes agreed by local authorities.

Schools Week has been told the favoured finance schemes chosen by authorities is for smaller repayments at the start of the contract, with larger repayments in the future.

The figures also show schools in five regions are tied into these contract repayments until 2039 (when a current year 11 would turn 40).

It also means schools are tied to service contracts with hefty and disproportionate prices. During the National Audit Office's 2011 investigation into PFI it was revealed one school paid £333 to have a lightbulb changed.

Some of these prices have become more reasonable since standardised contracts were brought in.

However, the long-term commitment to these contracts still means schools have less flexibility if they need to make savings in future.

Region	Capital value (£billions)	Total unitary charges over lifetime of projects (£billions)	Number of PFI projects
East of England	0.4	1.6	10
East Midlands	0.8	3	14
London	1.5	5.2	37
North East	0.6	2	13
North West	1.3	4.8	29
South East	0.4	1.9	10
South West	0.6	2.6	11
West Midlands	0.6	2.4	15
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.5	5.9	28

SAVINGS DRIVE

The Treasury is aware of the crippling costs of PFI. A savings drive was launched in 2012 to save £1.5 billion by finding efficiencies in PFI contracts.

Government departments urged the authorities responsible for procuring the contracts to review their current deals.

It said last March the drive had resulted in savings of more than £2 billion from the country's 700 PFI projects.

Danny Alexander, former chief secretary of the Treasury, has said there is a further

£2 billion saving to be made. He said: "This programme has ensured proper management of contracts between the private sector and the public sector, ensuring that taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their investment."

The latest Treasury PFI figures were published in 2014. *Schools Week* understands updated figures for the two-yearly report are due to be published soon – which should show whether more savings are feasible.

Additional reporting by Philip Nye

THE FUTURE

The problems: Fair funding formula could be toxic for PFI schools

Pledges to create a new England-wide fair funding formula could be derailed unless ministers find a way to fund schools' PFI agreements.

Many schools currently receive funding towards their PFI repayment contributions through a specific clause in their funding formula.

The money is sliced from the dedicated schools grant given to local authorities – before the rest is shared among other schools – to shore up the budgets of the PFI schools.

But the government plans to implement a new fair funding formula from next September to address historical disparities in money received by schools in different regions.

Policy experts told Schools Week that civil servants working on the formula will find it “almost impossible” to find a solution that meets the rising PFI costs in some schools while maintaining the Conservative manifesto pledge to maintain current levels of per-pupil funding.

Jonathan Simons, head of education at thinktank Policy Exchange, said: “If you are lucky, they will both fit in the envelope. The manifesto commits them [the government] to a minimum level of per-pupil funding.



Jonathan Simons

They've got to get all of that covered.”

Writing as part of a collection of essays on fair funding produced by the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) last month, Mr Simons said a new formula should be almost entirely pupil-led.

Factors affecting what a school receive would include: a lump sum, deprivation weighting and additional funds for low attainment, looked after and English as Additional Language pupils.

“Covering PFI debt, and other area costs and school-level factors, has to come from whatever is left, really. I think that's going to have to be the way it's going to go.”

In this case, schools would only receive top-up funding if cash was still available after the budget was organised. Another option, Mr Simons said, would be to work out what these specific extra costs are, and then divide the rest per pupil. But this would endanger the manifesto commitment.

Natalie Perera, former head of school funding reform at the Department for Education (DfE), said one of the key questions for ministers is to decide whether local authorities

should continue distributing extra cash for “special circumstances” – such as PFI or split-site schools.

Ms Perera, now executive director and head of research at thinktank CentreForum, said: “There's a wider problem here about local flexibility. Schools in these circumstances with crippling costs will be hard to allocate.

“Without local authority involvement it requires either the DfE or Education Funding Agency to know about every school in the country that has a PFI and how much it's paying.”

She said an alternate solution would be to hand the money to regional schools commissioners.

Doug Allan, secretary of fair funding campaign group f40, said the discretion to fund PFI costs should be left to local authorities. He said: “The contracts are so very different from one another, it's best left to local authorities to decide how to manage them.

“We concluded that any different arrangement would create difficulties for local authorities when the contracts change, or when they end, given that the contract is actually with the local authority.”

There is agreement on one

point though. “If you don't have a national funding formula that has a way of recognising [differing contracts], then those schools will struggle,” Ms Perera said.

Mr Simons agreed that the squeeze on education funding means PFI debts will assume a bigger share of school resources. “It will be increasingly challenging – and in some cases perhaps almost impossible – to meet them without some form of additional government action or intervention.”

He said, theoretically, the government could look to renegotiate PFI debt nationally, with the DfE acting on behalf of schools.

He added: “It's a series of bad options here and all because of some pretty badly organised PFI deals 10 or 20 years ago.

“There are some schools – through no fault of their own – that no academy chain is going to touch.”

The DfE would not discuss specifics of the new fair funding formula, but confirmed it will be implemented by 2017/18.

A spokesperson said: “We will consult on this in due course and phase changes carefully over time, so they are fully manageable for councils and schools.”



Natalie Perera

From watershed moment to toxic legacy

1997	1999	MAY 2004	JULY 2010	DEC 2012	JAN 2016
LABOUR EXPANDS USE OF PFIS AFTER COMING IN TO POWER. THEN HEALTH MINISTER ALAN MILBURN SAYS: “WHEN THERE IS A LIMITED AMOUNT OF PUBLIC SECTOR CAPITAL AVAILABLE, AS HERE IS, IT'S PFI OR BUST.”	£10.5M VICTORIA DOCK PRIMARY OPENS AS THE FIRST NEW SCHOOL FUNDED UNDER PFI.	TONY BLAIR ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE (BSF) PROGRAMME TO INVEST MORE THAN £2BN IN NEW BUILDINGS FOR 180 SCHOOLS, 55 PER CENT OF WHICH TO BE FUNDED UNDER PFI.	MICHAEL GOVE, THEN EDUCATION SECRETARY UNDER THE COALITION, ANNOUNCES BSF WILL BE SCRAPPED BECAUSE OF “MASSIVE OVERSPENDS AND BOTCHED CONSTRUCTION JOBS”. AT LEAST 715 SCHOOLS DUE TO BE REVAMPED ARE CANCELLED.	CHANCELLOR GEORGE OSBORNE ANNOUNCES 46 OF THE NEW SCHOOLS UNDER PSBP WILL BE FUNDED BY PF2 – HIS REMODELLED VERSION OF THE PFI – PLEDGING IT WILL BE FASTER AND MORE TRANSPARENT.	HYLTON CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, IN SUNDERLAND, OPENS AS THE FIRST PF2 SCHOOL, BUILT BY GALLIFORD TRY.

Will schools get a better deal under revamped PFI?

Special assemblies were held this term at Hylton Castle Primary School to celebrate the opening of their new school building. The Sunderland school was the first to open under George Osborne's revamped PFI initiative – Private Finance 2 (PF2).

Forty-six schools will be rebuilt or refurbished using £700 million of PF2 funding as part of the government's Priority School Building Programme.

