

A FULL LIST
OF WHAT'S IN
THE PROPOSALS

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THE END IS NIGH
FOR QUALIFIED
TEACHER STATUS

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PARENTS LOSE
THEIR SEATS AT THE
GOVERNORS' TABLE

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"Schools are set
free, and everywhere
are in chains"

** With apologies to Jean-Jacques Rousseau*



THE WHITE PAPER: SPECIAL EDITION

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EDITION 62

WHITE PAPER

Think again on academy plans, petitions demand

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The government's plan to turn all schools into academies is facing a swell of opposition, including two petitions that have each gathered more than 100,000 signatures in less than a week.

The petitions will now be considered for debate in parliament.

Chancellor George Osborne announced last week that every state primary and secondary school will be expected to have either become an academy by 2020, or to have an academy order in place to convert by 2022.

One petition calls for a public referendum on Mr Osborne's proposals; the other for the decision to be reversed.

A series of rallies were also held across the country this week, including a "Hands off our Schools" demonstration organised by the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers outside the Department for Education's London offices yesterday.

School leaders have also voiced their opposition. Geoff Barton headteacher of King Edward VI School in Suffolk, and a regular columnist in education newspapers, has called the plan "dire for education".

But in a blogpost on Sunday, he said the proposals had produced a "greater sense of solidarity across the teaching profession.

"It's the forced academisation issue that



Geoff Barton

has energised so many people to express their outrage through not one but two online petitions.

"Both polls have galvanised thousands of people in just a few days. If the secretary of state has any sense, she'll be alert to this strength of feeling."

Parents have joined the opposition. A post by education secretary Nicky Morgan on parenting website Mumsnet to explain "why academisation is best for our schools" had attracted more than 800 comments, many of them negative, as *Schools Week* went to press.

Ms Morgan said the proposals would place trust into the hands of teachers and would give schools greater autonomy to make the decisions "that are right for their

community and pupils".

Former education secretary David Blunkett, writing for *The Observer* on Sunday, said the government's plans to convert all schools were "doomed to fail".

He wrote: "In high-performing localities, we appear to be confronting problems that don't exist, rather than concentrating on using flexibility and autonomy as weapons to tackle underperformance where standards have to be raised – the original objective of academies."

The government must now formally respond to both petitions.

All the policies included in the white paper that require legislation will be debated in parliament and the House of Lords, as part of the formal process for passing new laws.

However, those parts of the paper that don't require legislation – such as plans for a new portal to handle complaints from parents – will be created in due course by the government.

It is expected the new legislation will be proposed as part of another education bill, which could be announced at the next Queen's Speech in June.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said: "The changes we are making will put control back in the hands of teachers and school leaders – those who know their pupils best – making sure every single child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential."

New teachers could qualify within months

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT

New teachers could be fully accredited within a few months if the government follows through its plan to scrap current training qualifications.

Under the plans, set out in last week's white paper, trainee teachers would gain accreditation at their headteacher's behest, a decision that would be ratified by a teaching school or school-centred initial teacher training provider.

A Department for Education (DfE) spokesperson said there would be no set time for accreditation: a "very small" minority could qualify in just "six months".

Replacing qualified teaching status (QTS) in an increasingly academised system, as set out in the white paper and Budget, would shake up pay for trainees as academies can set their own pay conditions.

The DfE said some could give trainees annual pay increments, while others might give salary increases only after a teacher had been accredited, no matter how long that took.

Professor Alan Smithers, a teacher training policy expert from the University of Buckingham, said: "Qualifying as a teacher has mainly been a matter of serving the time, so I welcome the government's attempt to beef it up. The new approach has been likened to learning to drive.

"But I wonder where the independent assessment of capabilities comes in. Ofsted



has had to cope with a slashed budget and it is inspecting much less these days, so I can't see it taking it on.

"Without independent oversight, trainees and their future careers will be at the mercy of the personal preferences of one or two senior teachers during their first years in schools. So, in principle, a good idea, but how can we be sure it is going to be fair?"

The title of QTS will be changed and trainees will be "accredited" rather than "qualified", although a DfE spokesperson said the new name would be announced in "due course".

The white paper said: "We will introduce a more challenging accreditation, recognising the ability to teach well, advanced subject knowledge and understanding, and application of up-to-date evidence."

As part of its training shake-up, the government also promised to give the "best" training providers long-term allocations of places, so they could plan staffing. *Schools*

Week previously reported that 80 per cent of training providers said uncertainty over numbers meant they were reconsidering the courses they could offer.

However, the DfE told *Schools Week* the definition of "best" was still to be decided. It also confirmed the changes could take place in time for the 2017/18 round of recruitment.

James Noble-Rogers, executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, gave the proposal a cautious welcome, but said: "There is also a case for increasing the amount of time that it takes to become a fully recognised teacher – much will, however, depend on the detail."

Schools Week last week reported the concerns of universities about the current system that does not guarantee how many places each university-led PGCE course will have for the start of the 2016/17 academic year. Universities were unanimous that the system had negatively affected their ability to provide provision.

WHITE PAPER

Trusts to be rated in new league tables

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Multi-academy trusts will be rated in new performance tables as part of a government accountability drive.

In Thursday's white paper announcement, education secretary Nicky Morgan said the tables were part of new accountability measures for chains, which also included the continued publication of inspection and performance data at individual school level.

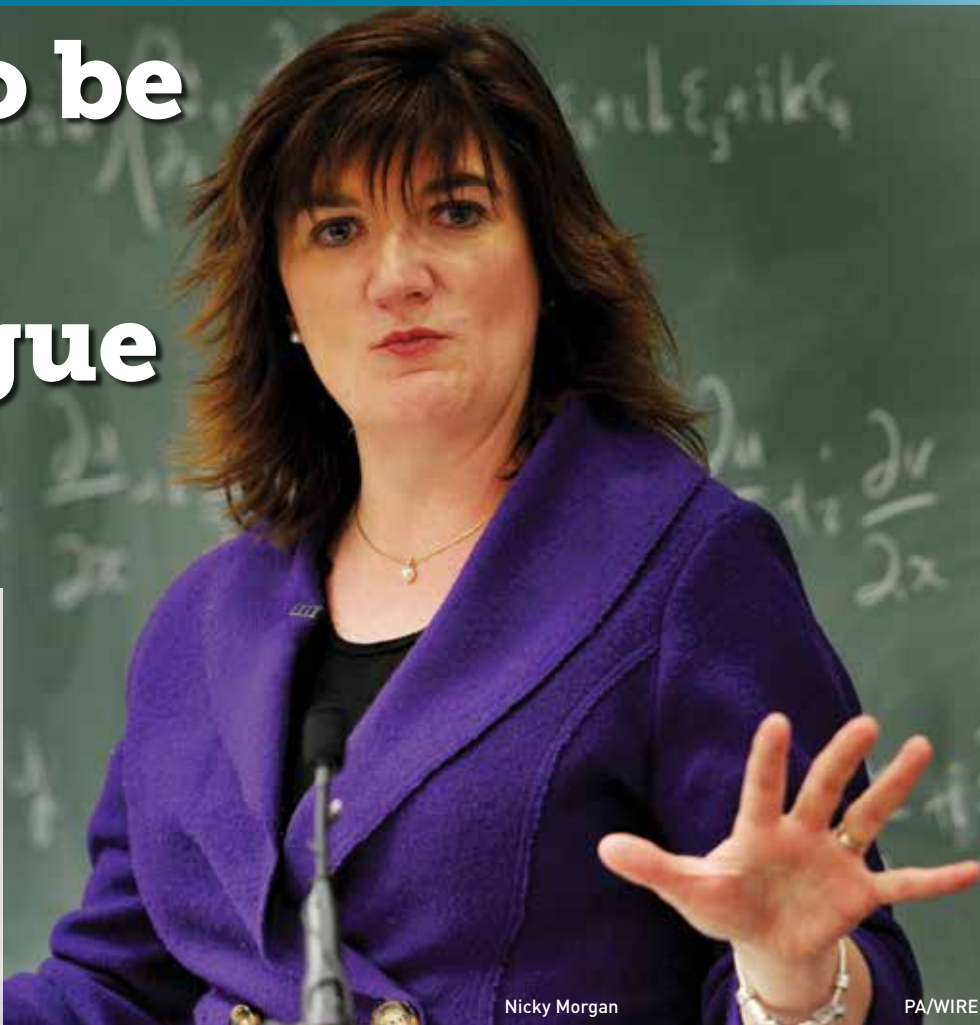
It follows the Budget announcement by Chancellor George Osborne that all schools will have to become academies by 2022.

The government expects most schools will form or join trusts so "proven educational models can spread and grow", although the paper says "successful and sustainable" schools will be able to continue as a single academy trust.

National schools commissioner Sir David Carter said this month he expects about 1,000 more trusts will be needed by 2020.

The paper says: "An effective accountability system ensures that professionals are held accountable for the outcomes of their decisions using fair, intelligent, reliable and carefully balanced measures of success and failure."

The measures need to avoid "creating perverse incentives or unduly hindering innovation" and must recognise the risk



Nicky Morgan

PA/WIRE

and challenge headteachers take on when relocating to work in the most challenging schools.

The measures will also give schools and groups "time to improve while reacting in time to avoid chronic failure that irredeemably damages any child's education".

Schools Week reported last March on the department's proposed measures to rate the performance of academy chains.

Under its plans, they would be given a score for the value they added to pupil attainment between key stages 2 and 4.

The length of time an academy had been part of a chain would also be factored in – which ties in with the proposals set out in the white paper.

Ark Schools, United Learning and the Harris Federation come out on top using the

new metrics.

It marks a seemingly new approach from the government. The Department for Education turned down a freedom of information request in 2014 for the grades of academy trusts.

The department said then that releasing the information could destabilise academies sponsored by low-scoring trusts.

Just last week Neil Carmichael MP, chair of the education select committee, launched an inquiry into trust chains, stating they currently receive "little scrutiny".

"We are determined to examine their performance, accountability, and governance. The government will face significant challenges in implementing these proposals.

"As a committee we look forward to examining the full details."

'It's no magic wand but it will unleash success'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Academy status is no "magic wand", said education secretary Nicky Morgan as she spelled out plans to convert every school in England.

In a speech at King's College London Maths School in south London to mark the launch of the white paper, she said the government was not "abdicating its responsibilities" by handing more power to multi-academy trusts but was giving greater freedom to school leaders.

Although the white paper placed a heavy emphasis on school autonomy, Ms Morgan said she was "not so naive as to believe that academy status in itself is a magic wand".

"There is and always will be a role for government in education. The public rightly expects their elected government to hold schools to account for the outcomes young people achieve and the investment taxpayers put in.

"My job is to create the conditions for autonomy to succeed right across the country."

Ms Morgan contrasted her government's interventions to those made in Rab Butler's 1944 Education Act, Ken Baker's national curriculum and David Blunkett's national strategies, which she described as "top-down", claiming that such an approach can "only take you so far".

"As Michael Barber and Joel Klein have said, 'you can mandate adequacy but you cannot mandate greatness; it has to be unleashed'. It is greatness that we want to see everywhere in our education system today."

The education secretary said the white paper did not propose another "big idea" imposed on schools, but "lays out how we will give schools, school leaders, and the education profession the power, incentives, accountability and support to give every child an excellent education".

She said the new system would create a dynamic school system which "spreads excellence and is intolerant of failure".

Addressing concerns about the approach, Ms Morgan emphasised it was the government's ability to move academies between sponsors which made the system more accountable than council-maintained schools.

"I can hear the howls of derision from opponents of academies – asking 'what about this one or that one that struggled?' It's true some academies have been weaker than others, some haven't met the high expectations that we've set for them.

"But here's the crucial difference: when a local authority school failed, it was stuck with the local authority, end of story. Under a system of academies and multi-academy trusts we have the power not just to intervene swiftly, but to actively move schools to new management to turn them around."

Last year *Schools Week* reported 133 academies had been rated as inadequate but did not have new management. One had stayed with the same academy sponsor for two years before graded as inadequate again last June.

Breathing space from Ofsted

Headteachers who step up to take over failing schools will have a two-and-a-half year breathing space from Ofsted as the government tries to attract the best leaders to the most challenging schools, writes John Dickens.

The white paper outlines a "rebalance of incentives in the accountability system" so the best leaders are encouraged to work in challenging schools and areas.

Many have said in the past that they are put off taking on struggling schools because it could be "potentially career-damaging".

The breathing space, the paper says, will allow heads "time and stability to put in sustainable improvement".

Malcolm Trobe, acting general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, welcomes the "helpful" move. "People who take over schools in challenging circumstances need some time to be able to make the necessary changes."

The white paper also reveals that Ofsted will consult on removing the separate graded judgments on the quality of teaching. Instead, inspectors will only comment through the other graded judgments.

The government says it wants to focus on outcomes, not methods, and will trust teachers to deliver that.

The paper says: "Despite recent reforms and clarifications, such as Ofsted no longer judging the quality of individual lessons and confirming they do not have a preferred teaching style, some schools continue to tell us that they feel they are judged on whether or not they follow particular styles of teaching."

It says that Ofsted's judgments instead will be used in a "more sophisticated way". "These judgments provide an important indicator of a school's success for its pupils, valued by parents and the public, and we want to maintain this.

"But in the past we have relied on some elements of these judgments – particularly the outstanding judgment – as an indicator of aspects of schools' effectiveness that aren't the focus of a school inspection, which increased the stakes further."

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, says the change follows a "weight of evidence" that judgments on teaching quality based on lesson observations are "highly unreliable".

WHITE PAPER

DfE stays silent on sum set aside for conversion

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The Department for Education has assured schools it has more cash set aside to fund all-out academisation – but is still silent on how much.

It also appears that some of the £1.5 billion pledged by Chancellor George Osborne in last week's Budget was already allocated in the autumn spending review.

Last week *Schools Week* revealed that some schools feared they would have to dig into their own pockets to pay for costs of the forced academy conversions.

The Budget included £640 million to cover both the pledge to speed up the national fair funding formula and to academise all schools.

But Mr Osborne said £500 million of this would go towards the funding formula, leaving just £140 million set aside to convert schools.

That works out at less than £9,000 per school – which lawyers and opposition politicians say is not enough.

It also emerged this week that some of the £500 million will come from money already allocated in autumn.

A Conservative spokesperson told the BBC that the Budget “ensured the department is fully funded to support additional costs of delivering a fully academised school system”.

But the Department for Education (DfE) would not confirm the sum.

The academy push has also raised questions about the impact on cash-strapped local authorities who must pay the legal costs when their maintained schools convert, although some have now started passing on these costs by fining schools when they become academies.

Councils are also landed with the debt of any underperforming schools that convert with a budget deficit. A BBC investigation in September last year found councils have inherited debts of more than £30 million since 2010.

Richard Watts, vice-chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people board, said: “Academy conversions have already cost local authorities millions of pounds. At a time when councils are having to make further savings to plug funding gaps over the next few years, local taxpayers should not be expected to foot the bill for this process.”

Schools Week analysed government figures in December and found the total budget deficits for local authority-maintained schools had risen from £76 million in 2013/14 to £103 million last year.

The actual number of schools running a deficit had meanwhile fallen from 1,057 to 948.

The DfE said councils only took on the debt when schools became sponsored academies after a “prolonged period of underperformance, and the deficit was accumulated under council control”.

It did not expect the all-out academisation to increase the level of deficit passed on to councils, as it would not impact the number of failing schools.

Excluded pupils will still count in school's results

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The practice of academies that exclude pupils to skew their results and claim “rapid improvements” is set to be stamped out under reforms that will keep schools accountable for the grades of excluded youngsters.

A report by the Centre for High Performance last week revealed some academy trusts exclude pupils to change the profile of their intake and increase results.

But under the government's alternative provision (AP) reforms, schools will be held responsible for the achievement of pupils they exclude until they find a place at another mainstream school. If a pupil remains in AP, their grades will still be counted in the excluding school's performance results.

The white paper also states that tailored plans will be expected for every pupil in AP provision.

Tracy Pepper, education director at AP provider Catch22, said: “It is our view that every child belongs in mainstream [education], but unless the mainstream model changes to accommodate a broader range of needs, there will always be a need for AP.”



“This report acknowledges this need but we would like to see greater emphasis on the value good AP can provide. Commissioning better quality AP is a no-brainer.”

The reforms follow a report by Ofsted last month saying that schools must do more to protect vulnerable and disenfranchised pupils.

Sean Harford (pictured), Ofsted's national director for education, told *Schools Week*

he welcomed the plans: “These proposals are about ensuring schools commission high quality AP and remain accountable for the educational outcomes of pupils placed in such settings.”

But Ofsted's report praised schools for taking more responsibility for AP – switching from “poor-quality” external providers to in-house interventions.

Schools were also spending more with the average spend per AP pupil rising from £2,536 to £3,217 in three years.

Another proposal is for an innovation fund to “test new approaches to pupils who move from AP to post-16 education”, to include “exploring opportunities for social impact bonds”. Bond programmes are a form of “payment by results” in which providers are only recompensed if hitting pre-agreed outcome targets.

Schools will also be encouraged to support AP providers by sharing subject specialists and facilities.

Ms Pepper said the pledges are welcome, particularly the potential for innovation offered by the new fund. “But there is no one-size-fits-all. Facing many challenges, AP achieves incredible results that young people would not achieve anywhere else. This must be acknowledged and celebrated.”

While the white paper's focus on AP has been heralded, Bart Shaw, an associate at think-tank LKMco, says the “omission” of special educational needs and disability (SEND) “continued marginalisation of SEND within the government's vision”.

The Department for Education confirmed to *Schools Week* that special schools will fall under the government's proposals to turn every school into an academy.

However, Jarlath O'Brien, headteacher of a special school in Surrey, said this could reduce support for SEND to “almost nothing”.

Local authorities, as previously reported by *Schools Week*, will remain responsible for high needs funding and the quality of SEND provision in their area.

But Mr Shaw added: “In an era of universal academisation and tight local government budgets, it is far from clear that local authorities are best placed to monitor the quality of SEND provision in schools.”

He instead suggests regional schools commissioners could take responsibility.

Churches get special relationship with RSCs

SOPHIE SCOTT
@SOPH_E_SCOTT *Investigates*

An agreement will set out the relationship between churches and the government as all schools get set to become academies.

The Department for Education (DfE) said in last week's white paper that it is agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with churches.

About 50 dioceses are currently designated as academy sponsors, with up to 1,000 Christian faith academies serving 500,000 pupils.

This represents a much smaller proportion than non-faith schools. Just 5 per cent of Church of England and Roman Catholic schools are academies, compared with 17 per cent of schools classed that have no religious character.

The white paper said: “We will work with the churches and relevant faith bodies to ensure that the religious character and ethos of church and faith schools is protected in a system where every school is an academy.”

The document stated the MOU would acknowledge churches expect academies to remain part of a “diocesan family of schools”.

The agreement will also outline how dioceses are to work with regional schools commissioners, describing “clear protocols for agreeing the arrangements required when church schools become academies”.



A DfE spokesperson said no further information was available about the memorandum.

The government's plans do not include the 84 other-faith schools (Jewish, Muslim and Sikh), 48 of which are still maintained by the local authority. Thirty-three are Jewish schools.

The Partnership for Jewish Schools said it

would not comment on the proposals at this stage, as it was a “complex issue”.

However, the plans have come under fire from non-religious groups.

A spokesperson for the National Secular Society, which campaigns to reduce religious influence, said: “The government's desire to protect the religious character of faith schools makes a mockery of its promise to ensure all academies are inclusive and welcoming to the communities around them. This concordat simply ensures that faith-based schools will remain free to robustly assert a Christian ethos on a religiously diverse and largely religiously indifferent school community.”

“Meanwhile, the prospect of non-religiously designated schools joining faith-based multi-academy trusts threatens to extend the influence of the churches and further diminish secular education in England, encroaching on both parents and young people's religious freedom.”

“We'd like to see a white paper that challenges the influence of organised religion in publicly funded education and instead advocates for equality-based education system free from an overbearing religious ethos.”

Paul Barber (pictured), director of the Catholic Education Service, said: “We were pleased to see reference to our MOU with the department in last week's white paper and we welcome this commitment to our continued relationship.”

PULL OUT AND KEEP

WHAT THE WHITE PAPER PROMISES

The government last week released the first education white paper since 2010. But what does it actually say?

Editor Laura McInerney has dug into the 128 pages of **Educational Excellence Everywhere** to find what the government is saying it *will* do. Small projects

that were already announced have not been included. Likewise, anything which was a vague aspiration rather than something concrete and feasible. Here's what she found.



1. Reform the **National College for Teaching and Leadership**
2. Create web tools enabling schools to advertise jobs (and a **new national website**)
3. Reform **allocation of teacher training places**
4. **Strengthen initial teacher training content**
5. **Replace QTS** with a stronger, more challenging accreditation
6. Develop **new National Teaching Service**
7. Ensure there is a sufficient supply of high quality CPD provision
8. Introduce a new **Standard for Teachers' Professional Development**
9. Examine feasibility of **incentivising teaching schools to publish their research and CPD on an "open source" basis**
10. Support **college of teaching, peer-reviewed journal, and Education Endowment Foundation**
11. Design new voluntary **National Professional Qualifications** for leaders
12. Rebalance incentives in the accountability system to help challenging schools including Progress 8 AND giving taken-over schools **30 months before Ofsted visit**
13. Implement **fair national funding formulae**
14. Launch a **new Excellence in Leadership Fund** for best multi-academy trusts
15. For governors: "provide clearer info" about schools, "**establish national database**" of governors and **bar "unsuitable"** ones in maintained schools
16. Take **new powers** to direct schools to become academies
17. Launch a new **online Parent Portal** and new league tables site
18. Guidance on academy complaints, easier for parents to do so via **Department for Education/ombudsman**
19. Consider how parents can **petition regional school commissioners (RSCs)** for their school to move to a different multi-academy trust (MAT)
20. **Streamline admissions objections and relax sixth-form admissions procedure**
21. **300 new teaching schools and 800 more National Leaders of Education**
22. If academies can't organise school improvement support, **RSC will do it and have an Intervention Fund to help**
23. Teaching schools to be based on data (not Ofsted) and funding "better targeted"
24. Establish **new and better means of brokering school improvement**
25. Target interventions toward **Achieving Excellence Areas**
26. Support schools to expand **evidence-based, character-building activities and tracking**
27. Publish a **strategy for improved careers provision** for young people
28. **Reform alternative provision** and make schools more accountable for excluded pupils
29. Ofsted will **consult on removing graded judgments on quality of teaching**, learning and assessment
30. Reduction in using Ofsted grades for choosing system leaders, teaching schools, etc
31. **League tables for MAT performance measures**
32. **Improve effectiveness of pupil premium spending**
33. RSCs able to "**commission a pupil premium review**"
34. Tools for improved school efficiency/budgets and offer **financial health checks**
35. **Remove** requirement for parent governors
36. **Agree an understanding with church** regarding relationship with commissioners
37. **Redesign** legal framework for academies/local authorities (this means a new education bill)

WHITE PAPER

'Free' resources rock unsteady teaching schoolsJOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Teaching school alliances already struggling to become financially sustainable could be thrown further off track by plans to give away their teaching resources free.

The white paper states it will examine the feasibility of teaching schools publishing their research and training materials on an "open-source" basis.

But David Weston, chief executive of the Teacher Development Trust, said the proposal could be unwelcome at a time when many alliances are still relying on government cash to keep running.

Teaching schools are expected to become self-sustaining, but the government recently announced it would extend funding to run into a fifth year for the first cohort. Only four years of funding had been guaranteed.

A teaching schools evaluation report by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), published last month, found financial sustainability was a "persistent challenge faced by almost all teaching school alliances".

Mr Weston said: "Many teaching schools have struggled trying to get an income stream. They have to employ a lot of people and get experts to get the right resources. It's an issue when you then can't charge for those."

He welcomed the "aspiration" that resources should be free but added: "You have to make sure it's resourced."

Financial returns of almost 70 per cent of all teaching schools from last year, obtained by *Schools Week* under freedom of information laws, show most are still reliant on their grant.

A total of 341 of 479 either overspent or used all their grant. The figures appear to support the NCTL's findings that teaching schools are struggling to make money.

The Teaching Schools Council did not respond to requests for comment.

The white paper also proposed creating another 300 teaching schools, acknowledging that areas with the weakest performance do not have sufficient access to them. A *Schools Week* investigation revealed that only two of the 563 existing teaching schools were in areas serving the poorest quarter of the population.

The paper adds: "We will also better target school improvement funding to where it's most needed, funding system leaders to help build capacity and engage with schools most in need of support."

Teaching schools will also now provide a "brokerage" role to co-ordinate improvement support. An online development portal will be set up to make it easier to match up schools without relying on local or central government.

The government said it will take a "more sophisticated" approach to appointing teaching schools and leaders of education. It will recognise teachers who have turned around schools, instead of "relying heavily" on Ofsted judgments. The new approach will start in spring.

Parent governors to lose their seatsJOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Fewer than one in ten governors say parenting skills are important for membership of a governing body, a new survey shows.

The white paper announcement that reserved spots for elected parent governors on school governing bodies will be scrapped in favour of "skilled" professionals caused uproar last week.

But new survey figures seen exclusively by *Schools Week* show only 7 per cent of governors actually think parenting is an important skill for a governing body.

The survey – for support group The Key's annual state of education report – found governors thought parenting was the tenth most important skill needed on a governing body.

Financial skills came top, picked out by two thirds of respondents as important, followed by school leadership (43 per cent) and business management (38 per cent).

But Janet Scott, chief executive of School Governors One-Stop Shop, an independent charity that recruits governors, said:

"Parents have a range of skills that can add value to a governing board, both professionally and personally. Some schools will welcome their contribution – be that at their child's own school or at another school within the community.

"The term 'parent governor' might be disappearing but parents can still have a role to play."

Meanwhile Rachel Gooch, a national leader of governance and governor at two schools in Suffolk, said the removal was "unnecessary".

"There simply aren't enough full-formed governors to go round. So we need to develop them within governing bodies.

"Parents are great for this – they have the time and the interest. They need good induction, training and mentoring from more 'expert' governors, but almost always they rapidly become effective and use all their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the whole school.

We grow our own school leaders and we should have a pathway to grow our own governors, too."