But will these schools face the same future as those in PFI?

Not according to the Treasury. It says PF2 will address issues raised with PFIs.

Probably the biggest change is that soft facilities management services – such as waste management, catering, cleaning or security – have now been removed from the contracts. Control over the services, which have attracted criticism in the past because of their value for

money, will instead be managed by the school or the local authority.

There is an option to include “minor maintenance” activities in the contracts – but the Treasury says these can be added or removed after the contract has started. Contracts will also include a clause for a periodic review allowing schools to ensure they have value for money.

Another change is that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) will be the procuring authority on the projects, rather than local authorities, although the EFA does not have a history of managing such contracts well.

Marcus Orlovsky of Bryanston Square consultants, who has worked on several PFI contracts, said local oversight of projects would be lost. “Trying to manage the contracts centrally, while at the same time trying to keep costs down, has the possibility that it will end up in the same state.”

The government will also become a minority equity holder in new projects. It says that this will deliver increased financial transparency for the public sector, but perhaps more importantly for schools, a stronger involvement in decision making.

It means the taxpayer should receive a proportion of any returns made on the contracts, but experts have concerns.

Part of the new deal means construction firms will be asked to put more of their own money into projects as equity. Mr Orlovsky says this will drive up the overall costs of projects.

Mark Hellowell, lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and author of a report on PF2 for the Centre for Health and the Public Interest, added: “Far from avoiding the ‘PFI mess’ ascribed to its predecessors, the government is taking a route that may lead to another.”

THE BUSINESSES

The low-key investment firm that owns 260 UK schools

One of the largest buyers of equity is a firm called Innisfree, based in central London.

It paid £42.5 million for construction giant Balfour Beatty's 50 per cent stake in PFI contracts of four school projects, in Birmingham, Bassetlaw, Stoke and Rotherham, in 2013. Balfour chief executive Andrew McNaughton described the firm's £24.5 million profit as "superior returns" on its original investment.

Innisfree is now the largest investor in PFI education infrastructure projects in the UK. It owns 260 schools across the UK, in 18 different PFI projects, with a combined capital value of £1.5 billion, according to its website.

Annual accounts for Innisfree Ltd, the firm that manages all of its investment funds, show it posted a £6.5 million profit in 2014/15.

Seven directors shared salaries totalling £5.3 million, up from £4.1 million the previous year. The highest paid director received £3.2 million, up from £2.1 million the previous year.

The annual accounts consider profit made before tax to be the "key performance indicators". The accounts also reveal a total of £14.5 million worth of dividends

(distribution of profits) were paid to shareholders in 2015, up from £7.3 million in 2014.

Innisfree did not respond to repeated approaches from *Schools Week* for comment.

However the firm told the public accounts committee (PAC), as part of the 2011 PFI investigation, that it aims to achieve returns of 8 to 10 per cent every year for its investors – who are mostly UK pension funds.

Company chief executive David Metter told the committee: "Our customer satisfaction across our projects is very high."

Mr Metter, worth £82 million and ranked at 924 in the *Sunday Times* Rich List in 2013, added: "Go to all these hospitals, schools, and railway lines, and ask them the questions. Say, 'Do you think these work?' Mostly our public sector customers are very happy."

But the PAC final report concluded: "The rewards to investors and managers of the funds appear to us to mean that the private sector was receiving excessive profits on the back of government-funded projects at the expense of the taxpayer."

Multi-million pound profits from 'flipping' contracts

Additional reporting by Philip Nye

Private firms have posted profits totalling tens of millions of pounds since 2012 from selling their stake in government-awarded contracts to build schools – while company directors pocketed seven-figure salaries.

The guaranteed yearly rise of PFI repayment costs is heaping more pressure on schools as their budgets are tightened by the public sector squeeze.

But an analysis of annual accounts and publically available documents has found business is booming for firms running the projects. A process known as "flipping" – where building firms sell on the value of their equity in PFI projects to other companies – came under scrutiny as part of the public accounts committee's 2011 investigation.

Former committee chair Margaret Hodge said firms were making excessive profits, which critics say should be shared with taxpayers.

Schools Week can reveal – despite the public criticism – at least 70 school PFI projects have been flipped from July 2012.

The data, not yet published, will form part of an updated PFI database by the social justice not-for-profit organisation European Services Strategy Unit (ESSU).

Building firm Balfour Beatty made nearly £50 million from selling its shares in two PFI deals.

In April 2013, the firm sold its 50 per cent stake in four PFI schools projects to its partner in the projects, investment group Innisfree (see left). The total sale was £42.5 million – making a profit of £24.4 million for the builder.

The construction firm made another £24 million profit from selling its 100 per cent stake in the Knowsley schools PFI project. It was sold for £42 million in May 2014 to investment fund Dalmore Capital, seven years into a 27-year contract.

Interserve also made £60 million profit by selling half its stake in 19 PFI projects – four of which were schools in Plymouth, St Helens, Sandwell and Leeds – to Dalmore Capital in October 2012.

Schools Week was unable to ascertain from publically-available documents how much of this profit could be attributed to school projects.

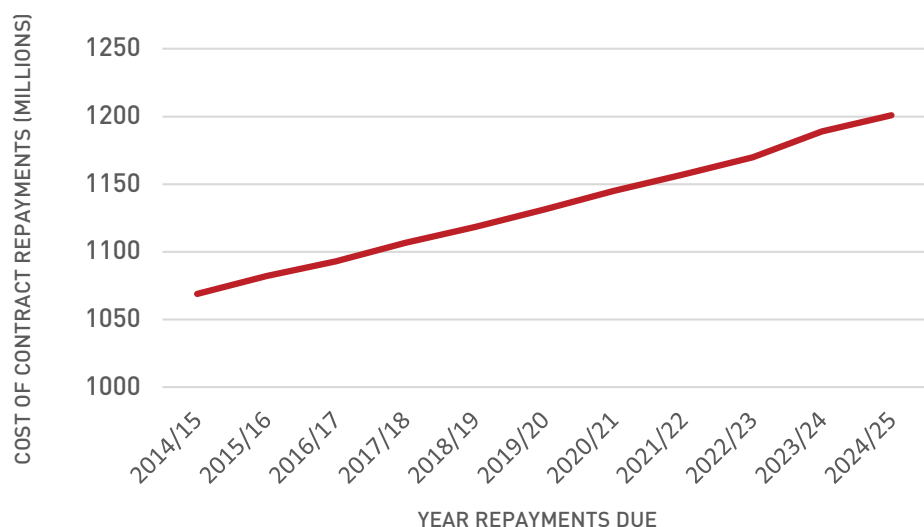
The PAC, in its report, "Lessons from PFI and other projects", said it had heard evidence tax revenue was being lost because of the offshore arrangements of some of the investment companies snapping up contracts.

And *Schools Week* has found 40 of the equity deals since 2012 have been acquired by offshore infrastructure funds, including in tax havens such as Jersey, Guernsey and Luxembourg.