Gillian Allcroft, deputy chief executive of the National Governors' Association, also



Gillian Allcroft

called for parents to "continue to have a seat at the board table".

Last week's white paper says parents "will always be encouraged" to serve on governing bodies. But adds: "We will expect all governing bodies to focus on seeking people with the right skills for governance ... as we move towards a system where every school is an academy, full skills-based governance will become the norm across the education system."

The paper also says that trusts may soon be asking the Charity Commission for the go-ahead to pay governors in key positions to attract the best people.

PETITIONS TO FORCE CHANGE OF ACADEMY SPONSORFREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Parents could spark a change of academy trust under proposals in the white paper that give them the right to petition regional schools commissioners if they are not satisfied with how their school is run.

But there are no details on the percentage of parent signatures needed to trigger a review or the process for such an investigation.

The government said it wants parents "very much more in the driving seat" of a system in which all schools are academies, although a government source admitted the bar for a commissioner intervention would have to be "very high" to maintain stability while also "avoiding stagnation".

A Department for Education spokesperson declined to comment on how it would get around current legal restrictions on moving academies between trusts, apart from in specific circumstances. He said the government would be looking at the legal framework in relation to academies "in general".

The proposal is similar to one put forward by Labour in 2014, which suggested parents have the power to sack headteachers. A similar mechanism, the "parent trigger", exists in some parts of the US.

Then Labour leader Ed Miliband's plans were criticised over fears the powers could be misused by groups of parents with an



Ed Miliband

axe to grind and were mocked by Liverpool College principal Hans van Mourik Broekman, who wrote in *The Telegraph* that heads should also have the right to sack parents. The school he leads switched from the private sector to an academy.

Mr van Mourik Broekman told *Schools Week* it was not obvious from the white paper what issues the government was trying to address with its petition plans, and that much more information was needed.

"Sure, these things can be abused, but I think the devil is in the detail.

"The right to petition is one thing, and I think that's probably a good thing, but these percentages are

important, and so is the criteria that the commissioners will use to test both the validity of the complaint and the likelihood that a change in trust will address it."

It comes amid warnings that new ways to get parents involved will not be a substitute for the end of the mandatory requirement for schools to have two elected parent governors.

It also comes after the Education and Adoption Bill, which received royal assent last week, removed the need to consult parents on academy conversion plans, leading to further fears about parents' rights.

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governors' Association, said she "completely welcomed" steps to improve parental involvement, but warned the measures set out by government – which also include a Parent Portal for information sharing – were not the same as governance.

"We actually want both, because governance is stronger with a diversity of skills.

"There is a danger that trustees could become very cliquy and self-appointing. Just being an important person in your working life doesn't necessarily make you a good school governor."



Emma Knights

WHITE PAPER

I'm going to do it my way, says York head

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Exclusive

A York headteacher is promising parents his school will not become a "corporate" operation if forced to become an academy under new government plans.

John Tomsett, of Huntington School, made the pledge in response to a letter from a parent received after George Osborne's Budget announcement last week that every state primary and secondary school will be expected to be an academy by 2022.

The parent wrote: "I'm deeply sad that this is the future, not just for Huntington but for all schools. It seems to me to be yet another step towards a market driven, neo-liberal approach to education that is abhorrent to many teachers and not enough parents.

"No doubt there are some wonderful academy chains out there, but increasingly, the future for schools looks corporate and shiny and unkind. This is not what I want for my children, or anybody else's."

The parent implored Mr Tomsett to continue delivering his school's values of respect, honesty and kindness.

Mr Tomsett, a member of the Headteachers' Roundtable – a key influencer of government policy – told *Schools Week* the letter was a "complete surprise", but it gave him a "genuine boost" that parents want a "values-driven future".

He said if academisation was made mandatory, he would make it an opportunity



John Tomsett

to forge a future based upon the school's "core purpose and our values-system".

"Any Huntington academy will focus upon improving the quality of teaching and learning above all else, to the benefit of our children, just as our parent wishes," he said.

"If you begin and live by those values then whatever decision you make about academisation, because clearly it is inevitable, then you have a chance of doing something good."

Mr Tomsett's vision of an academy is similar to a co-operative schools model which gives staff, parents and the community a "guaranteed say" in their school and how it develops.

Julie Thorpe, school programmes and

digital learning lead at Co-operative College, a charity that promotes the co-operative model, told *Schools Week* there is a "real democratic deficit" in the standard academy model – "and this will grow even deeper with the announcement of the removal of the requirement to have parent governors".

Dave Parr, director of Oasis Community Partnerships at Oasis Community Learning, a multi-academy partnership that also encourages public input into how its schools are run, said there are ways for parent and community voices to still be heard when they become academies.

Oasis has created local academy councils – boards made up of people from the local community, whose purpose is to be a "parental voice".

"Our councils empower the community to be part of the life at our schools," Mr Parr said.

This approach contrasts with the E-ACT academy group that recently replaced school governors with "ambassadorial advisory bodies", ending the involvement of parent representatives in holding their local school to account.

An E-ACT spokesperson told *Schools Week* the changes would benefit pupils and were "in line with the Department for Education's guidance".

Mr Tomsett said his school did not need a specific "brand", such as the co-operative model, instead it would build its own vision.

Read the full letter at schoolsweek.co.uk

PEER-REVIEW JOURNAL PLANNED

The Department for Education is set to fund a new peer-reviewed British education journal – and to open up access to other academic work.

An independent journal is one of the white paper proposals to "spread cutting-edge research in an accessible format for teachers".

The College of Teaching, which received a £5m pledge from the government last week, is also set to offer its members access to current journals, similar to Scottish arrangements.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland funds a scheme allowing members to access more than 1,700 journals at a cost to the council of just 29p per teacher.

Schools Week has previously highlighted the equivalent scheme in England could cost just £132,000.

Claire Dockar, chair of the College of Teaching, said this week that teacher demand meant access to journals would form a "key part" of college plans.

But Loic Menzies, director of think-tank LKMco, said he would be "surprised" if the new journal could compete with the best blogs – "given that they make research evidence accessible in bite-sized chunks, which are far better suited to busy teachers".

Publishers turned down a proposal for a similar open-access British education journal in 1998 from former Institute of Education director Chris Husbands because they said it was not commercially viable.

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PULL OUT AND KEEP

TEN QUESTIONS

LAURA MCINERNEY, EDITOR OF *SCHOOLS WEEK*

The things you wanted to know about . . . academies

The government wants all schools to become academies by 2022. What does this mean for you? Laura McInerney answers your questions.

1. Aren't academies run by private companies? Is this just privatisation of schools?

Not quite. We have to be careful with language here. Academies are schools run by *charitable* trusts via a contract with the government. We call these charities "academy trusts". The trusts are private, because the state does not own them, but they cannot run schools for profit. If a trust does a bad job of running a school it will have to give it back (the buildings, the land, everything).

They are not public bodies but they do fall under laws that cover public organisations - for example, freedom of information laws.

So this is not a school sell-off. It's more like lending schools to charities to run on our behalf for as long as the charity is capable of doing so.

2. Can academy trusts sell off school land and stick the cash in their coffers?

No more easily than before. Academy trusts are given school buildings, and the land they sit on, purely so they can operate the school. As with any school, they can apply to make adaptations, or to give the site over to something else. For example, an academy in Oxfordshire with a large site allowed another school to be built on part of its land. But it can only do this sort of thing in liaison with central government. (And if it is thought it's not complying, its school leaders can end up in front of a parliamentary committee as has happened before now.)

3. So how come the chief executives of academy trusts are being paid so much?

This is a good point. We revealed earlier this month that the highest paid CEO received £400,000; others received increases of between £20-30,000.

There are no nationally-agreed maximum levels for CEO pay. As in the charitable sector, where leaders of major charities can earn substantial six-figure sums, so can people who oversee academy trusts that may have upwards of 30 schools.

Is this value for money? Possibly. We want good people to manage schools, and it is true that current CEOs would get paid substantially more to work in private businesses, such as retail chains. But there is a

sensible debate to be had about whether caps ought to be brought in.

4. If academies are "free" from the national curriculum, does that mean the curriculum no longer exists?

In essence: yes. Academies are not "bound" by the national curriculum. But that doesn't mean they won't follow it. Ofsted, the schools inspectorate, requires all schools to follow a "broad and balanced" curriculum. Just because a school is an academy doesn't mean it can teach English, maths and knitting, and all will be well. GCSE exams will also still be based on the national curriculum, so key stage 4 teachers will largely still focus on the same content.

This doesn't mean everything is hunky-dory. At primary, tests are only in a few narrow subjects, and some subjects may get lopped off the end - for example, there is no real incentive for teaching art and drama. But we need not get het up about the idea that suddenly everyone will teach wildly different things. (Though they might eventually).

5. What will happen to local authorities?

It's important to remember that local authorities haven't "run" schools for a long time. Their role has been one of oversight and statutory responsibilities, such as organising transport and special needs. Over the past six years, local authorities have had less and less money available for supporting schools and, in several places, all schools have already converted to academies.

Special needs is likely to stay with local authorities, and it seems as if they may get souped-up powers in other places. For example, they don't currently have power over admissions at academies, but there are plans afoot to give them a role in this again.

6. Does becoming an academy improve standards?

The answer that every serious academic will give you is: *we just don't know*. Evidence so far has been inconclusive, but the data we do have largely suggests it doesn't really make a difference. Some academies do well, others do badly. As with local councils, some academy trusts are very good at running their schools, others are quite poor.

Basically, academies are not magical.

7. So why would changing to a fully academised system be any better for pupils?

That's a good question. And one we can't answer using data. What education secretary Nicky Morgan has long said is that she believes a system in which "school leaders" make their own decisions, without oversight from the local council, is better because those leaders are closer to the pupils and know how to make the best decisions for them. This is slightly illusory though for the reasons below, and because most leaders in schools will have to defer to an academy trust CEO once they join.

8. Who is in charge of checking these charitable trusts aren't cooking the books and doing badly by their pupils?

A raft of education people check on academies, as well as the Charity Commission.

Eight regional schools commissioners - who are senior civil servants - can check at any time. They decide if trusts should be allowed to take over new schools, or shed ones no longer working. Commissioners can also give out warning notices, and can close an academy trust if it is performing badly. This hasn't happened so far.

The Education Funding Agency - run by more civil servants - checks the accounts of academies each year, and keeps an eye on businesses owned by the people running the charities to see if they are buying services from themselves. Oddly, directors of charities are allowed to purchase from their own for-profit companies. This has been the source of much contention and it is quite unusual in the third sector.

Ofsted visits academies and writes reports about them the same as it does about other schools. If it notices patterns in one academy trust, it will run a "focused inspection", where it writes to the academy trust about these patterns and says what it needs to do to improve.

As charities, all academy trusts also depend on the Charity Commission granting their charitable status. Should the trust behave in an uncharitable way, the commission could theoretically strip them of their status, which would mean losing the schools they operate. (Though, in practice, one academy trust referred to the commission so far has been waiting more than a year for its investigation to complete.)

Academies are, therefore, theoretically well-scrutinised. A problem is whether or not these organisations can cope with the workload and have adequate powers to enforce their will.

So far, the evidence is that they are not always able to do so - and the lack of transparency around many of the decisions made by commissioners has made people particularly suspicious.

9. What does it mean for pay and conditions?

Academies are free to set their own teacher pay scales and do not have to abide by the national minimum salary of £22,244 which maintained schools must follow. They are also free to hire unqualified teachers who are not on any form of training programme, and do not need to offer the opportunity to qualify.

10. What does it mean for pupils?

Almost nothing. Almost everything about the day-to-day running of a school can be done in one that is maintained OR is an academy.

The Telegraph

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SCHOOLS WEEK

WHITE PAPER

IN brief

NEW CHIEF SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR

Civil servant Shan Scott is to become England's new chief schools adjudicator. She will take over from Dr Elizabeth Passmore on April 4, following Dr Passmore's retirement, and has been appointed for a three-year term.

Joining the Department of Education and Science in 1984, Ms Scott worked in successive education departments until 2013. She has also served as a school governor and pupil mentor.

During her time at the Department for Education, she has worked on admissions, governance, school organisation, academies and schools with a religious character.

Most recently, she was joint head of the department's due diligence and counter extremism division.

Dr Passmore first took the role on November 1, 2011, having served as interim chief for three months at the beginning of 2009.

MORE MEN TRAIN FOR PRIMARIES

More men are training to be primary teachers but fewer are entering secondary schools, new analysis has revealed.

The newly released *Good Teacher Training Guide 2015*, produced by Alan Smithers and Mandy-Diana Coughlan from the Centre for Education and Employment Research, found the proportion of men in postgraduate routes for primary teaching has increased since 1998 from 14 to 17 per cent. In contrast, the proportion of men training to be secondary teachers has dropped by eight percentage points.

The proportion of trainees from ethnic minorities has also increased substantially over the same period, in both primary and secondary routes.

Older trainee primary teachers are now more common, with 41 per cent aged 25 and over in 2015 compared with 37 per cent in 2000.

PIXL CLUB ROW STARTS AGAIN

A row over the use of a fast-track ICT qualification has flared up again after a leading headteacher raised concerns.

Schools Week revealed last year how the PiXL Club, an organisation aimed at raising attainment, was encouraging its members to enter "vulnerable" pupils for the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification.