Professor Dexter Whitfield, the director of ESSU, which compiles the data, said PFI contracts were expected to deliver a 12-15 per cent rate of return for the private sector. But the National Audit Office, as part of its review in 2012, found investors selling their shares in equity early resulted in returns of between 15 and 30 per cent on their original investment.

Professor Whitfield said: "This reveals a scandalous exploitation of taxpayers' money."

The rising costs of PFI repayments



Profit on sale of PFI equity in UK

Sector	No of PFI transactions	No of PFI projects	Value of equity sold (£m)	Total Profit (£m)	Average % profit
Health	14	18	129.3	86.3	66.7
Education	6	8	47.8	16.3	34.1
Transport	8	12	101.8	48.0	47.1

Source: ESSU PPP Equity Database, 2011

IS THERE ANYTHING SCHOOLS CAN DO?

Even when a school becomes an academy, the local authority remains the PFI contract holder.

So any changes to contracts have to go through the local authority. There are a range of options available that could decrease costs – including audits, benchmarking and gold plating.

Craig Elder, a partner in the public sector team at law firm Browne Jacobson, said any change to agreements mostly depended on the relationship between the local authority and the PFI contractor, which could be

variable.

But he said most contractors have signed up to a code of conduct that states they will consider changes for best value.

Several PFI experts have told *Schools Week* that local authorities are paying their contracts without fully knowing if they are getting what they pay for. That suggests there is plenty of scope to find savings in contracts.

Individual schools have also found it hard to

encourage local authorities to negotiate changes.

Consultant Marcus Orlovsky said this is because a local authority's PFI contract would normally cover multiple schools, and scrutinising the complex contracts to make minor savings wasn't worth their time.

But as local authorities now face bigger cuts, they have been increasingly proactive. Slough council, for instance, has renegotiated its PFI contract to take back control of its utility bills, which has "generated year-on-year savings".

SCHOOLS WEEK

AN EDUCATIONAL PAPER DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

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OPINION



JAMES CROFT

Founding director, the Centre for Market Reform of Education

School choice is the only way our children can succeed

The evidence is clear: local schools favour well-off parents, while more enrolment in publicly-funded private schools increases equity. The government should be encouraging more private providers to enter the market

Every child should have the opportunity to succeed educationally. But for many, education equity is hard to come by. Disadvantage has proven stubbornly difficult to counteract over several decades. The performance gap between the richest and the poorest has remained persistently large; regional inequalities have, if anything, increased; ethnic differences in attainment have become more marked.

In this country, at least among education professionals, developing school choice as a policy option is generally considered irrelevant to addressing these problems, and one that may even exacerbate them. Choice, it's argued, favours better off and better-educated families over those without the means to interpret and act upon the information offered to help them decide. Much further down this road and it would be winners and losers in a zero-sum game. Indeed, it is for this reason that, in most countries, the local school model prevails, and reform efforts focus on trying to provide a uniform national standard of provision across the schools landscape.

But it's quite simply a myth that local schooling is the equitable alternative to school choice. On the local school model, even if tempered by the right to prefer, pupil allocation mechanisms are proximity-based, which means the status quo already favours the better off and better educated, who can, and do, buy their way into and out of catchment to ensure success. The effect of school improvement on house price premiums is a discernible and well-known phenomenon. Good and improving schools have a gentrifying effect on their catchments, which over time squeezes out the less fortunate. Ironically, therefore, the local school model essentially allows well-off parents to purchase a better education – by paying the extra premium incorporated into their house prices – in stark contrast to its proponents' intentions.

At a recent conference on school choice convened by the Centre for the Study of Market Reform of Education, this issue elicited some strong views – though intriguingly almost all saw it as a question of how to manage parents' choices generally, rather than how to overcome the distorting effect of residential sorting in a proximity-based

system (an issue of design).

This distinction is key to understanding the research literature on the subject (which we have surveyed extensively), since almost all studies looking at the effect of school choice programmes on segregation and inequality do not account for this, nor indeed for the decisions of those who opt out in favour of fee-based private alternatives. So on the face of it, the picture is mixed – some studies finding the gaps between schools in terms of pupil composition and achievement increasing with school choice, others finding no effect – but when school choice is decoupled from pupil residence, residential segregation appears to decrease. At the same time, evidence suggests that parental preference of fee-based private alternatives also decreases as more publicly-funded options are made available, thus encouraging integration – a phenomenon reported to be now occurring in England.

School choice means improved outcomes for all

As far as the charge goes that school choice gives rise to less equitable outcomes in the education system, the picture is much more clear-cut. There's cross-national research indicating that higher enrolment in publicly-funded private schools increases equity by decreasing the role of family background on international test scores. There's international research to the effect that choice decreases the role of family background on achievement. There's also research suggesting that school choice has no impact on achievement differences between pupils. Other research suggests that pupils from different backgrounds benefit from choice to roughly the same degree overall. Importantly, there's no convincing evidence out there to suggest that it adversely affects anyone's learning or life chances.

In other words, school choice has a mixing effect when it's institutionalised, and, largely due to the attendant effect of schools competing for pupils, it ensures improved outcomes for all. The question then ought to be how we can optimise it through supporting measures geared to ensuring that new providers find the market sufficiently attractive to get involved, new schools can be run viably, good schools are incentivised to grow, failing schools are closed, and the school transportation system is adequate to demand.



ED CADWALLADER

Consultant, specialising in assessment and timetabling

Setting targets does nothing for pupils

It's time to ditch a culture of misused statistics and instead come up with a fairer system for measuring pupil performance – and that of those that teach them too

In many schools, targets appear on marksheets without any input from the teacher who knows pupils. Instead they are derived solely from those pupils' key stage 2 (KS2) results. Ironically, many data sources for these targets, for example, the Fischer Family Trust (FFT), tell schools not to do this. So why is it a bad idea, and why do schools do it anyway?

Part of the reason lies in the phrase: "KS2 results are a strong predictor of GCSE performance". That is, there's a belief that what a child achieves at the end of primary school tells you how they will do in their GCSEs.

A look at how KS2 results become GCSE targets explains why this is, and isn't, true. Various companies produce estimates of a child's GCSE performance in a subject by looking at the past results of pupils with the exact same KS2 results, month of birth and gender in high performing schools (the top 20 per cent for value-added). That range of estimates, though based on a previous year's cohort, is highly accurate. If you take a large sample of pupils with the same prior attainment you can accurately predict what the distribution of their GCSE results will be. What you can't do, using the data alone, is predict where in that distribution an individual will fall.

If a child's mostly likely grade is a C then typically around a third of similar children got a C. But then, a third did better and a third did worse. In many schools, this means children are given a target of a C grade, even though there may be a higher chance of a better grade. Telling students to aim for the mid-point of where they are likely to achieve and then focusing attention on those that fall short (and away from those who reach that point but could go further) makes no sense. Tracking systems are of questionable value when more than a third of children might be underachieving yet deemed on target. So why do so many schools set targets like this?