One school leader called the advice "dumbing down and gaming", while PiXL chief Sir John Rowling claimed: "This is not a con trick."

The story flared up again after Tom Sherrington, headteacher at Highbury Grove School in Islington, north London, blogged about attending a PiXL meeting last week at which ECDL entry was again encouraged.

The blog provoked a lively response – including from Ofsted's Sean Harford who described part of the blog detailing PiXL "tactics" as "depressing for education".

Paul Hammond, who describes himself as a PiXL associate teacher, tweeted: "Difficult to see who loses out if kids get listed qualification and headteachers keep their jobs."

Priority areas for change

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Areas of England with low standards for learners and poor capacity to improve are to be targeted for extra support, with a focus on improving the supply of teachers, leaders and governors.

But the lack of detail in the white paper has prompted questions about how such interventions will be carried out.

Education secretary Nicky Morgan last week committed to creating "achieving excellence areas" across England.

Although it will not reveal a comprehensive list, the Department for Education has released a methodology document explaining how the areas will be selected for a September pilot.

A map published with the methodology (see opposite page) shows that parts of the north east, including Northumberland and Middlesbrough, will be priority areas, along with segments of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, the East Midlands and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Other areas labelled "weak" include parts of Manchester, Merseyside, the Isle of Wight and North Devon.

But Schools North East director Mike Parker said the issues identified were not new, and more detail on the government's plans for intervention was needed.



Mike Parker

"We have been talking about these things for six-plus years.

"Particularly in geographically disparate areas like Northumberland, the teacher availability is an area of concern."

Mr Parker said he wanted more government support for existing initiatives such as the Jobs in Schools North East website, and warned ministers not to replace schemes already addressing issues with "duplicated solutions".

He said: "The government has known for a long while that there's a paucity of sponsors in the north east and they have done precious little so far. I will be interested to see how they can improve the situation in the region rather than focusing on external solutions."

The areas will be selected based on 11 indicators, with five relating to education standards such as access to a good secondary school and attainment and progress data. A further six will measure schools' capacity to improve, including availability of academy sponsors in the area and initial teacher training provider coverage.

Statistician and teacher supply expert John Howson said the methodology was "interesting"



John Howson

but warned it "may just be too complicated". The main issue was what the government was going to do after collating the data.

"A failure to commence the National Teaching Service 18 months after it was first announced doesn't inspire confidence that this government, one wedded to market economics, will

suddenly adopt a diametrically different approach and start intervening in placing teachers and leaders in schools.

"Will they sack those already there, add these as extras teachers outside the national funding formula or just wait until a school has a vacancy?"

In its proposals, the government said there were "pockets of underperformance" across England where the school-led system was "not yet mature enough" to address issues, and committed to eradicating those issues in the next five years.

It pledged not to establish new "top-down initiatives or bureaucratic action plans", but instead said it would target schemes to ensure "sufficient high quality teachers, leaders, system leaders, sponsors and members of governing boards on these areas of greatest need, starting with the National Teaching Service".

RELAXED ADMISSIONS CODE COULD CREATE ELITE SIXTH FORMS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Plans to relax the admissions code for school sixth forms could boost grammar-style streams at 16, say legal and policy experts.

The government said in its white paper it intended to remove school-based post-16 provision from most aspects of the code, bringing them into line with sixth-form colleges and other 16 to 19 providers.

But the proposals have led to fears about how trusts might use the change in rules.

Smita Jamdar, a further education legal expert who serves as head of education at law firm Shakespeare Martineau, said there would be "every logic" for over-subscribed sixth forms to change their criteria to admit the brightest pupils so they score highly in league tables.

She told *Schools Week* that "apart from having to avoid discriminating in any way" each school could set its own criteria for sixth-form admissions.

"You could end up with schools with really excellent provision in certain subjects and create almost a kind of grammar stream."

Anne Heavey, an education policy adviser to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said her union was also worried about trusts creating separate streams at 16.

"Once a child has started at a school that's working for them they want to stay there until the end of their career. Having that option removed by an arbitrary new admissions' quirk that a school can bring in to protect their standing in the league tables is incredibly unfair."

Ms Heavey said the lower rate of funding for sixth-form pupils meant schools were having to run "increasingly large classes", and warned that a relaxation of the code could give schools an incentive to "bunch" certain subjects – such as maths and science – at certain schools and stream pupils based on ability in those areas.

"We are told the academies system creates choice for parents and children," she said, "but actually through this white

paper it looks like there's significantly less choice, particularly for less-able students."

In the white paper, the government said it wanted to "relax restrictions on school sixth-form admissions" to align them "more closely with other post-16 provision by removing them from the scope of the code".

It did, however, want to retain "certain key requirements including the assured route of transition between year 11 and year 12 for students at the school", the document said.

The news follows an announcement by education secretary Nicky Morgan in January that schools must refresh their admissions' arrangements every four years instead of every seven, as they are currently required to do.

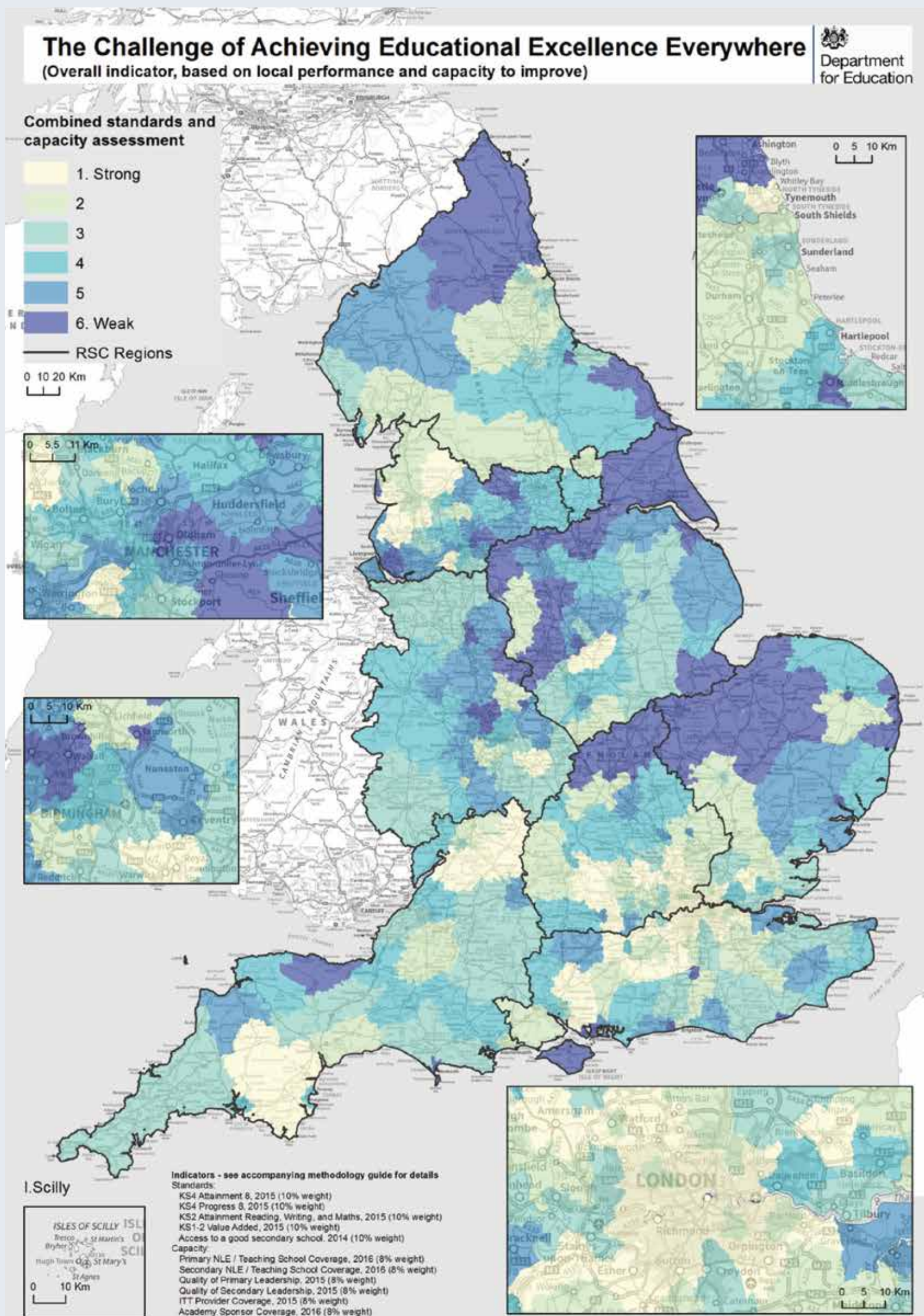
At the time, it was announced that the change would apply to councils' arrangements for the schools still under their oversight and schools that had taken on responsibility for their own criteria, as is the case with academies.

The government declined to comment.



Smita Jamdar

Map taken from the white paper showing educational priority areas



OTHER NEWS

Schools limit post-16 options for high-needs pupils

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools are giving high-needs pupils "weak" information about their post-16 options and failing to provide sufficient information about those who move on to other providers, Ofsted has warned.

Inspectors visited 17 providers and spoke to 1,600 young people between January and March last year to compile the report, which focuses mainly on the work of further education (FE) providers and councils.

They found that many, particularly those with more complex or profound learning difficulties or disabilities, had received "insufficient information" about the full range of opportunities available.

The report warned that schools often recommended a post-16 provider that they had a working relationship with and who offered easy access for students, rather than "considering individual learners' educational and support needs, interests and aspirations".

The report comes more than three years after Ofsted warned in August 2012 that schools, local authorities and other agencies did "not work together sufficiently well to ensure that [high-needs] learners were adequately prepared for transition between school and post-16 provision".

In Tuesday's report, commissioned to update on progress made in this area, Ofsted warned that the sharing of information between schools and providers was "generally weak, even in those schools where learners were taking part in taster and link courses".

More than half of the providers sampled did not receive "sufficiently detailed information" about learners' achievements, progress, career aspirations and support needs. "Too much of the information passed on was descriptive and failed to provide a clear picture of the abilities of the young person and the barriers to their learning.

"This was especially the case for learners with fluctuating conditions, such as those on the autistic spectrum or with poor mental health. Consequently, FE providers had to rely on their own resources to assess learners' needs and abilities to ensure that appropriate arrangements for specialist support could be made."

In the worst examples, "key information" regarding the behaviour, mental health or other personal circumstances of the young person was missing, Ofsted said, adding that it often resulted in delays in designing programmes.

Clare Howard, chief executive of the National Association of Specialist Colleges, welcomed the report, adding that "too often, learners and their families are not aware of the full range of choices available".

She said schools should be able to provide quality advice about "the full range of options" so they could attend a college of their choice that met their needs.

Referring to education secretary Nicky Morgan's plan to guarantee vocational institutions and apprenticeship providers access to schools, Ms Howard said this should be extended to specialist disability colleges.

Paul Joyce, Ofsted's deputy director, said he was "disappointed" with the slow progress since 2012. He said it was "imperative" that schools and providers worked together to collect and analyse information about pupils.

More teachers set to desert pension scheme

JESS STAUFENBERG

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Exclusive

The number of teachers opting out of the teachers' pension scheme has "plateaued" after a recent tumble in contributions – but experts warn that more could opt out following pension changes announced in last week's Budget.

Union policy advisers said teachers have "calmed down", shown by recent Department for Education figures that 2,910 teachers left the scheme between July and December last year – a similar level to the same period in 2014.

But experts are "cautious" about future numbers after last week's Budget and ever-increasing living costs. The numbers of non-contributors is also still significantly greater than five years ago, they say.

Usman Gbajabiamila, pensions policy adviser at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), said there were fewer "knee jerk" reactions this year.

"There is some stability in it now – the changes have gone through and the scheme's a year old, and members have calmed down a bit.

"What freaks people is uncertainty. Even if the changes are positive, if you're not certain where your money's going people say 'I'll put my money where I'm

more confident."

In 2012 a flat 6.4 per cent contribution rate was replaced with a tiered scheme in which the highest earning teachers had to put 11 per cent of their wages into their retirement pots.

By February 2015 there had been a 42 per cent increase in the numbers opting out of these contributions – overwhelmingly for "personal financial reasons" – compared with the same period the previous year.

Newly qualified teachers are still most likely to pull out with 74.6 per cent of opt-outs having fewer than five years' service. Teachers in London are most likely to quit.

Hamish Arnold, computing co-ordinator at Waulud primary school in Luton, said rising costs were also felt near to the capital.

"We were looking to buy a house, and prices in Luton went up by £20,000 in six months, at which point that extra £100 a month really made a difference," he said.

"If it's between getting a house and not having to worry about having a mortgage when I'm retired, or a pension, I'll go for the house."

Valentine Mulholland, policy adviser at the National Association of Head Teachers, said despite the "flattening" of opt-out numbers – about 5 per cent of all UK teachers – she was cautious



about the future.

"We are likely to see an ongoing upward trajectory.

"The pay framework is being dismantled. We're expecting another four years of zero per cent increase in pay, although that's not the level of inflation.

"And while schools should be applying a 1 per cent increase to teachers climbing the pay scale, the government has now said any increase should be related to performance."

The capacity of schools to offer higher salaries may also be squeezed by George Osborne's announcement that public sector employer contributions towards pensions are set to increase yet again.

The Association of Colleges estimates that an increase from 16.48 per cent contribution to 18 per cent by 2019 could cost an average secondary school £50,000 more a year.

"We're very concerned," Ms Mulholland said. "The existing [pension contribution] increase has already put enormous pressure on schools and directly goes on to pay roll costs. This will worsen that."

FAILING FREE SCHOOL WAITS (AND WAITS) FOR TAKEOVER

ANN MCGAURAN

@ANNMCGAURAN

Exclusive

Education secretary Nicky Morgan this week said the ability to remove schools quickly from under-performing providers was a key benefit of an academised school system – but delays over the takeover of a failed free school show the process is not always speedy.

Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland, an independent school that converted to a free school in 2012, was rated inadequate by Ofsted in November 2014 and given a financial notice to improve by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) last January for failing to balance its budget.

Told last October by the Department for Education (DfE) that Bright Tribe, the Cheshire-based multi-academy trust, was the preferred sponsor for a forced takeover, the school currently remains with its original owners.

Richard Vardy, chair of the school's parents' council, said: "As the regional schools commissioner had said we needed urgent action we had presumed this wouldn't take a year, but perhaps their definition of urgent is different to parents.

"In the meantime the school is totally without any direction and we are in limbo."

Bright Tribe chief operating officer Kathy Kirkham (pictured) told *Schools Week* the delay was due to ongoing talks between the chain, the EFA and the DfE – despite



completed due diligence of the school's finances.

She said she was "optimistic" the school would join Bright Tribe by September.

"The due diligence process can be lengthy, however. It is necessary for both parties to ensure the conversion is the best solution and the school and the academy trust are a good match."

Micon Metcalfe, a school business manager in London, agreed due diligence "could potentially take some time" and that finances were only a small part of the negotiations.

"Any incoming trust would need to take a look at staffing, quality of teaching and standards and assess what would be needed to turn the school round. In the end, isn't the department only left with two options? Letting schools fail or paying the bounty a new sponsor feels it needs to sort it out?"

Bright Tribe operates seven academies in Essex, Suffolk, Cumbria and Greater Manchester, and sells education services to schools through a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Publication of last year's accounts for Bright Tribe and its "sister" organisation, Adventure Learning Academies Trust, has been delayed while the EFA seeks more detail on their contents.

Ms Kirkham said: "It's been more an issue between what our auditors think needs to be in the accounts and what the EFA feels needs to be in the accounts. We want to make sure we comply with everything and do everything properly."

Bright Tribe was one of a number of sponsors given a share of a £10 million pot to support struggling schools in the north of England through the creation of "northern hubs". Ms Kirkham declined to say how much the trust received.

She said Bright Tribe had also completed due diligence on two other schools in the north and was in "further discussions" with the DfE and in early-stage talks over two primary schools in Northumberland.

She rejected claims that her former role as the EFA's head of free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools would result in favourable treatment from the agency.

"Absolutely not. They have their own procedures and rules. Their whole process means that everyone gets treated the same."

EXCLUSIVE

How to turn around an academy?

What does the British Olympic boxing team and a successful academy have in common?

Researchers have found that high performance in both can be traced back to similar patterns of behaviour, and that results will follow if a particular series of steps are taken.

The Centre for High Performance, a team of academics from the universities of Oxford and Kingston and the London Business School, analysed the traits of successful academies across the country, as well as other turnarounds – including Olympic boxing and cycling teams. “The findings from the schools are identical to the findings to the British Olympic teams. Boxing did exactly what an academy is doing to turn itself around, as did cycling. These are things we are observing outside education,” says Dr Alex Hill, the centre’s director.

The group exclusively shared their report with *Schools Week*’s Sophie Scott, who looks at the centre’s recommendations and whether the white paper can address them.

Low-performing schools could turn themselves around by following a series of specific steps, says Alex Hill.

He has boiled down the success of 160 academies to a number of “dos” and “don’ts” and is confident that following the steps will improve academic success.

The two-year project looked at schools that had been in special measures but had turned themselves around over the past five years.

The team analysed data and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils, then compared each school’s journey to pull together common themes and practices.

The report focused on the findings from two schools from inner cities, two from an urban environment, two from a rural area, and two from a coastal region. All are now rated as good or outstanding, apart from one coastal school that requires improvement.

One method that has already made headlines was reported in *Schools Week* last Friday.

Dr Hill and his team found high-performing academies were paying other schools to take on their unruly pupils, essentially taking them off the books, in a bid to improve exam results.

“It does lead to fast improvements,” he says. “I wouldn’t say it is the answer to all the problems though and is it the right way to do things? I don’t think so, but it does work.”

In a system grappling with budget cuts, Dr Hill says the methods outlined here should enable schools to improve using fewer resources.

“The impact of each step depends on the other actions you have already taken. And the impact you make depends on where you are located, because you have different access to good leaders and resources.”

3 DON'T USE A ZERO TOLERANCE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Dr Hill says zero-tolerance policies have short-term impact and can lead to deeper problems within the student population. His solution is for schools to become “all-through” – to teach from primary up to secondary with consistent behaviour policies.

“This creates a school-wide culture from a young age and you can make sure bad behaviours don’t start early on.”

Can the white paper address this?

The expectation that all schools will be part of MATs could see this kind of structure become more common, creating stronger links between primary and secondary schools, and common behaviour policies.

Chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw has also encouraged schools to use this method.



4 DON'T USE A SUPER HEAD FOCUSED ON GCSE RESULTS

Improve all year groups. Dr Hill says: “Super heads do not create the right foundation for sustainable improvement. They focus on year 11 and English and maths, and divert resources there to get better results, and then leave and the rest of the school has been ignored.”

Can the white paper address this?

Super heads are not mentioned and there is no incentive to stop focusing on year 11. The government does say it wants more leadership development training delivered by successful headteachers – through teaching school alliances and MATs – to schools in need of help.



THE DO'S AND DON'T'S

1 DON'T IMPROVE TEACHING FIRST

Start with governance, leadership, structure and behaviour. Schools that focused on improving teaching before structures and leadership did not see results.

Dr Hill says: “In terms of sequencing, you should first improve governance, then leadership, then structures, behaviour and then teaching. People think teachers can fix everything, and they cannot do that without a good environment.”

Can the white paper address this?

The government wants to bring in “skilled governors” to oversee multi-academy trusts (MATs). An “excellence in leadership” fund will also be established to give the “best” MATs cash to boost good leadership in struggling areas.



5 INVEST MORE RESOURCES IN RURAL/COASTAL SCHOOLS

The team found it was much easier to secure rapid improvement in urban schools. Dr Hill points to recruitment problems within rural and coastal schools as one of the main stumbling blocks to improvement.

Can the white paper address this?

Teaching schools are not in areas with the highest need. The white paper reveals plans to create 300 more teaching schools, with changes to their selection criteria to help more rural and coastal areas. The government also plans to create “achievement excellence areas” where organisations such as the National Teaching Service and National Leaders of Education will be focused (see page 6).



2 DON'T PERMANENTLY EXCLUDE DISRUPTIVE PUPILS

Instead, improve student behaviour and motivation.

Dr Hill says it is “common practice” for schools to take disruptive pupils off their books in a bid to change the profile of the school. “This is not a long-term solution. A better way is to create better pathways within the school so pupils could be managed differently and then reintegrate into the main pathway once behaviour had improved.”

Can the white paper address this?

The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned a “behaviour tsar”. Tom Bennett will produce a report on “how to prevent and tackle classroom disruption” that should provide future teachers with tools to address behavioural issues.

Schools will also be required to keep the grades of excluded pupils in their results under reforms to alternative provision (see page 4).



6 DO PLAN FOR FINANCES TO DIP BEFORE EXAM RESULTS IMPROVE

“Investing more resources in schools does not speed up improvement. It is more important to make the right changes, in the right order,” Dr Hill says. However, when schools spend more on good teachers and leaders, they should expect to not be financially viable.

Can the white paper address this?

This seems contrary to the white paper in which the government set out how schools should always be financially viable or face “swift” intervention from the Education Funding Agency. However, it does say the agency is developing an “increasingly differentiated approach” so schools can be “supported without interference”.



NEWS

.. leave them alone and they'll come home,
wagging their tails behind them..



Star

EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

Never look where their hands are pointing. A childhood obsessed with magicians teaches you that, but it's also true for politicians. Never look where their hands are pointing: it's always a distraction.

With that in mind the *Schools Week* team pored over the 128-page education white paper unveiled last Thursday pulling out every possible policy.

The most spectacular was the plan to force all schools to become academies by 2022. It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who once said 'All men are born free but everywhere are in chains' but Nicky Morgan will be the education secretary remembered for promising schools freedom, but only if they sign up with an academy chain.

The irony of this is lost on no one. But remember: never look where the hands are pointing. There's more to this than meets the eye.

Forced academy sanctions won't apply until at least 2020, possibly 2022. Why wait so long? Could it be there isn't actually a plan to legislate for the change but merely a hope everyone will jump?

Likewise, the lines in the white paper about increasing the "rigour" of teacher accreditation are also rum. As reporter Sophie Scott's story lays bare on page 2, the training period could actually be reduced to a few months.

Even knowing we've got past the bluster on those items, we dug deeper. Which policies were the politicians trying to distract from? We found three.

First, is the quasi-comical line: "In the rare scenario that a trust stops operating an academy at short notice (and there is no immediate, alternative provider) the secretary of state will be responsible for the running of the school . . . and she may direct a local body to do so on her behalf."

Imagining Nicky Morgan running round to take over a school is faintly amusing ('make her do lunch duty' one tweeter said) but it distracts from the end of that sentence. Which local body will she direct in this emergency? Local authorities will be reduced to a few people in charge of school place planning and special needs. Unless she's suggesting zero hour contracts for school improvement teams, it cannot be them.

A more sinister idea, told to me by one headteacher, was that she is foreshadowing a future in which the education secretary could force an academy trust to take on any failing school. Without that ability, schools could be left stranded.

A second point, buried on page 103, describes a new fund for exploring "opportunities for social impact bonds" in post-16 alternative provision. Another

word for impact bonds is "payment by results". The companies providing the education is only paid if it gets certain outcomes. In a trial completed by the Department for Work and Pensions, improved attendance was worth £1,400, an entry level qualification, £900.

The theory is that paying for results saves a lot of money over the longer term. Pupils with low exam grades more often go on to become unemployed, and expensive.

But it relies on the ability of the government to accurately define and police the outcomes. On its contract management history one would be forgiven for thinking the Department for Education is not competent to do so.

Impact bonds also open a slippery slope towards companies making profit from schools, a suggestion disliked among the bond community. The "social" in their name means the groups involved would be not-for-profit, with extra cash going back into the business. "Think of it as smart philanthropy rather than a push for profit," one told me.

But it would be easy for the government to first argue that payment-by-result is important for youngsters in alternative provision as it saves so much money in the long run. Then, if it

works, make the argument it should be extended to all schools.

The final, most worrying gem, is a benign-looking point in section 5.22 announcing that regional schools commissioners will be given funds to procure improvement services for academies under their watch. Sounds good, but it means commissioners will now be in charge of telling academies:

1. How they should improve
2. Arranging and paying the consultants to do it, and then
3. Deciding if it has worked

How can we then expect commissioners to be objective? Telling an academy trust it has failed after putting it through a school improvement plan they wrote will be tantamount to admitting they can't do their job.

Forcing freedom on schools is bizarre. Planning not to enforce it until 2022 is even stranger unless you are hoping that people will do the hard work for you, and convert before you even need to pass a law.

While that battle is being fought, however, remember the other 37 policies, plus these oddities, will also be on the go.

Never look at where the hands are pointing.



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Outwood Grange chief: 'No takeover of School Partnership Trust expected'**Janet Downs, Lincolnshire**

When is a partnership not a partnership? When the failing partner will only call upon the stronger partner when the failing partner thinks it's needed.

That said, a wholesale takeover of Schools Partnership Trust Academy by Outwood Grange Academy Trust (OGAT) would more than double OGAT's size. This could lead to overextension (and it still might if SPTA calls for help with all its academies). The transfer costs would also likely be expensive.

Schools may be forced to pay conversion costs**Allan Hickie, Kent**

To my mind the biggest problem with conversion is the cost of transferring software licences, etc, over to the new company. Some of the prices merely to switch the software name to a new legal entity are, to my mind, disgusting and nothing more than a money-making scheme for the companies involved. I cannot and do not see how it can cost several thousand pounds to switch a licence over.

Gavin Booth, address supplied

This will yet again impact unfairly on small rural primary schools. These schools would not be able to support the costs of their own conversion and instead would become reliant on a large chain absorbing the costs. Yet again limiting their ability to strategically choose their own direction and potential partners. Much more thought needs to be given to how this policy will work in large shire counties and coastal communities.

**Jenny Lloyd, Exeter
In reply to Gavin Booth**

And this applies to smaller inner city schools as well (we're currently 170 growing to 210). And this is on top of other stealth costs such as schools bearing the cost of increased pension contributions on top of increased national insurance contributions in the current budget round.

Budget 2016: Longer day for quarter of secondary schools, says George Osborne**Sobi Noreen, address supplied**

My children already attend after-school activities and I think it's awesome children are doing activities which we would be paying thousands out of our own pockets.