In a word: accountability. School leaders treat their teachers the way the government treats them, telling them exactly what their pupils should achieve and punishing them with criticism if any fall short. The culture of setting targets and holding people to account is so entrenched that it persists even

though the method for deciding those targets is flawed. The very term "pupil targets" is misleading because really these targets are meant for teachers, who face censure when students fail to reach them, in spite of the fact that giving pupils misleading targets that cap their aspirations makes teachers' jobs harder.

Although the work of headteachers and deputies is increasingly dominated by statistics, few have had any training in their use since they themselves were pupils. Many mistakenly believe that because models such as those used by FFT are drawn from the top 20 per cent of schools, the targets represent elite performance.

Statistically-driven targets make closing the achievement gap even harder

But the practice of statistically-driven targets makes closing the achievement gap, between lowest and highest attaining children, even harder. If a child has low prior attainment and so a mostly likely grade of E, there is a higher chance of exceeding that grade than if prior attainment is high and the most likely grade is A. In other words, targets are more challenging for high-ability pupils, and may not be hard enough for low-ability children.

Parents also play an important role. Parents who were themselves successful in education are less likely to accept data-derived handed-out targets as the upper limit of their child's capability and are more likely to encourage their children to aim higher. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who perhaps do not engage with the education system with such confidence, are less likely to push a coasting child when the school says they are on target.

So how should schools set targets? Simply, they shouldn't. If a teacher thinks the best way to motivate a pupil is to say: "Go for a C" they should do that. If they think it's best to say: "Forget the exam for now, let's focus on what you're doing and how we improve" they should do that. But in order to truly hand this power back to teachers a harder question needs answering: how should teachers really be held accountable for their pupils' performance?

There are simple, practical methods for integrating Traveller children into the education system, as my school has shown, yet local and national government has yet to pick up on them

Travellers are one of the most marginalised and vulnerable ethnic minorities in Britain and far too often their needs – in particular for their education – are overlooked. In Traveller communities it is sometimes accepted that children will not receive a secondary education. It is worrying this acceptance now appears to be shared by local and national government.

Education is one of the strongest methods of successfully integrating minorities into the wider community. It's time those in power took the issue of education for Traveller children more seriously.

If we fail, we risk condemning another generation of Travellers to a life of poverty, racial stereotyping, and social exclusion. Why am I concerned about this? Over the past 10 years my school, Holy Family Catholic Primary in South Gloucestershire, has welcomed significantly more than the average number of Traveller children through its doors. Some years, almost a third of the children have come from the Traveller community.

Teaching Traveller children is challenging but extremely fulfilling, and we have made significant progress. This has been achieved through the hard work of our staff, reaching out to the community, building relationships



DAWN BREEZE

Headteacher, Holy Family Catholic Primary School

We can't keep ignoring the needs of Travellers

and trust with a group still apprehensive about dealing with outsiders.

When you consider that slang like "gypsy" and "pikey" is still culturally acceptable, as is a disdain for Traveller lifestyles, this apprehensiveness about dealing with community structures, such as schools, is understandable.

Traditionally, this nervousness to integrate has resulted in low school attendance. At Holy Family, we have managed to turn this around and achieved it by setting out on an ambitious programme of training and learning about the Traveller community.

We identified a member of staff responsible for visiting homes and building links, and by fostering these attendance has increased, integration of Traveller parents has improved and a governor responsible for Traveller

relations has been established. We also looked at the needs of Traveller children and developed a curriculum that makes learning accessible, providing skills needed for further education.

Nevertheless, more still needs to be done above and beyond the actions of one school.

First, the government needs to radically rethink its home-schooling policies. Parents are entitled to educate their children how they see fit. But if children are home schooled, there needs to be considerably more safeguarding and standards checking than is currently applied.

It is far too easy for those in the Traveller community to use the home-schooling argument to opt out of education. Everything we have seen suggests parents who have been to secondary school themselves are

more likely to send their children there as well. Toughening up home-school inspection would not only put an end to legalised truancy, but would also send a clear message to the Traveller community that Britain takes their education and integration seriously.

The next is funding. We were able to fund our work on Traveller integration but not every school can. If the government is serious about fostering community cohesion, funding for minority outreach is essential.

Schools must also take a pragmatic approach. Look at small changes you could make with a large impact. Highlight a member of staff responsible for minority relations. Consider adapting the curriculum slightly: for example, Traveller children tend to spend a great deal of time outdoors so we became a Forest School in order to incorporate this into our pedagogy.

Of course, not every school is going to find themselves in the same specific situation as us. The Traveller population varies depending on where you are, but the approach we take is important for two reasons.

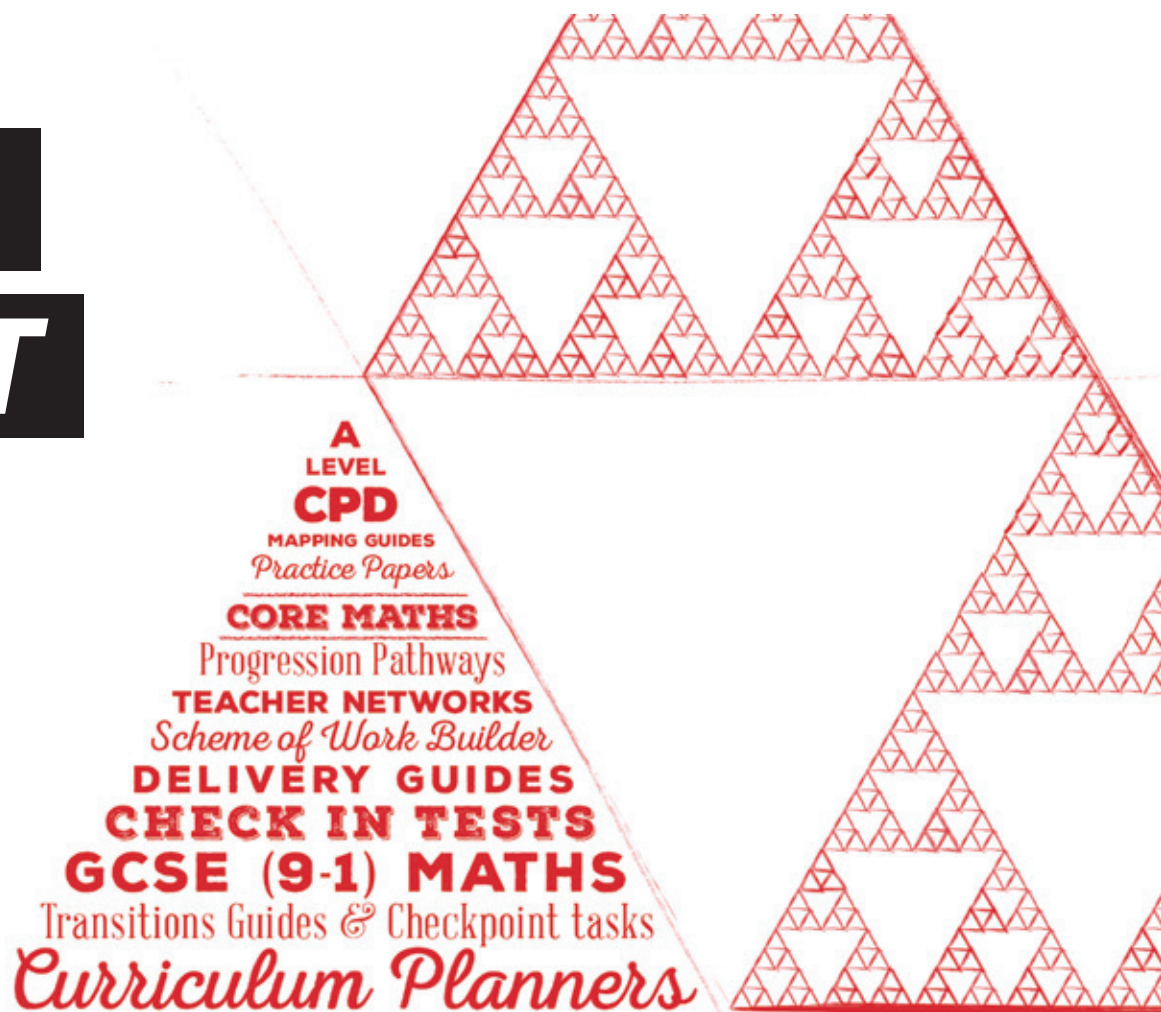
Firstly, just because a minority is small, it doesn't mean you should make a minimal effort to integrate them. Secondly, the methods we used to integrate with the Traveller community are the same as those we would have used to reach any isolated and marginalised section of society.