I feel we working parents as a whole pay enough taxes for extra activities. My children come home happy, healthy, content and don't have enough energy to roam streets so that means more family time.

**Amaryllis Rae, address supplied**

Watch millions more teachers leave as the government squeezes to get even more unpaid work out of a drained workforce.

**Dawn Ashby, address supplied**

Parents should be able to choose what extracurricular activities their children do and not be forced to stay at school later for low quality activities they might not be interested in.

What is an academy? (and other questions about converting schools)**David Marriott, Swindon**

Great article, as ever. Though, no mention of the fact academies have all the accounting and audit responsibilities that go with being a company – and the possibility of significant personal liabilities for the directors. In my experience, many governors of academies do not fully understand what they have taken on. When things than go wrong, it's too late to say "We didn't realise...."

Academy conversion is an unnecessary distraction – here's how to survive it**Anonymous, address supplied**

An excellent piece. But buyer beware. I was on a governing body that did all that due diligence back in 2011: evaluating our options, carefully selecting a small multi-academy trust that offered support (what's the point of being a standalone in a system where improvement is about collaboration?), an ethos we believed in, "earned autonomy", and the safety-net required for kids should the governors and senior leadership team (SLT) fail in its obligations.

The transfer was seamless, and the shot in the arm was like a tonic. For about a year. Then, having achieved good, we were off their radar. They had inadequate schools to focus on, after all. Within two years, with very little support, no centrally procured services, a scheme of 100 per cent delegation, not one single contact from a trustee, and no way out (and god knows we looked), we fell foul of a brutal Ofsted.

The academy trust dumped the SLT and local governing body, and kept the school by the skin of its teeth. However, one year on, the inexperienced team they installed have failed, things that weren't as bad as Ofsted said they were now are, and the school has been rebrokered. So yes, choose carefully, but remember that things can change.

White paper: Multi-academy trusts will be ranked in new league tables

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Tim Keech, Cambridge

I look at it from the point of view of a parent with two children about to enter the system. My children live in

the catchment area of two primaries and one secondary school. They are the only schools we'd be able to get attend without a massive amount of disruption or moving house.

Therefore choice is utterly meaningless.

We don't have a choice, we have to use our local schools regardless of how they are run.

Knowing that if they were in a top-ranked academy, rather than our academy, they'd be more likely to get slightly better exams results provides me with no more useful information than knowing that they'd probably do better if we lived in a different local authority.

What is being taken away is my parental right to sit on the governing board and transform it in a positive way.

It all just seems a very convenient way for well-connected people to be put in charge of huge sums of public money with as little scrutiny as possible.

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!

**Correction**

In last week's story 'DfE gives academies £8m towards redundancy payments' a line was missed from the statement by United Learning regarding their £1.5m pay-outs which clarified that 75 per cent of schools in the trust were now good and outstanding.

Here is how the statement should have read:

"Many schools joining us have either long-standing performance issues or have continually struggled to work within their designated

budgets ... [but] 75 per cent of our inspected schools are now good and outstanding up from 22 per cent at their previous inspection and none are inadequate (where previously 25% were judged to be).

This rate of improvement, delivered at pace, comes from a variety of measures, the overwhelming majority of which are classroom-based. However, there has been the need in some academies to conduct major restructures to address inherent weaknesses, move on under-performing staff and to realign budgets."

PROFILE

“GOOD TEACHERS MAKE SUCH A MASSIVE DIFFERENCE”

ANN MCGAURAN

@ANNMCGAURAN

Kathy Kirkham, chief operating officer, Bright Tribe

Kathy Kirkham is the model of a no-fuss multi-academy trust leader. She's open and direct, addressing each question thoughtfully and without hesitation.

A former comprehensive school student who grew up on a farm in Essex, she's a chartered building surveyor by profession. This background – including experience with complex private finance initiative (PFI) projects – helped her in 2006 to secure a role with Partnerships for Schools (PFS).

PfS, the joint venture company set up in 2004 to deliver the UK's Building Schools for the Future programme, was replaced in 2012 by new executive agency the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Kirkham became that agency's head of free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools – her responsibilities included the delivery of the first two waves of free schools.

Now she is chief operating officer of Stockport-based Bright Tribe, which runs seven academies: three secondaries and four primaries. Its schools are scattered around the country: the secondaries in Essex, Suffolk and Cumbria, the primaries in Ipswich and Greater Manchester. The trust also has a wholly-owned subsidiary, Bright Tribe Education Services.

Kirkham has been married to Peter since 2007. He is a civil engineer and a development director for a housing association. He doesn't share her interest in horseriding – she's had a horse since she was 14 – “but he really likes animals”.

Her love of animals, and her ability to work hard and focus on getting things done, began early. Her parents were tenant farmers near Great Dunmow. “I was an only child. I worked on the farm a lot.

“My mum and dad, Mary and Stan, had to work seven days a week. My childhood was interesting and absolutely fantastic, but it was very driven by the fact they were self-employed. They weren't going to make any money unless they worked hard.”

She says that “fortunately” her parents got the opportunity to buy the farm after 40 years as tenants. “So I still live there. The guys who farm it for me are the sons of the neighbouring farmers who were really good friends of my mum and dad.”

Kirkham went to the Helena Romanes School, a “bog standard” secondary. “School was fine. I did enjoy it, but I also liked being outside on the farm. We had about 500

pigs, so they needed feeding and cleaning out every day. I did that after school, weekends and holidays. We had some arable land as well – about 100 acres. I worked on that driving tractors.”

Helena Romanes was a good school “in terms of being supportive . . . but you weren't pushed to be academic or stretched. One of the reasons I'm doing what I'm doing now is that I think it's very unfair that the standard of school you end up going to – and therefore how it affects your future – depends on where you live”.

But she had “an amazing biology teacher”. “In the A-level class, 11 of 13 got an A. That taught me that if you work as hard as you possibly can you will generally do OK. I suppose what she (the teacher) also showed me is that if you have a really good teacher they make such a massive difference.”

She went to work on the farm at 18 for about eight months, then worked for an agrochemicals company in Essex while doing a part-time HND in biology.

She then saw an advert to train as a surveyor with the local council in Essex, so she did that for five years part-time while going out on site. She won the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' award for the highest marks achieved throughout the five years.

The council got funding for three leisure centres done through PFI, and she managed what was a “very, very complicated project. That was very good at getting me into a whole world of different stuff.”

She then joined Cambridgeshire County Council in the education department at a time when education and social care became integrated. That's where, she says, she “really learned education”.

Her time at the council was followed by a spell as project

director for PFS, responsible for central England, which included delivery of schools across a wide area including Luton, Suffolk, Norfolk, Birmingham and Walsall.

With the creation of the EFA in 2012, she was asked to deliver free schools, UTCs and studio schools “from a capital perspective”. “It was challenging and I had to create and develop the teams to do it. For the second wave, I really had to set up a framework of consultants because there were about 65 schools.” She is good at setting up teams – and not afraid to delegate.

Her work on UTCs meant she had a lot to do with Lord Baker, the force behind the vocational schools. From September 2012 she worked a day and a half each week for the Baker Dearing Trust “to try to help them manage the team of people they had helping UTCs get delivered”. She kept that role until last September.

In 2012 she met venture capitalist Mike Dwan, “the guy I work for now”. A multi-millionaire and managing partner of Equity Solutions, Dwan supports Bright Tribe and its “sister” multi-academy trust, Adventure Learning Academies Trust (ALAT), which runs five schools in Cornwall. It's clear that the “DNA” of the two trusts is almost identical, however. Their two boards, although different legal entities, are made up almost entirely of the same people and organisations. Kirkham is on both boards.

The day after I talk to her, Ofsted chief Sir Michael

KATHY KIRKHAM

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

Do you have any pets?

Two labradors, 11 alpacas and one horse

What's your idea of a perfect holiday?

Lots of walking, discovering new areas and then relaxing by the sea

What's your favourite meal?

I don't have a favourite. I just love food and need feeding on a regular basis

You have a day off! How would you spend it?

With my husband in our garden

What's your favourite building?

The Shard in London



Kathy with husband Peter



Ozzie the horse



One of Kathy's 11 alpacas

M

Wilshaw wrote to education secretary Nicky Morgan about what he sees as a serious weaknesses at seven large MATs. Bright Tribe was not among them.

Sir Michael said it was particularly concerning that many of the academies in those trusts are failing their poorest children.

I ask Kirkham about the Ofsted report in December for Colchester Academy in Essex, which Bright Tribe took over last April. In July 2014, Ofsted rated the school inadequate. By last December it moved to requires improvement, while its latest report said many disadvantaged pupils still made much slower progress from their different starting points than other pupils.

Kirkham is adamant that "all our schools (across ALAT and Bright Tribe) are showing progress". GCSE results for Colchester last year were "massively better than the year before".

She adds: "We are very keen on personal pathways. It's not all about academia. That's why we like the UTC concept – so there are more technical pathways." Dwan is chair of governors for Bolton UTC and the Greater Manchester

Sustainable Engineering UTC "and Bright Tribe as a trust has just started to work much more closely with them just to make sure they get the support they need". She agrees with skills minister Nick Boles, who says UTCs are stronger as part of bigger organisations such as multi-academy trusts.

Yes, she says, there is a market (in education), "but it's very important people work together. It's not a dog eat dog world". If there's one person who's skilled at putting together a team that delivers, it's Kirkham.

Curriculum vitae

EDUCATION

Great Dunmow infant and junior schools

The Helena Romanes School, Great Dunmow

HND biology (part-time)

Degree in building surveying (part-time)

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) building surveyor qualification. Won RICS chairman's prize for top students

MBA (part-time)

CAREER

Agrochemicals company, Essex

Uttlesford District Council, Essex Building surveyor

Cambridgeshire County Council Working for director of Children's Services

Partnership for Schools Project director responsible for Building Schools for the Future for central England

Education Funding Agency Deputy director free schools, studio schools and UTCs responsible for capital delivery

Bright Tribe and Adventure Learning Academies Trust Chief operating officer



JANE MANZONE

Primary teacher in north London



'THIS IS POLICY'

Roll-up, roll-up . . . the education circus is in town

Levels created a misleading set of criteria from which teachers taught in limiting ways. But people were too optimistic as a landscape with "standards" looks anything but rosy

These are the worst times I have known in education. Too many people stirring the education pot have made for a turbulent few years, full of disorientation and chaos. From the rubble has come a response: a level of control over teachers that I have not seen before. Class teachers are being stripped of any semblance of autonomy, despite what the government proclaims about freedom.

Conflicts of interests now challenge a teacher's integrity: are children's test results and happiness equally important? What happens when these things collide? When there are targets to meet and attainment "gaps" to close, we use funding where it makes that most impact on results. The test has become the thing, whether teachers like it or not.

Teachers are now crash test dummies; strapped in and repeatedly hurtling towards a brick wall, unable to make sensible choices about what will work best. They find themselves having to follow this new initiative, or that new policy, in a bid to reach the unattainable.

Transfer of reasonable ideas into schools today is almost impossible. Even a perfectly sensible idea can turn into a circus in a data driven education world.

Consider this fictional scenario: an Ofsted inspection says some children in a school are not challenged enough. In response, the senior leadership team decides the school is now a "growth mindset" one. On a rainy Wednesday at 5.30pm the staff are introduced (with the help of a "learning stratospheres" PowerPoint) a new initiative of "challenge menus". Apathy and broken resistance means "the spice factor" is born to barely audible complaints from the overworked staff.

The next week a humble class teacher, let's call her Kerry-Anne, who has prepared her maths "challenge menus" (spending three hours on Sunday night and forgetting to wash her hair) against her better judgment, allows Lucy in her class to pick "vindaloo" equations instead of "korma" three-times table practice. It is an observation lesson; Kerry-Anne's feedback includes the words "explanations were not clear enough and some children were confused and made no progress at all". Like Dylan Wiliam's

ubiquitous "traffic lights", now most often used as a token form of self-assessment in books when teachers are following a marking policy, growth mindset has become a thing devoid of meaning, dangling free from the original thread of rational thinking.

Good ideas are only good when the teacher using them has chosen to do so for the benefit of her students and not for the system. But that is not what teaching today is like. Kerry-Anne only sees a brick wall in front of her. Strapped into the education van, she prepares for the next inevitable air bag to smack her in the face.

Teachers are now crash test dummies

A broad and balanced curriculum isn't just a sensible idea, it is a child's entitlement. Yet it is not possible in many schools and there are no ramifications for not following it, especially now that every school is to become an academy and doesn't have to follow the curriculum.

In that world, little Esther might not know what a primary colour is, and hasn't picked up a paintbrush since year 3, but the new expectations in maths and English demand a wider range of specific, non-negotiable skills and knowledge than ever before. This makes Esther's teacher hold her head in her hands and put to one side that mock Bayeux tapestry she wanted to make with her class. She writes lesson plans for extra spelling and grammar lessons. After all, her class must know a fronted adverbial from a modal verb and be able to spell "sacrifice" and "accommodate".

I stayed with a good friend of mine last weekend. I saw in her living room a file she had been given at an assessment course. She flinched as I picked it up. Out flew 30 copies of the new standards for the end of key stage 1. "The children have to meet all of them" she sighed. "I am not sure why a six-year-old has to be able to write using suffixes like 'ful' and 'ly', are you?"

As I survey the whirling blue mist of the post-level landscape, a crash scene emerges. We are in David Cronenberg territory. I see some blurry figures capitalising on the chaos but it isn't any teacher that I know.

On the day of the white paper, *Schools Week* and Policy Exchange hosted a webinar of policy experts.

Each had read the 128-page document and then, over an hour, debated the benefits and possible intentions of the policies. An excerpted transcript gives a flavour of their thoughts.

Laura White papers are the road map for what happens next: there can be a lot of concern, a lot of worries, but also a lot of excitement. Can you give a short summary of thoughts?

Sam It is a similar direction of travel towards what the government calls a school-led system.

They are trying to beef that up, and make every school into an academy in a multi-academy trust (MAT). It's particularly focused on primary schools.

The question for me is whether or not there is enough capacity to deal with this next shift.

Warwick This is policy having a nervous breakdown. I have looked at policy for coming on 20 years and it is getting increasingly dysfunctional. It is incoherent. There are contradictions all the way through it. I look at it and despair.

The government says every proposal puts children and young people first. Clearly it doesn't.

Schools doing well already don't need to be forced into being an academy. One more thing: it's not a school-led system. Let's be precise. It's an academy trust-led system.

Jonathan Warwick is right: the narrative of autonomy of school-led and headteacher-led systems is not where we will be by 2020. We will be in a trust-led or CEO-led system, which is less snappy and less parent-friendly, but more accurate.

Laura Do you think any of these policies could be consulted out? Or is this going to be a consultation of "how should we do this" rather than ought we?

Jonathan They are not going to run a consultation on "should we make schools into academies" - that's a decision that has been made. But there are going to be a series of consultations around the goals in this paper.

Laura Have academies sometimes used their freedoms around admissions to not take in vulnerable, and more expensive [to educate] children?

Warwick Schools have a lot of pressure on them to improve their results; the survival of these institutions, the headteachers' job [depends on it]. Can no one see that there is an incentive here to move kids out?

Laura Are you saying that in the white paper there is something to deal with this, Sam?

Sam There is a bit of a shift. If you are going to have an all-academy system there is no need for a school to control its admissions. You can give that power to a local authority. As a champion of children in the area, why can't they do more on admissions?

Becky Because policymakers are so London-centric, they don't understand the way that primary schools operate in most of the country. They still operate catchment areas. How are we going to run a system where schools can choose to redraw their catchment however they like, and when we get large population changes because of houses being built, they can de facto figure out how to sort it out and we will have gaps where children won't have schools to go to. Then what happens?

Laura The first chapter of the white paper is called "great teachers, everywhere they are needed" - a slightly strange wording - but it gets into some really serious things about qualified teacher status (QTS), including scrapping it and replacing with a new stronger, accreditation.

Sam There is a lot more detail that needs to be fleshed out. What they are trying to get at is that at the moment QTS is a pretty low bar, pretty much everyone who tries to get it, gets it.

Most professions also have a bar later, after three or four years, that you have to get over to become a true member of that profession. So they are thinking of a bar later on so that people meet a higher teacher standard.

Laura That doesn't make sense. There is already a sign-off by schools later. You get your QTS at the end of your training year in a school or university, and you have to be signed off by your school to end being newly qualified. One of the

Y HAVING A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN'

Schools Week and Policy Exchange webinar

SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER EXPERT PANEL



LAURA MCINERNEY
EDITOR, *SCHOOLS WEEK*

JONATHAN SIMONS
HEAD OF EDUCATION,
POLICY EXCHANGE

SAM FREEDMAN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
TEACH FIRST

BECKY ALLEN
CEO, EDUCATION
DATALAB

WARWICK MANSELL
EDUCATION
JOURNALIST



SCHOOLSWEEK 

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reasons that no one fails, is because a huge number of people drop out.

Sam We don't know how many of those people who drop out would have got the qualification if they had stayed.

Becky I am not sure it is about a higher bar. I am in favour of extending the period until you become fully qualified, and we might have a chartered teacher status of some description.

But if we want newly qualified teachers to do that, or newly unqualified teachers to do that, we have to reduce the teaching time for the first three years so you can actually properly invest in your development.

I suspect because we won't have enough money, it will be rather like stamping a portfolio. Once a year you will throw a few things together, send it off in the post, and it will become really meaningless.

Laura That has been a concern raised a number of times that this is a way of further kicking universities and "hey presto!" we have deregulated the teaching service.

Jonathan There is a question about whether or not this is a backdoor way of making it easier to get people in but I am not sure that this is anti-university thing.

If anything this is a more pro-university thing. A lot of academy

chains who run School Direct at the moment, are quite worried about an extension of QTS because they don't have the capacity to manage a two-year programme. You might see a lot going back towards universities.

Laura A second significant chapter in the white paper is: "Great schools are at the heart of our system". This includes a few things but mostly takes us to academies. There will be "new powers" to force people to become academies. Where do we begin?

Warwick The irony of a white paper that talks about a school-led system and brings it in through new powers to force schools in that direction is quite amusing.

Laura What is it about the process of moving to being an academy that people are so upset about?

Warwick There is no transparency. I spoke to a parent at an (ironically) free school that had an academy sponsor pulled from them.

No information about the decision. No idea of any criteria being used by ministers. Does anyone think regional schools commissioners are a good idea?

Laura Regional schools commissioners oversee the process of taking schools into academy trusts, moving schools between trusts if needed, and

monitoring how well they are doing. Are they working well?

Sam Somebody needs to do that role. Given academy expansion I expect it will become more than eight people. I completely agree on transparency. If you are going to have a system like this, it is really important to understand what criteria are being used to make decisions.

Warwick It is a system where civil servants are designing the future of schools with a few headteachers having a say. That is the issue for parents, who are asking why they are getting no voice at all in what happens to their schools.

Jonathan If you're sitting on a board of governors in a maintained school you have four years or less to decide your own destiny. The 2020 date is a backstop. I can't believe there is any desire to legislate because I think that would be difficult ... The idea is to "nudge" people, to use the trendy term. Nudge them to overcome the inertia.

Becky: I predict a mass voluntary conversion.

Laura There is a suggestion in the white paper that if parents were unhappy they would be able to bring about the change of an academy trust through a petition.

Jonathan I worry about this because I am not sure this is the right mechanism. I would prefer an easy route for schools to trigger change if they themselves are unhappy.

Sam For that to work, you need each school to have governors with legal status, and we are moving away from that, to a system where governance is at the MAT level.

Jonathan This is an important point: if a school goes into being a MAT it ceases to be its own legal entity.

If I am headteacher of school A in a trust, and I and everyone in the school wants to leave, we can't. It would be like a history department in a school saying it wants to leave the school.

If we do move to an all-academy system, the vast majority of schools will be in MATs and schools will lose their legal status.

Becky This conversation about the legality of things is very interesting but going back to Warwick's fundamental point of "whose school is it" - we have to get that straight.

Who does this school belong to? And to what extent do local communities have the right to make decisions about their schools?

Listen to the full one-hour podcast
<http://bit.ly/1pH7SIh>

Schools must become academies by 2022. So what should governors do?

Budget Day for the Chancellor coincided with budget day for the large secondary school where I am a governor. Like George Osborne, the financial outlook was rather worse than we had expected a year ago. Unlike the Chancellor, our bursar didn't try to divert our attention from the in-year deficit by announcing some shiny new policies.

Osborne's "look over there" tactics were, unusually for a Budget, centred on education. There were baubles of money for school sport and extended schools, and an inquiry into maths to 18 for all. But the big sparkler was the plan to turn every school into an academy by 2022.

This policy isn't a surprise. Cameron has said it several times and the recent consultation on the National Funding Formula made clear that local authorities will lose all their roles with respect to individual schools. I am certain that the government will make this happen and, as I am both a governor of a large community secondary school and a director of a small primary multi-academy trust (MAT), I can see all sides of the policy.

The howls were predictable: privatisation; the end of comprehensive education; an ideological, evidence-free assault on local authorities and teachers' pay and conditions in the interests of profit-making sponsors.

GOVERNORS' CORNER

RACHEL GOOCH

Education tweeter @SchoolDuggery and school governor



HOW TO SURVIVE ACADEMY CONVERSION

I don't accept much of that. Academies are not private sector organisations, nor are they selective. Few have chosen to change pay and conditions and in an era of teacher shortages they would be mad to offer poorer terms. In any case, you don't need to be an academy to choose how much to pay your teachers.

The real problem with Mr Osborne's policy is one of capacity at all levels. It needs more academy finance experts, more strategically-minded governors, enough auditors to turn round academy accounts in three short months, a middle tier that can support failing academies, an Education Funding Agency that can administer grants for every school in the country and a Department

for Education (DfE) that is more than barely competent. Yet the Budget Red Book reveals that the money allocated to convert 15,000 schools is a paltry £140 million. It isn't enough.

Alongside the capacity deficit, we have a moral and democratic deficit. My primary school voted to convert to academy status as part of a local MAT because the governors were convinced it would be the best long-term option for our pupils. Up to now, governors at my secondary school do not foresee enough benefits for pupils from conversion for it to risk a potentially disastrous distraction from the school's core purpose of providing the best education it can.

Schools should not be forced to convert when those who know them best have considered the issues and decided it is not in the interests of their children. Running two systems will be difficult, but even now three-quarters of schools are still with their local authorities. That is not a small rump that needs finishing off to make things easier for the DfE accountants.

Having said all that, this is the policy. My advice to governors to make the best of it for your school. It is much better for everyone if you choose your own future rather than having it forced upon you. Only convert as a standalone academy if you are large and have no obvious partners. Otherwise, look for local partner schools that share your ethos or local established MATs where you will fit in.

Avoid large, established MATs where your voice will be small. Pay close attention to schemes of delegation and the composition of the trust board. Take time to do due diligence – you don't want to find yourself responsible for another school's deficit, pension hole or collapsed drains.

Get yourself a good project manager and don't let the burden of conversion distract the head from teaching and learning. Support your finance staff – the main stress will fall on them. Be transparent – explain to everyone, all the time, what is happening and why. Don't accept the first answer the DfE gives you on anything. Stay ethical and keep the children at the centre of what you do.



A week in Westminster

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

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION BOARD: SUMMARY OF MEETING 27 JANUARY 2015

Welcome

The Secretary of State opened the meeting by welcoming all Board members.

Note of discussions

The Board held discussions on the work of the department during the Parliament.

The picture to the left should look familiar to regular Week in Westminster readers. It featured in this column 12 months ago, highlighting the lack of transparency provided by the government. Why are we publishing it again, you ask?

Well, according to the Department for Education (DfE) that is the last meeting its board members had. Fourteen months ago.

In the past 14 months, the DfE has made significant policy changes, and if you've read this far in the paper you will be aware how many more it is planning to make over the next four years.

It may be that the DfE is due to publish very soon, as they tend to splurge - once a year - just around the Easter break when Schools Week is out of print. (We can't imagine why!)

Or could it be that Nicky Morgan is too busy getting some swift training in how to be a headteacher?

The white paper this week said

"in the rare scenario" that an academy trust stops operating a school "at short notice" without an immediate, alternative provider in place, the secretary of state "will be responsible for the running of the school".

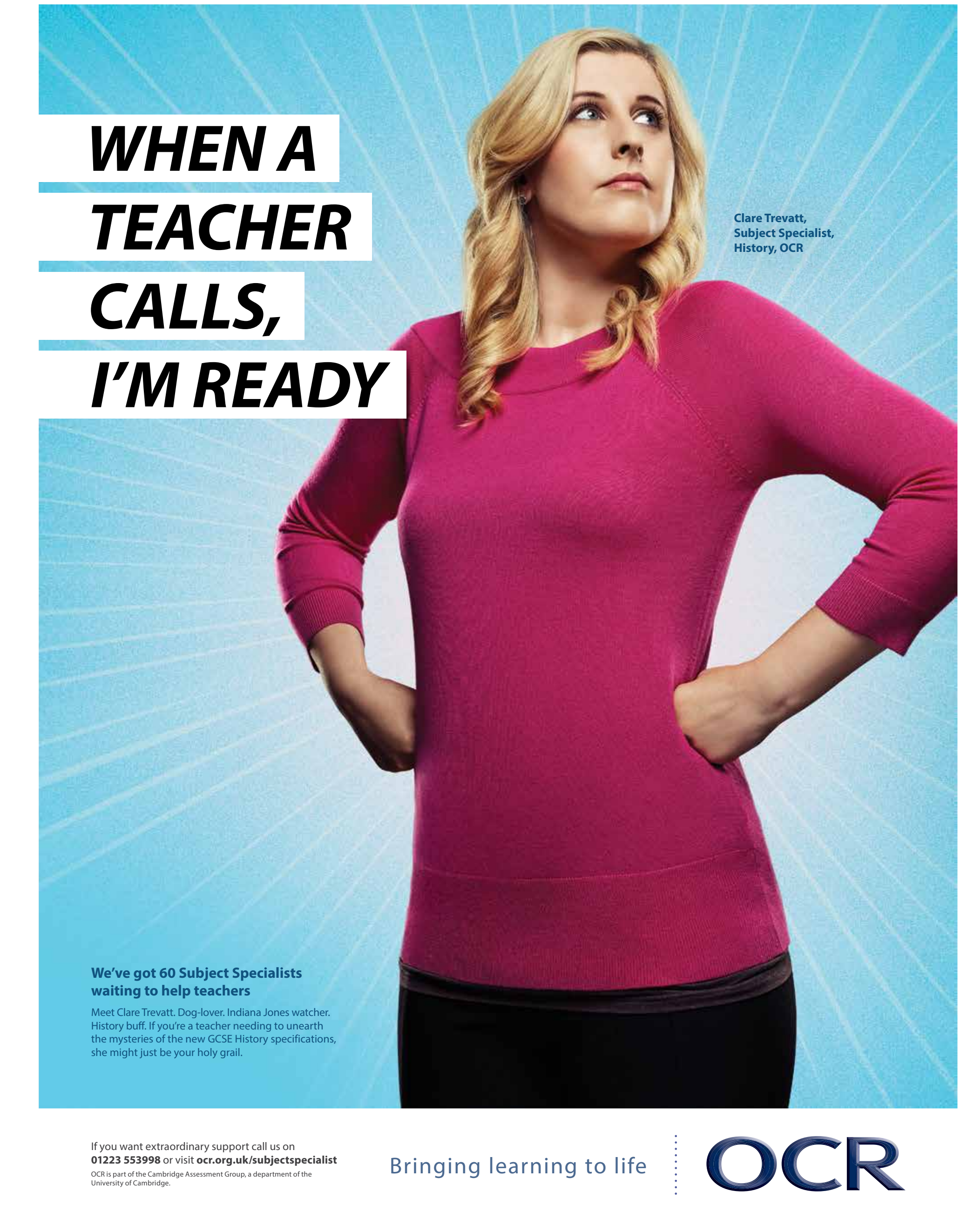
Week in Westminster can only imagine the scene.