"Integration" is a buzzword politicians are particularly fond of using, but the onus of integration should not be left to minorities alone.

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REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
OF THE WEEK

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



Our blog reviewer of the week is Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate director of knowledge development for TeachFirst

Transfer of learning: is there a solution?

@surreallyno

In two recent posts, Cristina Milos has explored why it's so hard for students to transfer knowledge from one context to another. Based on astonishingly-detailed reading of a wide variety of studies, she explains the biggest obstacles to transfer in maths: the over use of concrete materials, contextualised tasks, and authentic, real-life problems. She doesn't duck the paradox this entails: concrete and contextualised tasks are more engaging and easier to process for students, but "while they provide short-term benefits they can be disadvantageous in the long run". In her second post, Milos presents a series of strategies to support transfer, based on the literature and on international comparative studies. Among her suggestions are presenting students with multiple cases, asking them to compare and contrast, and offering them examples and "non-examples" of particular things. She exemplifies each strategy with concrete examples and real-life problems suitable to maths teaching ... If you're concerned with ensuring students take what they learn one lesson and apply it in the next, these posts are must reads.

Teaching poetry: five ways in

@mr_bunker_edu

In an equally useful post, David Bunker shares his preferred approaches to introducing poetry. He describes teaching poems as

one of the most difficult aspects of English teaching: "To so many students I teach poems are impenetrable puzzles, or written in language so unfamiliar that their first instinct is to balk before we've even begun". He offers five approaches that have worked for him: for example, withholding the title and "encouraging students to figure out what it might be – essentially approaching poems like a riddle", focusing on the most significant parts of the poem and "going heavy on context", "perhaps my favourite way to introduce poems". Bunker's post suggests he has taken a challenging task and fashioned it into a pleasure; in doing so, he offers sound advice.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast, so build great teaching cultures

@leadinglearner

Stephen Tierney questions the usefulness of the time spent on appraisal within schools. The process requires "an initial meeting to set objectives and targets, a series of lesson observations, an interim meeting and end-of-process meeting to review outcomes. In addition there is the requirement to complete the associated paperwork and invariably management time in ensuring greater compliance with policy or chasing up late documentation." So is this worthwhile? Tierney thinks otherwise. He goes on to suggest an alternative path, in which staff focus more usefully on professional development: offered a menu of opportunities, including lesson observations, mini-observations and "making a difference projects". From these options, staff would "select the one that is of most interest or relevance to them. The choice could vary from year to year. All would need to have a means for monitoring it is happening or showing it is having impact".

The future of leadership

@M_Heffernan

This half-hour BBC broadcast by Margaret Heffernan discusses the problems with "command and control" leadership. At a surprising variety of places she hears about the problems with competitive and individual models of "hero leadership". At Netflix she learns about "Netflix Culture" in which important decisions and key responsibilities have been devolved to employees. At Rada, she is told that supermen and superwomen are turned away from auditions, while at Microsoft, the company has changed direction to prioritise teams and collaboration. Finally, of all places, she meets with senior generals from the US and British armies, who tell her they have dispensed with command and control leadership. Heffernan pulls insights from diverse fields into a coherent and thoughtful set of conclusions about best practice.

BOOK REVIEW

Reading Reconsidered

Author Doug Lemov,
Colleen Driggs, Erica Woolway

Publisher Jossey Bass

ISBN-10 1119104246

ISBN-13 978-1119104247

Reviewed by Kieran Dhunna

Halliwell @ezzy_moon



Much has been said on social media and educational communities about Doug Lemov and his book, "Teach Like a Champion", so I approached this new book with interest. Coming from a background in both sports coaching and teaching, I have often found myself torn in discussions about Lemov and the methods of practise advocated for teachers; can effective teaching really be distilled into key elements without losing individualism and creativity? Is it

possible to educate to a formula? If so, surely education would be very simple!

However, the track record for reducing achievement gaps of the US Uncommon Schools network, for which Lemov works, cannot be ignored. Neither can the fact that the book is informed by long-term analysis and observations by the authors. For me, this is not a book motivated by ideology but on sharing what the authors have found to be positive practice from their wide-ranging experiences of teaching reading.

I found this a book a little heavy going. It is a valuable read but a bit overwhelming. However, it isn't meant to be read in one go so I imagine it to be a good go-to handbook if approached module by module and used as an aid to planning processes.

It is based on four core ideas distilled from the US Common Core standards, with chapters dedicated to each of these, followed by "the fundamentals", which the authors have focused on as "core elements of literacy instruction important in their own right that also offer deep synergy with the core ideas".

From this framework, chapters are further refined into modules, making it very easy to jump to a specific area you want to focus on, which appealed to my efficient side. As a less experienced teacher, I found the modules

had activities with clear, purposeful thinking behind them and although I didn't see the video clips that accompany the text, I feel they would support it well. Regardless of ideology, the authors have written the book to act as a structure for teachers to work from; as a scaffold to building some understanding of the complexity of literacy instruction.

One of the things I liked about the book is that it values the importance of reading as a facilitator for all other subjects. Although, ultimately, it is about improving achievement, it has been written with a view of how strong grounding in processing skills, criticality and endurance (to name a few) open opportunities for students not just in school with us but throughout life. As the authors put it, "we must prepare students for college and university with intentionality and backwards design" so they offer a rigorous programme to ensure the best possible future for students.

With regards to reading for pleasure – something I feel strongly about – there is no module dedicated to this but an underlying expectation across the book that there is pleasure in the process of reading, irrespective of content. The ability to engage with words at a deep level is the source of motivation and intrinsic reward.