The question is – if NiMo was your headteacher, would you be happy for these to be your governing body minutes?

If, in the meantime, the DfE board needs an adequate notetaker to make sure these meetings are accurately recorded, Week in Westminster would happily attend. Our shorthand skills are excellent. Services would be provided free (although chocolate is always welcome).

Happy Easter, all. We shall see you in a couple of weeks, hopefully recovered from our chocolate coma.

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School Bulletin



Alfie takes home top award

Alfie with his mother, left, Hugh Dennis and Ormiston Park Academy vice-principal Collette Hunnisett

Computer whizz-kid Alfie Fuller-Burgess picked up the Einstein award at Ormiston Academies Trust's recent annual awards.

The year 10 pupil from Ormiston Park Academy in Essex joined more than 170 businessmen and education sector leaders at the Grand Connaught Rooms in London.

He was handed his award by comedian Hugh Dennis, the night's presenter, to recognise his "extraordinary ability and exceptional achievement".

Alfie, currently the British champion for Microsoft Office Specialist after beating 10,000 contenders last year, came close to scooping the world title in Dallas, Texas.

South East Asian contenders pipped him to the post, but Alfie came home with an award for seventh place.

After being presented with his Einstein prize, he said: "I was very happy to discover I had won. I particularly enjoyed socialising with the high-ranking professionals within OAT and hearing their thoughts on my achievements."

Lining up in a blaze of glory



Tyre Fires of Tavistock school collecting the top prize from Peter Jones (far right) and The Duke of York

A team of sixth-formers from Devon have been crowned champions of Peter Jones' Tycoon in Schools 2015 competition.

The Tavistock College students, who set up Tyre Fires of Tavistock, were presented with £1,000 by the *Dragons' Den* star and The Duke of York at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace.

The team impressed Mr Jones by selling a range of fire pits made from recycled wheel rims. "They took on a very ambitious project and executed their plan brilliantly," he says. "Their product is exciting, they clearly have excellent negotiation skills

and they've made a good profit."

Having come up with the idea in a "blue-sky" thinking session, the seven pupils raised £1,327.56 during a seven-week trading period.

They sourced materials from a local scrapyards – negotiating a reduced price – manufactured the products, and carried out scrupulous quality checks.

The pits were produced by welding two rims together with a hole for the door cut using an angle grinder.

The pupils marketed them on social media and sold them at various events across Tavistock.

Museum visit that lasts a term

FEATURED

Three groups of primary and nursery pupils have moved into local museums to test whether education in a museum setting results in better learning, social and cultural outcomes.

Pupils from two primary schools and a nursery in Tyne & Wear, Swansea and Liverpool will learn full-time in the museums for up to a term, as part of a King's College London project.

"My primary school is at the museum" takes the school classes directly into museums for their day-to-day lessons, including lunches and breaks.

The three pilots will "assess the benefits and logistics of a partnership model that could in future help to address some of the funding issues faced by both the education and museum sector, as well as provide learning and audience engagement benefits for both parties", a King's spokesperson said.

The pilot project will include Kensington Children's Centre, a pre-school nursery, which will be based at Tate Liverpool museum, a year 5 group from Hadrian Primary School in South Shields, which will be based at Arbeia Roman Fort in South Tyneside, and a reception year from St Thomas Community Primary School that will be based at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea.

The idea was conceived by architect Wendy James of Garbers & James, and



Hadrian pupils at the Arbeia Roman fort and, below, Kensington pupils at Tate Liverpool museum

then developed with King's.

It was first tested in an "ideas laboratory" run by the cultural institute at King's, and supported under the institute's cultural space programme strand.

Additional support and advice for evaluation will come from Dr Jen DeWitt and Dr Heather King, researchers based in the department of education and professional studies at King's.

Wendy James said: "My work in the public cultural sector has increasingly specialised in education and museums. I

strongly believe that there could be many creative benefits from children engaging with richly diverse object collections, for the pupils, their families, schools and museum.

"I am delighted at the opportunity to test such a partnership model between primary schools and their local museums and to develop the knowledge and understanding we need to shape what we hope will be the partnerships of the future."

The findings of the pilot will be published in autumn this year.



MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Sir Michael Barber has been appointed chair of the Foundation for Leadership in Education, a new body for aspiring school leaders.

Sir Michael, currently the chief education adviser of Pearson, says he wants to put in place "seamless school leadership development for the future" in a way that differed from the approach of the government-funded National College for School Leadership.

"The foundation will be totally owned, driven and lead by the profession, taking a rhetoric of the Gove, Morgan and Cameron era of improvement led by the school leaders themselves. We are going to take that literally," he says.

"Every parent knows how important it is for each school to have a great headteacher. It is exciting to see the profession itself taking responsibility for making that possible."

Sir Michael served as head of Tony Blair's delivery unit from 2001 to 2005, and as chief adviser to education secretary David Blunkett on school standards from 1997 to 2001.

He studied history at the University of Oxford.



Sir Michael Barber



John Jackson



Debbie Leonard

John Jackson is the new chief executive for the London Grid for Learning Trust (LGfL).

The former chief information officer of Camden Council replaces Brian Durrant, who retires after 15 years leading the trust.

Mr Jackson says he will continue to focus on delivering "massive economies of scale and knowledge to our schools and customers more generally so we can spend as much money on education as opposed to administration". He also wants to use profits to reinvest in schools and education.

He says the LGfL is currently building a

"public sector SuperCloud" for schools so that services are "cheaper... and support key initiatives such as shared services and devolution".

Mr Jackson was responsible for digital innovation and technology in his ten years at Camden.

He studied history at Newcastle University before completing an MSc in information technology at De Montfort University.

Debbie Leonard is to succeed Chris Jeffery as headteacher of The Grange School, an independent school in Cheshire, from the beginning of September.

She joins from Croydon High School, an independent day school for girls aged 3-18 in south London, where she has been head since 2010.

Ms Leonard, who has spent her career in a variety of independent schools, says she is "extremely excited" about moving to The Grange and having the "opportunity to lead a school that is not only academically very impressive but, more importantly, has a strong culture and the ambition to further develop excellence across all areas of the curriculum".

Ms Leonard will work with Mr Jeffery for the remainder of this school year to "ensure she is introduced fully to the school, its people and its ways".

Mr Jeffery is to become headmaster of Bootham School in York.

A keen sports person, Ms Leonard has coached hockey to national level and says she is a strong advocate of outdoor learning. She is also an independent schools inspector.

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

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ENGLISH TEACHER

EDEN GIRLS' SCHOOL, COVENTRY

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- has high ambitions for all and provides excellent opportunities for professional development
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For an informal and confidential discussion, please call

Anand Patel on **02476 220937**.

Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged.

To apply, please fill in the attached application form and email the completed form to lucy.wood@edengirlscoventry.tetrust.org

CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 8TH APRIL 2016, 12PM

Please note that interviews will be held w/c 11th April 2016.

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Park is a great place to work. Its family atmosphere, committed staff and small classes make it a place where students flourish.

This is an exciting opportunity for an innovative, flexible and committed leader with experience in EYFS and Key Stages 1-4, suitable pastoral experience and sound business acumen to enhance and promote the provision we offer.

Applications are welcome from experienced and aspiring head teachers.

Closing date for applications: 5th April 2016 – 12 noon

Interviews: 12th and 13th April 2016

Tel: 020 8554 2466

Email: headteacher@parkschool.org.uk

www.parkschool.org.uk

Park School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, references and a medical.

TEACHER OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

FULL OR PART TIME | SALARY: MPS + FRINGE
REQUIRED SEPTEMBER 2016



Loyauté m'oblige

You will have:

- The ability to teach Computer Science at GCSE and A level is desirable.
- Opportunity to join lead school of the Herts & Bucks Teaching School Alliance
- Exceptional student attitude, attainment and achievement
- First class CPD and career development opportunities

Full job description is on the school website.

Application to be sent to Mrs. J. Price, (HR Admin) by Friday, 15th April by 10am. Please include a covering letter, completed teaching staff application form from the school website and include the names of two referees.

INTERVIEWS WEEK COMMENCING 18TH APRIL 2016

Website: www.stclementdanes.org.uk

Email: enquiries@stclementdanes.org.uk

Address: Chenies Road, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire, WD3 6EW

Tel: 01923 284169

St Clement Danes School

An 11-18 co-educational, all ability school on the Herts / Bucks border. 'Outstanding' (Ofsted Oct. 2011). If you would like to join a friendly staff team, the following vacancy will commence 1st September 2016.

TEACHER OF HISTORY (MATERNITY COVER)

PART TIME (APPROX. 0.4 - 0.6)

REQUIRED FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2016



Loyauté m'oblige

You will have:

- Ability to teach KS5 History an advantage
- Opportunity to join lead school of the Herts & Bucks Teaching School Alliance
- Exceptional student attitude, attainment and achievement
- First class CPD and career development opportunities

Full job description is on the school website.

Application to be sent to Mrs. J. Price, (HR Admin) by Friday, 15th April by 10am. Please include a covering letter, completed teaching staff application form from the school website and include the names of two referees.

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Dedication, commitment, loyalty and a drive for excellence in all areas of school life evidenced by an enthusiasm for education both personally and professionally promoted by CPD.

The Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. To ensure that this is achieved we expect all employees to share this commitment and staff will be recruited and selected in line with safer recruitment policy and practice. The successful applicant will undertake an enhanced DBS check.

Application requirements:

Please submit a letter of application together with your application form.

Completed applications should be posted to:

HR, The Ursuline Academy Ilford, Morland Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4JU

You may also return your completed application form via email to our HR Administrator:

bbarnes@uiai.org.uk

School visits can be arranged by appointment. Please contact Mrs Barnes for details.

Your letter should address the selection criteria and include your thoughts on what makes a good Mathematics Teacher. Short-listing for the position will take place following the closing date and references will be taken up prior to interview.

Please note we are unable to accept CVs.

CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 15 APRIL 2016 – 12 NOON
INTERVIEWS: W/C MONDAY 18 APRIL 2016

JOBS

**TEACHER OF ART**

Roll: 1360, 370 in academic Sixth Form
Part-time (0.5fte preferred)
Salary: Main Pay Scale plus London Fringe Allowance

Required for September 2016, a well-qualified, enthusiastic teacher of Art. We are looking to appoint a committed professional with a clear understanding of creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The successful candidate will join a well-established, successful and supportive department which has excellent facilities. Art and A Level Photography are popular options; masterclasses and study visits are an important part of the curriculum.

TEACHER OF SCIENCE

Roll: 1360, 370 in academic Sixth Form
Part time (0.4fte preferred)
Salary: Main Pay Scale (or UPS) plus London Fringe Allowance

Required for September 2016, a well-qualified, enthusiastic teacher of Science. The Science department comprises an innovative and highly successful specialist team and public examination results are outstanding. We have some flexibility to accommodate a preference for one or more of the science disciplines ie Physics, Chemistry or Biology.

Applications for these posts are equally welcome from experienced and newly qualified teachers. NQTs are offered the option of a 1st July start date and we have an active NQT programme to support and develop new teachers.

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Application forms, available from the school website, should be returned with a covering letter to the **Headmaster, Mr N Daymond, Parmiter's School, High Elms Lane, Garston, Nr Watford, Herts WD25 0UU** or by email to the address below.

Closing Date: Tuesday 3 May. Early applications would be welcome.

Telephone: 01923 671424
Email: admin@parmiters.herts.sch.uk
Website: www.parmiters.herts.sch.uk

Parmiter's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN a *Schools Week* mug



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.