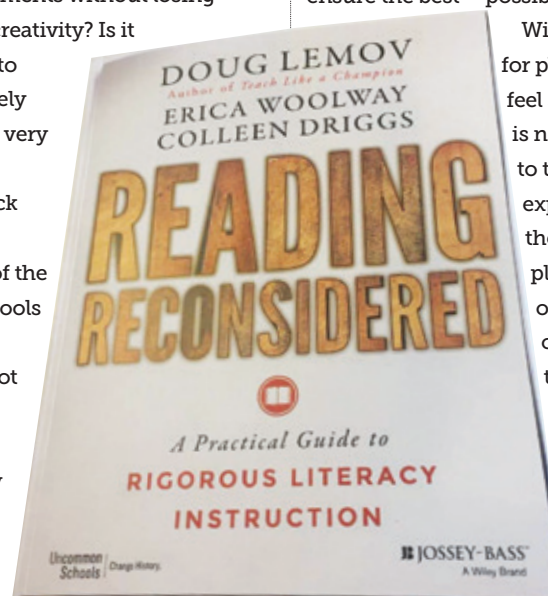
Advocating the power of shared reading in the classroom

reminded me of how teachers share books on social media, which offers us the opportunity to compare and discuss interpretations, consider choices and themes and share the experience of engagement.

The theory behind what is needed for strong literacy correlates with known practices such as assessing pupils' progress and practise, therefore it is possible more experienced teachers – particularly those with a literacy background – will not find the book as useful as I did.

As someone who lacks a strong grounding in this area, I found it very handy. Having felt a bit at sea about things such as guided reading, what constitutes good practice and why with long-term impact, I feel this book offers everything teachers need, both in knowledge and resources to ensure they are providing high quality instruction.

Reading Reconsidered will be published March 30



What are you working on at the moment?

The publication is a description of what artificial intelligence (AI) in education is and what it can do. It puts forward an argument for why it needs to be taken into account more within education.

Why should it?

Because AI can do a lot to help us with future problems. It is grounded in evidence from research that has been conducted over the past 25 years from a whole range of people involved in AI in education.

What is interesting about this research?

This is the only report that has been written for a non-academic audience. It talks about what AI in education is.

What are AI systems?

AI uses various techniques to build dynamic computational models of a subject that has to be learned, a dynamic model of the learner and their progress in very fine grades. It's not just whether a learner got something right or not but what steps they took. It is about building a computational model of the teaching process. There are three core models: how you teach, what you have to

RESEARCH CORNER

Q&A

ROSE LUCKIN

INTELLIGENCE UNLEASHED: AN ARGUMENT FOR AI IN EDUCATION



learn and how the learners are getting on.

Research shows that AI enables learners and teachers to add to their understanding and knowledge using smart machines. That might take the form of an adaptive piece of software that can provide individualised one-to-one tutoring for learners and there is a good body of evidence to support the fact that these tools are effective.

What do you hope the impact of this research will be?

We would like to raise awareness and to start a dialogue about how educators understand how artificial intelligence might best be used in education because it is important they drive this innovation. There is no question

about it: artificial intelligence is here and it is not going to go away. Big companies are investing a lot of money in developing AI solutions and it is really important that we start a discussion now about what we want AI to do for education that we don't end up having it imposed on teachers and learners and parent.

What do the findings show?

The key findings are that artificial intelligence systems can support teaching and learning effectively. They can help us to bridge the attainment gap between the less able and more able learners within an organisation, a classroom. They could help teachers by assisting them to deal with the

wide range of pupil abilities that they have to deal with within the classroom.

Is there any other research that you would recommend?

The other research that I suggest are videos from Dr Rand Hindi and myself where we talk about what artificial intelligence really is and what it isn't and what we mean by "AI in Education".



They can be found at www.pearson.com/innovation/smarter-digital-tools.html

Also, an earlier report from 2011, "What is AIED and why does education need it?" by Joshua Underwood and myself.



A week in Westminster

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

THURSDAY:

At an Inside Government conference, Marcus Bell, the director of teachers and teaching at the Department for Education, said: "Just because there are more [teachers] doesn't mean there are enough." A slip of the tongue there, in a speech that was supposed to be a defence of schools minister Nick Gibb's view that there's no crisis!

Speaking at the Association of Colleges, Nicky Morgan said she "doesn't want children to grow up with their aspirations limited", which she said would happen if the UK left Europe. It's all very on-point for showing support to government but Week in Westminster is worried that we're in for a tedious few months of people jamming the EU into every conversation even where it isn't wanted. "European Values" audits anyone?

FRIDAY:

Ofqual announced Amanda Spielman as Glenys Stacey's interim successor. Week in Westminster wishes to take this chance

to wish her all the best. You can read our "exit interview" with Dame Glenys on page 8.

It's always nice to see top bods reading *Schools Week*, and Sir Michael Wilshaw is no exception.

In today's "monthly commentary", released by Sir Mike, he explained the "phenomenon" of teachers going to teach abroad. He quotes figures showing that 100,000 UK teachers are now working in other countries, as revealed by this publication last year. Get that man a *Schools Week* mug.

SATURDAY:

Dominic Herrington, the regional schools commissioner for the south east and south London, isn't a fan of the media. He's previously been brusque with reporters and unwilling to share information in front of them. Today was no exception.

At the National Governors' Association's regional conference in Reading, he apparently said: "I hope there are no journalists here today, so please don't quote me but I think that the media don't help with the celebration of good schools."

There weren't journalists there Dominic. But everyone else was. Has he not seen our award-winning GCSE league tables celebrating excellent schools? His copy is in the post.

MONDAY:

An extra 24 hours by the leap year gods!

TUESDAY:

Reformed content for various GCSEs and A-levels were published today, in which Nick Gibb was keen to point out that politics A-level now includes an option to study feminism, and the list of prominent thinkers includes more women. Feminists rejoice! Coming two days after the #oscarssowhite ceremony, it's nice to see more BME representation too.

More than 45,000 people let the government know they were not happy with the original content for politics. That's probably more responses the government has had to all its other exam reform consultations combined.

Education select committee chair Neil

Carmichael told us that national schools commissioner Sir David Carter lives in his constituency (Stroud, Gloucestershire, in case you don't already know). He points out: "He will struggle to avoid me."

Week in Westminster envisages Neil donning his fedora and mac on weekends, hiding behind hedges outside Sir David's house, waiting to pounce on him as he leaves to go on a jog wearing his skin-tight running trousers... *Rinses eyes out*

WEDNESDAY:

Nicky Morgan has already declared her support for Britain staying in the European Union and today Neil Carmichael joined the ranks, proudly wearing (a rather large) "IN" badge during the education select committee.

It's not clear how the rest of the select committee is planning to vote. Perhaps next week the select committee can have a fashion show of badges so we can find out. March 6

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEK FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

School Bulletin



US politics presentation for Norwich pupils



American diplomat Tim Gerhardson talks to pupils at City Academy Norwich

Pupils at City Academy Norwich have given their thoughts on some of the world's biggest issues.

As part of a major listening exercise with British young people by the Embassy of the United States, US diplomat Tim Gerhardson visited the school last week to deliver a presentation and discussion with 23 year 11 students.

He asked the views of the students on issues such as their knowledge of America, their perceptions of US foreign and domestic policies, and how they see the historic "special relationship" between the UK and US.

The session also covered topics as diverse as the role of technology in the world today, gender equality, climate change and global security.

Shazney Radley, 15, said: "I learned a lot about US history. It also highlighted that women in today's society aren't as involved as they should be and that there is actually things that we can do about it."

The students also quizzed Mr Gerhardson on the current US presidential campaign and the rise to prominence of Donald Trump.



Stomp! beats a path to Rickstones' door



New Rickstones Academy pupils receive a masterclass from the cast of Stomp! David Gallagher (front) and Manasseh Jackson (back right)

Inset: New Rickstones Academy pupils test out their dustbin banging skills

New Rickstones Academy pupils received a masterclass in dustbin banging and crashing from the former stars of West End show Stomp!

Cast members Manasseh Jackson and David Gallagher brought their musical bins to inspire the music and drama students in Essex.

The pupils were encouraged to first use their bodies and then the props to make rhythmic beats, just like the famous musical.

Mr Gallagher, who has been running Stomp! workshops around the country since

2000, said: "We get young people looking

at music the way we approach it. There's nothing written down, it's all about rhythmic beats, movement, comedy and theatre.

"We build in numeracy – it's all about counting beats – and literacy and can even touch on the recycling aspect with our props so there are lots of cross-curricular applications to what we offer. Our show is very physical so we also bring that side into it." A group of 30 students from the school will work with the performers again on 22 March before they put on a show at Braintree Arts Theatre on March 29.

Windmill Academy pupils speed to science success

FEATURED

The world's fastest accelerating vehicle took centre stage at Windmill Academy as a reward for pupils who won an inter-school science competition.

The Top Fuel Dragster from the Santa Pod raceway and some of the Santa Pod team taught the Northamptonshire pupils all about the science behind the car before they got the chance to sit in the racer and look at the engine and body close up.

The winning pupils, all in year 5, came together from six academies in the Education Fellowship trust to celebrate their success in a special Balloon Racer Challenge.

A spokesperson for the trust said the young learners showed "superb science skills" during the challenge, including problem solving, application of science knowledge, team work and resilience.

Matt Coleman, principal of Windmill Academy, explained: "The competition was run as part of a two-year project funded by an ENTHUSE Partnership Award to raise engagement and attainment in science.

"It is providing wonderfully exciting opportunities for many pupils in the Education Fellowship's primary academies in Northamptonshire."

Windmill pupil Lucy Neville said: "We all had a great afternoon, I can't believe how fast the car could go – it gets up to 300mph in about four seconds and



Windmill Academy pupils welcome the world's fastest accelerating vehicle, the Top Fuel Dragster

Inset: Windmill Academy pupils sit inside the Dragster

accelerates faster than a jet. It was just amazing. Thank you to everyone involved in making it happen."

Michelle Brett, assistant principal and science lead at Windmill, said: "The afternoon was absolutely wonderful. The Santa Pod team were so knowledgeable and it was great for the children to be able to see science in action in the real world.

"It's not very often you have a chance to get so close to a high performance vehicle like the Top Fuel Dragster. We hope the visit will inspire the children even further in their science studies."

The Santa Pod team left two dragster



models with the school. The trust said they would be awarded to the two pupils who explain what they learned from the afternoon in the most creative and entertaining manner.

Santa Pod will then promote the winners' work on their website.

SHINE

TEACHERS GET CHANCE TO SHINE WITH DISADVANTAGED KIDS

Teachers across the country are being invited to submit their ideas for raising the achievement of disadvantaged children for this year's Let Teachers SHINE competition.

Ten grants of up to £15,000 will be given to help successful applicants develop their individual projects.

Entries deemed to have the most impact on pupils will also have the opportunity to receive additional funding to roll their scheme out to other schools.

Phil Neal, director at Capita SIMS, which supports the competition, said: "The competition is testament to the power of an idea born out of the classroom to address the attainment gap. If you are a teacher that thinks you have the makings of a great project to help disadvantaged children, I urge you to enter."

Teachers must demonstrate their idea will help disadvantaged children by raising attainment in English, maths or science.

Entries are being accepted at www.capita-sims.co.uk/campaigns/sims-and-shine until April 17.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Saskia O'Sullivan, head of science at Rendcomb College, an independent day and boarding school for children aged 3 to 18 in Gloucestershire, has been appointed to the Royal Society of Chemistry's Science, Education and Industry Board (SEIB).

One of just 17 members, Ms O'Sullivan's peers on board include 10 professors, 11 fellows of the RSC and two fellows of The Royal Society.

Ms O'Sullivan, whose appointment runs until 2018, said: "As you can imagine the number of students taking chemistry and the number of chemists we have got has been in decline and the RSC are keen to support teachers to up that number. I am there as a teacher so that when they are putting forward ideas I can say what works directly in classrooms from experience."

Ms O'Sullivan began teaching in 2006 and has worked at Rendcomb College for the last four years. She was previously at Ribston Hall High School before that in Gloucester and has also worked as a social worker.

She holds an MA in natural sciences from the University of Cambridge, and an MSc in science and education from the University of Bristol.

Steve Warburton has been appointed as principal of the Greater Peterborough



Saskia O'Sullivan



Steve Warburton



Greg Williams



Amanda Spielman

University Technical College (GPUTC), which is due to open in September 2016.

Mr Warburton, who has been involved in the GPUTC project for the last year and was already interim principal, brings more than 30 years of senior leadership and teaching experience.

He was headteacher of nearby Hereward Community College and was previously director of education at Thomas Deacon Academy and assistant principal at Sawtry Community College.

For the last six years, Mr Warburton has been a consultant specialising in educational technology and school improvement, recently working for Novatia.

The new £10 million GPUTC will specialise in engineering and the built environment, with an emphasis on sustainability and new technologies.

Mr Warburton said the "fusion" between academic and practical, technical learning is

what drew him to the job.

He said: "Integrating 40 employer challenge projects across the years and specialisms is an exciting aspect of what we are doing, as well as capitalising on my educational technology experience to ensure that our students and staff successfully utilise its potential."

Mr Warburton has a degree in modern history from Oxford University and an MBA in educational management from Leicester University.

Greg Williams is the new director of Landau Forte Academy Tamworth Sixth Form in Staffordshire.

He moves from his position as senior assistant headteacher at Aston Manor

Academy in Birmingham.

The Tamworth sixth form is part of the Landau Forte Charitable Trust, which controls six schools.

Mr Williams said: "In the past our sixth form has been known as mainly academic but we are now looking at introducing more vocational qualifications, which will fit really comfortably in Tamworth industry, such as mechatronic engineering.

"What I am here to do is to make sure the pupils progress. One of my key other ambitions is to develop employability skills within the school. To do this I'll be working with local employers to find out what their specific needs are."

Mr Williams studied English literature at the University of Wolverhampton and then took a SCITT route into the classroom.

Ofqual chair **Amanda Spielman** will act as chief regulator on an interim basis after the departure of Glenys Stacey.

The former merchant banker and strategy consultant-turned education professional took up post on Tuesday and will serve until a permanent replacement for Dame Glenys is found by the Department for Education.

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

Do you know an **inspirational** and **outstanding** FE lecturer, teacher, support worker or volunteer working in a Cornish college or school who you would like to nominate for the **Cornwall Teacher Awards 2016**?

If you would like to make a nomination for the **Cornwall Teacher Awards 2016**, simply visit the website to vote.

More information coming soon, keep checking our website: www.cornwallteacherawards.org





LEAD TEACHER OF HISTORY

Ealing, London

Apply by 07/03/2016

Job start September 2016, with the requirement for some preparatory work and induction beforehand

Salary: Ealing Fields Pay Scale and commensurate with experience

Location: Ealing, London

Contract type: Full Time

Contract term: Permanent

Your role as a teacher and leader:

Clearly, as we are a brand-new school, your role will evolve considerably over the next years as the school grows to scale. In the first year, you will be the only History Teacher; so will teach all four Year 7 classes. Additionally, you will be preparing the Year 8 curriculum for September 2017, and helping develop the longer-term plans for the Department, including helping us recruit colleagues, who will join you in September 2017.

In our first year, the expectation would be that you also lead on other humanities subjects (including Geography and 'Individuals in Society'). Then from September 2017, you would assume the role of 'Lead Teacher' for your subject specialism.

Whether you are appointed as Head of History, or the Lead Teacher of History, you're the expert in your subject - and this is your chance to prove it! This is a unique opportunity for you to help shape the curriculum in the way you see fit, and you will be able to build the department around your ambitions, and assist in recruiting colleagues you believe will be aligned to, and are capable of, achieving those ambitions.

The deadline for applications is Monday 7th March 2016, at 12 noon.

First round interviews for long-listed candidates will take place on Monday 21st March 2016.

Shortlisted candidates will then be visited in their current schools (wherever possible), for a 'Reteach'. The dates for this will be arranged on an individual basis.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact our Headteacher, Lee Faith: lee.faith@ealingfields.co.uk

LEAD TEACHER OF ENGLISH

Ealing, London

Apply by 07/03/2016

Job start September 2016, with the requirement for some preparatory work and induction beforehand

Salary: Ealing Fields Pay Scale and commensurate with experience

Location: Ealing, London

Contract type: Full Time

Contract term: Permanent

Your role as a teacher and leader:

Clearly, as we are a brand-new school, your role will evolve considerably over the next seven years as the school grows to scale. In the first year, you will be the only English Teacher; so will teach all four Year 7 classes. Additionally, you will be preparing the Year 8 curriculum for September 2017, and helping develop the longer-term plans for the Department, including helping me recruit colleagues, who will join you in September 2017.

Whether you are appointed as Head of English, or the Lead Teacher of English, you're the expert in your subject - and this is your chance to prove it! This is a unique opportunity for you to help shape the curriculum in the way you see fit, and you will be able to build the department around your ambitions, and assist in recruiting colleagues you believe will be aligned to, and are capable of, achieving those ambitions.

Application Process:

To make an application please download a copy of the Candidate Information Pack and an Application Form from: <http://ealingfields.co.uk/join-our-team/>

Completed application forms should be sent by email to: employment@challoners.com. Please do not send in any additional documentation with your application.

admin@ealingfields.co.uk

[@ealingfields](https://twitter.com/ealingfields) www.ealingfields.co.uk

Ealing Fields High School
Brave Hearts, Bold Minds



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www.greenwoodacademies.org/schooldirect

The Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust specialises in transforming underperforming schools operating in areas of economic and social disadvantage. We aim to help children realise their potential whatever their background. The Trust is recognised nationally as a leader of educational best practice and has successfully grown to support 30 Academies across the East Midlands. Our employees are highly supported by an outstanding leadership team and are offered significant pathways for internal promotion and professional growth.

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You will be a highly strategic thinker with the skills to develop strong partnerships, raise funds and contribute to the dynamic intellectual life of the RSA. You will be a dynamic communicator keen to develop and share ideas through writing and speaking but, most of all, you will have proven your capacity to influence thinking at the highest level and generate change. You must be able to work independently but with the capacity to be part of a collaborative team which will seek your leadership on the development of projects and impact in the UK and internationally. You will understand the need for a robust research agenda and you will be prepared to challenge orthodoxies where they impair the creativity and development of learners, professionals and the education system as a whole.

The RSA combines thought leadership with civic innovation to further human progress. Building on our 250 year history as a beacon for enlightenment values, the RSA is currently at an exciting period in its history. We provide platforms for leading experts through the UK's most ambitious free public lecture series, our projects generate new models for tackling the social challenges of today and we are building on our network of over 27,000 Fellows around the world – these are achievers and influencers from every field with a real commitment to progressive and social change.

How to apply

For more information and to apply for this position please visit www.thersa.org/about-us/Jobs/. The closing date for receipt of applications is **Midnight on Monday 14 March 2016**. **Interviews are expected to take place on Wednesday 23 and or Thursday 24 March 2016**. Please note that we are unable to accept late or incomplete applications.

The RSA is committed to being an equal opportunities employer.

Registered as a charity in England and Wales no. 212424 and in Scotland no. SC037784

HEADTEACHER

HEADTEACHER SALARY LEVEL: L31-37 (LONDON FRINGE)



The Governors of Presdales School are seeking to recruit a confident, inspirational leader who is ready to bring energy, enthusiasm and vision to our outstanding school. The current Headteacher, Mrs Janine Robinson, is retiring after 28 successful years in post.

Presdales is an Academy for girls from 11-16 with a co-educational Sixth Form. Rated outstanding in the last four Ofsted inspections, it is a high-achieving, non-selective community school. It is our desire to build on this excellent foundation and to see Presdales become world-class.

Accordingly, the headship position is full of opportunity and challenge.

As a current Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in a secondary school you will be able to demonstrate significant whole-school impact in your current role which has led to sustained improvement in your school. You will share our commitment to girls' education and will have the drive and imagination to take Presdales to the next level.

We warmly welcome informal visits by prospective candidates. Should you wish to arrange such a visit, you are invited to contact the Governors as indicated in the details below.

The application form and further information can be downloaded from the school's website or you may contact the Governors by email. The form and Statement of Application should be returned to the Chair of Governors by email or by post.

Email: governors@presdales.herts.sch.uk
Presdales School Academy Trust
Hoe Lane, Ware,
Hertfordshire SG12 9NX
www.presdales.herts.sch.uk

INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY 16TH AND THURSDAY 17TH MARCH

Presdales School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
This position is subject to an enhanced criminal records check from the Disclosure & Barring Service which will require you to disclose all criminal convictions.

CLOSING DATE: MONDAY 7TH MARCH AT NOON | SHORTLISTING: WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH

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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN a Schools Week mug

> You may have spotted last week that four of the differences were invisible. Sorry!



What's the caption? tweet a caption @schoolsweek



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